

Preface to *Between Time and Eternity*

By Susan McCaslin

An autobiographical account of her spiritual awakening, *Between Time and Eternity* describes how unsolicited psychic experiences in early life opened Mrs. Park to the reality of a life beyond death and set her on a spiritual path she could not have previously imagined, given her fairly conservative upbringing. Of all her works, this one best introduces the author and describes her formative spiritual experiences.

This book had a long period of gestation, as it was mostly written in 1946 but not published until 1960. Mrs. Park could not publish it earlier due to a lack of financial resources. After her husband's death, she was able to use some of the money from his pension to defray the considerable costs of self-publication. The book was reviewed favourably in the journal "Spiritual Frontiers" in the January-February issue 1961, and in several other publications, but she generally promoted it herself by leaving it on consignment in bookstores and giving it to interested parties.

BETWEEN TIME AND ETERNITY

Olga Park

To all who are ready to taste of the strong meat
of spiritual experience of which Paul
wrote to the Christians at Corinth,
this book is dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

In response to many requests for the complete published story of those experiences which brought me to the awareness of the life beyond death, and which have so greatly blessed my life here, I am assembling these records.

To one who loves the quiet things and the private ways of life the thought of talking to hundreds of people all at once is, to say the least, disturbing. I feel I ought to be introduced and yet there is nothing special about me in my outward life to form a proper introduction. To most of you who read this, my name on the cover does not mean anything. Your first thought on picking up the book would be, in all probability, "Who is she?"

Well, I can't tell you except in terms of what I have gathered in thoughts and inner experiences on the journey of life. If I say my name is such and I was born at such a time, on such a date, at such a place, and my father's occupation was such; and I have been married so many years and have a son of so many years; and the name of the city where we live is such, and my husband's occupation is such—would these facts introduce me, the writer of this book, to you the reader?

You see, except for my name, there is nothing in my outward life to differentiate me from a thousand other women in any city anywhere. So we will skip all that and I will try to tell you of the inner person; of how I have felt and thought and why I am writing this book. First of all, I want to say that I do not consider myself to be the "psychic type." The inner experiences of which I write do not stem from natural psychism but from religious sincerity. Psychic awareness is a personal condition, like having an extra eye or ear which acts as a channel of contact with the unseen worlds around us. It has nothing to do with religion and the religious sense.

To have this extra sense makes life more complicated. Psychics have more intense temptations and trials than people who are not psychic. There are more psychics who are not religious than those who are. Don't let that word "religious" frighten you. More than likely you don't know what it means. Let me tell you what it means to me.

I don't think I was born religious, but about the age of nine years something happened—a sort of waking up inside; and from then on I was on fire with religious idealism. This religious sense made me happy, not gloomy. At play I was fond of the outdoors and very much of a tomboy, but I loved to go to Sunday school and church; I loved the spiritual exercises of morning and evening prayers; the daily Scripture reading. The people of the New Testament interested me particularly. When the gospels and epistles were being read it seemed as though these people were trying to tell about a side of life that was hidden, secret, but to them more real than the physical and more worthwhile.

The religious sense meant for me a secret happiness, unexplainable but real, of being under the watchful eye of a Spiritual Father whose love and wisdom were competently in charge of whatever might happen. Along the pilgrimage of life

there have been occasions—sometimes long periods—when I lost this sense of inner well-being; when even belief in an ultimate good deserted me. But whenever this happened, or was about to happen, special guidance always broke through from the spirit side of life.

Until very recent years I thought of this as the impersonal over-all providence of God, the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. I believed in the ministry of angels, but I thought of them much as I thought of God, as beings of an entirely different and superhuman kind. The question whether friends or kinfolk could or did communicate from the life beyond death sometimes came up in conversation, in talk over a sermon, or something of that sort, but only as a theory—never as a reality or a fact of everyday experience.

Even after the amazing experience at the birth of our second child Jamey, when I stepped over the border of this life for a brief hour, I did not realize the implications of what had happened. Even ten years after that, when I heard the voice of an unknown speak in answer to my urgent prayer, I was greatly shocked and troubled.

This is the first reaction of most Christian believers when they come face to face with the reality of what they have been professing right along. It is as though we Christians had built up a religious thought-form world in which there are three rooms—the Past, the Present and the Future. In the room of the Past are the people and scenes of the Bible. In the room of the Present, are we looking into the room of the Past and pretending to imitate what we see there. Of course we can't do it. The room of the Present is a different shape, and the windows and the doors and the furnishings are all different, and we are not our real selves but ideal thought-projections.

And in the room of the Future everything is still more unreal. This is our "heaven." The people from the past are there with us in this room of the Future, but they are not living and moving any more; they're just "sitting thinking," and we are the same as they. The whole thing is like a shadow show. But suppose one of these shadow figures from the room of the Past comes into the room of the Present, out of the room of the Future, and starts talking to us and changing things in the room of the Present. Our shadow show of religious ideas and attitudes is then all upset. It has come alive and it won't stay put any more.

It is a tremendous thing to enter into living relationship with the Past and the Future, and yet that is what we Christians have been professing all along. That is what happened when the prophets of old heard "the Voice"; when Joseph dreamed his dreams; when Jesus spoke with authority; when He showed Himself to the astonished disciples even to the wounds of His crucifixion; when He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, to John on the Isle of Patmos.

And this sort of thing didn't peter out or come to a dead stop; it has been going on right down the centuries, as all the lives of the saints and spiritual reformers testify. The thing that is so startling is that it can happen to just ordinary folk like you and me! I am not of the opinion that direct inspiration and psychic awareness are likely to happen to large sections of humanity suddenly, but I do think it is in the Divine purpose that we should have it as soon as we are ready, and that we ought to be getting ready.

When it does come, one is likely to make a lot of mistakes, to misconstrue what

one hears and sees and to misapply the guidance. Whenever such mystical reality as this book is to record breaks in upon the human soul—and we must remember, of course, that this has been happening right down through the ages, long before men kept any records and certainly many thousands of years before Moses began the Sacred Books of Israel—one ought to set prejudice to one side and watch carefully to see what God is at, and be willing to measure our previous conceptions against the newly discerned patterns.

Instead, we usually allow fear to blur our vision, not realizing that God will not—and indeed cannot—destroy His own truth, though our preconceptions of that truth may perish miserably. So Jesus came, saying, “I am not come to destroy the law but to fulfill.” Every vision of truth, though it be new to men, is nevertheless a fulfillment. Just recently I read on a church notice board this message: “If what you believe is truth you need not fear that the discovery of new truth will destroy it.”

There are some things in this book which you may find hard to accept at first reading, but if you will read on patiently to the end, and think upon them in the light of the teachings of Jesus and the experiences of the Apostolic Church, you will find eventually, as I did, that you have new eyes and ears quickened towards the perception of the goal to which this life leads. You will have a new respect for the Bible accounts.

CHAPTER 1

AT THE PLACE OF DREAMS

Within each human soul, beyond this world of physical knowing, between Time and Eternity, there stands a door. “Bethel,” Jacob called it—the “House of God and the very Gate of Heaven.” Here God can speak with man, and angels come and go. Thirty-three years ago this door at the Place of Dreams began to open and the awareness of the life beyond to press itself upon me.¹

I suppose there is scarcely a living person in whose family experience there is not somewhere a prophetic dream. As a rule, however, these are extraordinary occurrences bursting through to warn of death or tragedy to loved ones. One or two dreams of this kind have come to me at long intervals, but in the main my dreams of significance have been part of a long chain down which an instructing and guiding purpose has been woven.

For more than twenty-five years I have known that dreams can be, and often are, a link with the life beyond death. Long before then I was having very vivid and important prophetic dreams, which I was able to recognize as such by the events in which they were fulfilled. This was usually in a period of from ten to fourteen days. At that time I was not interested in psychic matters, and I had no thought whatever that my prophetic dreams were in any way connected with the life beyond death. My thoughts were all on romance and preparations for my forthcoming wedding. That was during the World War of 1914—1918.

Quite frequently I dreamed of trudging the roads of Flanders with the soldiers in deep mud and black darkness, crawling along trenches or sheltering from the hail of bursting shells. On one occasion I stood under the ruined arches of what had been the entrance to a large and beautiful church. Often the shock of not merely witnessing terrible events, but of being emotionally part of them, would bring me awake suddenly. One night I saw a vast expanse of territory blown up in a series of explosions, as if the whole had been mined.

I woke with a shock. After lying awake for some time, longing to sleep, yet afraid of further harrowing experiences, slumber stole upon me and I found myself back in the old house in Warwickshire, England. I was leaning over the back of Grandfather’s old Windsor armchair, in which my father was sitting, and I was reading over his shoulder a telegram which he held in his hand. It was dated

¹ It must not be assumed that I regard all vivid dreams or even visions as spirit-communications. Only by the content of the dream or vision can it be distinguished as a message and not just the psychic perception of subconscious images. Because the soul in sleep is somewhat loosened from the dense body of earth, it receives all kinds of impressions; and in the early stages of psychic unfoldment most of these are the visual awareness of problem conditions connected with one’s environment. As the soul becomes more aware of its spiritual nature and powers, it gains courage and confidence and ceases to pay attention to these shadows, and so becomes receptive to the higher vibrations of spirit communication. Olga Park.

April 9th of that same year, and bore my brother's name and number, with the word "Missing."

My father was stationed at an aerodrome in the south of England at the time. Whether he received any official notice of this sort in due course I do not know, but we here in Canada did. At what date I do not know. It stated that my brother was missing after Vimy Ridge. He turned up later as a shell-shock casualty. After his return at the close of the war, he described his experiences at Vimy, saying that the entire section held by the Canadians had been lifted into the sky by mines. This took place, as every child of today knows from his schoolbooks, on April 9, 1917. My dream occurred at the end of March, about two weeks earlier.

There are certain features of the two dreams just related which indicate clearly that they were dream-messages, but at that time I was not experienced in dream analysis. The conditions of black darkness in the first dream, and of suffering emotional shock, show that I was not having a firsthand visual experience but receiving impressions through another person. At the time the dream was registering with me it would not have been night in Flanders but probably mid-day.

The general conditions in the dream show that I was tuned in to the conditions, physical and emotional, of my brother—but, by some extraordinary process, to conditions still in the future at the time I had the dream. There is no proof in this dream as it stands of communication from the world beyond death, but taken with the dream which followed the same night, I conclude that it came from the same agent or agents.

The second dream contained carefully selected extras, as in any visual message from the life beyond death—a chair sold to neighbors before we left England, and the old home at Erdington. Then, the date on the telegram in my father's hands was not the same as the date on the cable actually received, but was the date when Vimy Ridge was blown up. This impression could not have come from my brother, since at the time I received it he was not aware, nor was anyone else aware, that Vimy Ridge was going to be blown up on April 9.

This second dream was also different from many of the other dreams in which I shared or received impressions of his actual conditions, for it was in a setting of bright sunlight, and in the dream I did not feel any emotional distress; though after waking I began to have some anxiety for my brother's future. Another important point, which clearly demonstrates to me its other-world origin, is that I was standing *behind* the chair looking over my father's shoulder.

The significance of this will not be apparent to those who have had no personal experience of other-world communications, but from my long years of such experience I know that it signifies that I was sharing the future-perception of another person. These dreams were impressed upon me, I would say, by some person in spirit who in this life had been connected with my father and the chair in which he was sitting, which was featured in the second dream. The waking and falling asleep again, to continue with a new aspect of the same theme, is a

common characteristic of dream communication. The dreams on this occasion were a pre-warning, but apparently the person who gave the impression saw no further than that my brother would be “missing,” due to events which would happen on April 9.

In the years since then I have had hundreds of prophetic dreams, a few of which—relating to myself and the more personal affairs of myself and near relatives—have been just as clear in focus and accurate in detailed fulfillment.

About the summer of 1926, I had a clear dream prevision of an accident, which happened to a man in the same church choir. I saw him standing in a field, or large open lawn, and just as I saw him something in the nature of a large bullet struck him on the forehead and, like Goliath, he went down flat. At once there appeared around him other members of the choir, also the organist and rector. They were much concerned about him, as he seemed to be dead, but after a long while he began to respond to their ministrations and regained consciousness.

The morning following this dream being on Sunday, I met Mr. C. as the choir was assembling before service, and said to him jokingly, “I didn’t expect to see you this morning. I dreamed you were knocked out.” Whether or not I told him the whole dream I do not remember. I probably did. I know that I did tell him to be careful, as my dreams sometimes came true.

The following Sunday morning Mr. C. was absent, and I learned that he had been hit while playing in a cricket match. The ball had hit him on the forehead, as I had seen in the dream. Members of the choir, together with the rector and organist, who were watching the match had indeed been much concerned, since for twenty minutes Mr. C. had shown no signs of life.

There is nothing in this dream itself to show any connection with the life beyond death. It appears to be straight prevision, but the fact that I received it immediately prior to the day on which I regularly met this man could indicate the intention of some person in spirit to warn him of the danger.

Another dream, which foretold an event by a few hours, occurred on Sunday, July 30, 1944, about 7:30 a.m. Two young friends of ours were expecting their fourth child, and there had been much speculation as to whether the baby would be a boy or a girl. As the other three children were girls, they were rather hoping for a boy—especially the mother. In my dream I saw Mr. S. sitting at the wheel of his car outside the church they attended.

The three girls and their mother were in the car, and Mr. S. was just reaching out his hand to start the motor, when another tiny little girl came running down the church steps and climbed over the door of the car. Mr. S. smiled and shrugged his shoulders and said, “Well, it suits me quite all right.” A baby girl was born the same night, about church-service time. This dream is in part symbolic, the car representing Mr. S. and his family and the church indicating the time of the birth.

To go back to the time when dream communication began: there was one

dream back in 1915 in which the same man was present whom I came to look upon in later years as a spiritual instructor—the director of my first steps in subconscious reception of other-world impressions. This was the first time I had seen him. He was of medium height, slight build, dark complexion and with straight black hair neither cut nor combed in the Western style. He was a real person and not in any sense an image or subconscious creation. He had an atmosphere of quietness, as of one habitually contemplative. In this first dream appearance he was dressed in an ankle-length garment of coarse creamy-white material such as a member of a religious order might wear. He was definitely an Easterner.

In the dream I was on the sea in a small boat or yacht, not far out from shore. With me was a tame white dove. Suddenly a hawk appeared circling overhead. I did not notice the bird, but my attention was called to it by the man I have described, who was standing a little to one side and behind me. As I looked up, the hawk swooped and struck the dove, but the pain of the strike was in my own back and woke me. There was no physical pain but I could still feel the pain of the strike within. This dream turned out to be a pre-warning of the malicious gossip of a neighbor. It occurred about ten days before the condition of which it warned.

Shortly after my marriage I had an exceptionally vivid and painful dream-vision. I was in a ship at sea. At first the sky was clear blue above and the sea calm, but a black storm came up with thunder and lightning and a howling gale, the waves rising mountains high, and the ship was driven in shore against high rugged cliffs. It split into three parts and I was engulfed in the sea along with all the other people who had been on the ship.

As the ship sank and the waves closed over my head, I was wrapped about with a wonderful sense of peace, like falling asleep upon a soft pillow. Instantly upon this the scene changed and I was climbing a steep road leading over those same rugged cliffs. Others were traveling the same road but they did not speak with me, nor I with them. The road seemed endless and I was very, very tired.

Presently night came on and the stony slipperiness underfoot made the climb more difficult and painful, and the danger of getting too near the precipitous edge was really terrifying. At length I reached the summit, and now I thought surely there would be a bright home for me, and the loving companionship of others. But no! My fellow travelers, talking and laughing gaily among themselves, passed me by without a word or look of recognition. I was alone in a strange place at the darkest hour of night. Then dimly before me there loomed like a deeper shadow the outline of a small arbor. I groped my way towards it with my hands outstretched and felt there a stone seat. With a deep sigh of thankfulness, I sat down. Presently the first faint glimmer of dawn appeared and I saw that I was sitting in a small arbor of stone built over and around a spring of water.

In the gray light I looked out upon the scenes of my former terror and loneliness, the steep rough road by which I had climbed to my present resting place, the sea in which the ship had been engulfed, still dark and sullen washing

against the bottom of the cliffs, and on my right beyond where I was sitting the blackened ruins of burned-out cities. In front of me I saw by the dawning light a beautiful old minster and I longed to enter it, but it was in darkness and the gates were fast dosed. Then rays of delicate pink and gold began to shoot across the sky from behind me in the east and lit up each point of the stone façade of the minster like myriads of jewels; and as the glory of the rising sun came up a man in the simple cassock of a monk or priest opened the doors and gates of the minster from within and, lifting his hands high, prayed to God, his face shining in the rays of the new-risen sun, then turned to me in welcome and bade me enter.

This exhausting dream experience had no meaning for me at the time. It did not apply to my marriage, my church connections or my religious emotions. It is only in recent years (1940 on) that it has had meaning for me as a marvelous prevision of my path of spiritual experience. After such a dream it was only natural that for a day or two I should feel uneasy and troubled, wondering if it foreboded sorrow or bereavement; but as nothing unpleasant happened and the days and weeks slipped by, I decided my imagination had been working overtime while I was in the sleep state.

So with this and many other vivid dreams of that period my thought was that they would make good material for short stories, if there ever came a time when I would have leisure for writing, and with this in mind I wrote down all I remembered as they occurred.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST EXPERIENCES OF THE PSYCHIC BODY

In my introductory chapter I referred to an “amazing experience at the birth of our second child, Jamey, when I stepped over the border of this life for a short time.” My husband knew of this, but I do not think I spoke of it to anyone else until the night of May 25, 1940. I was visiting my parents at a small country place about forty miles from my own home. We were sitting at supper. How the subject came up I don’t remember, but we got to talking about the life after death, and to my great astonishment my father expressed the view that we all went into an unconscious “sleep” at death until the Great and General Resurrection Day when Christ would come with the angels and the sound of a great trumpet and we would all rise in a perfected physical body. My astonishment at his expression of such a faith, quite contrary to the belief he had held in earlier years, was as nothing to his astonishment at my counterstatement that I knew we did not sleep or fall into unconsciousness, except for a few moments perhaps, but that we woke up almost immediately in a body exactly like the physical body we had just discarded, but more tenuous: invisible and intangible from the physical side of life. “You see,” I said, “I know that I have another body, a spiritual body, the exact counterpart of this physical body, because I have been in it, and moved about in it, and have heard and seen things by it.” I then told them what had happened when Jamey was born.

It was June 4, 1922, a Sunday night about 7:30, when Jamey was born. After coming out of the anesthetic and speaking with the doctor and nurses, I suddenly lost consciousness due to unexpected complications. When consciousness returned I was still in the same room but standing in health and strength.

There was a woman lying where I had been, and I looked down expecting to see myself, but to my surprise she did not resemble me in any respect. She appeared to be much older, her features were more angular and her hair was quite gray. While I was puzzling over this, the door I was facing swung open and Nurse C. stood there looking very bothered. She did not say anything for a moment, and then the voice of Dr. S. (my own physician) behind me uttered an impatient, “Well?” I turned at the sound of his voice and saw that he was “cleaning up.” He had removed his surgical overall and was drying his hands and face on a towel. Dr. L., who had given me my anesthetic, was also standing there but he was still in his overall. I was very puzzled, as appearances seemed to indicate that Dr. L. had been the accoucheur—that, in fact, the doctors had switched jobs.

Nurse C.’s reply to Dr. S. concerned the weight of the baby, which was slightly below normal. After talking with the doctor for a few moments, she went out with the intention of weighing the baby again, as Dr. S. thought she had made a mistake. I followed her through the closed door into an adjoining room and, looking over her shoulder, I read the weight of the baby, my own baby, 5 1/2 pounds, as she had just reported. Now I had not been in that hospital previously and I was not familiar with the floor plan, yet I saw it all as it actually was, and

what I saw and heard was verified later by attendant nurses and by my husband. The woman I had seen in the case room I recognized immediately when I saw her a week later. As her case had developed suddenly into an emergency and her own doctor was not available, my doctors had been asked to take charge and had switched jobs, Dr. L. being the accoucheur and Dr. S. the anesthetist.

This experience of waking up outside the physical body was so actual and natural that I did not feel strange at all, for I found myself in a super-physical body the exact duplicate of the physical. It was the same in height, breadth, thickness and form. It had the equivalent of the five senses. I saw objects and persons in front of me but not behind me. I heard what was being said and done behind me but I did not see who or what was there until I turned around. I was out of the body in an objective way and not as a mental projection. A period of unconsciousness preceded my passing out of the body and also my returning to it. This was because the physical body was not functioning properly. The first period must have been quite a long one, over an hour I should think. The second one was only a few moments. With a sound as of rushing wind and a feeling that I was wanted somewhere and trying hard to respond, my senses began slowly to function; first hearing as from a great distance, then the rushing sound and immediately the sense of touch, then sight. I did not recall this experience as one recalls even the most vivid dream. The recollection did not gradually emerge; it was never for a moment submerged. The periods of blank unconsciousness were due to the failure of the blood supply to the organs of sense. In the first instance, consciousness returned outside the physical body and took up the continuity at the place where it had stopped. What had taken place in my physical environment meantime, at least a period of an hour, was not an experience affecting my consciousness and so did not exist for me. Similarly, on the return to the physical, consciousness took up the thread of memory, not where the physical consciousness had stopped, but where the etheric consciousness had stopped.²

One might think that such an experience as this would change one's religious outlook, but then it was not greatly different from my understanding of Paul's statement in his letter to the church at Corinth that "there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." I did think to myself, if death is like that, it is very simple; nothing to be afraid of or to dread. I was puzzled that I had seen only people and things in the physical world. This is the borderland condition between this life and the next, in which one sees, and in fact is substantially present in the place or circumstance that has one's attention.

When my little son died on the third day, I wondered where and in what circumstances he had awakened and who would give him such love as he had left behind on earth; but it never occurred to me that it was possible to find out. I just concluded that if I did not know the answers to such questions no one else did,

² The "etheric consciousness" for Mrs. Park was a dimension of substance midway between the physical and the higher spiritual levels—a kind a mediating ground between waking consciousness and our awareness of the spirit world.

either. So the amazement of my out-of-the-body experience and the hurt of my bereavement slipped gradually into the background of memory.

My father and mother too, although they were profoundly impressed at the time I related my experience to them, seemed later to have forgotten about it, or it may be that they had not grasped its full significance. This was the case with my father, I know, because when he came to the end of his earthly sojourn he was still thinking of death as a total unconsciousness and not as an awakening in an ethereal body.

Then, too, one might think I would have been stimulated to enquire into psychic things, but I was not. My life flowed on just in the same channels as before.

In the fall of 1924, another incident happened which made me aware of the reality of an unseen world and life surrounding this one. In May of that year my husband and I, with our little son, had moved to Westville where we had taken a furnished house on a six-months' lease. We had wanted an unfurnished place, but houses for rent were very scarce and this was the most suitable place available. The owners, an elderly couple, planned to spend several months visiting around among their married sons and daughters. Mrs. C. was in very poor health, and it was hoped she would benefit from rest and pleasant visits with her family.

Our lease was about up when there arrived one Friday morning a letter from Mrs. C. saying she was feeling so much better she had decided to stay on where she was at the home of one of her daughters, and would like us to continue our tenancy for another three months, if possible. The writing was firm and there was nothing in the letter to indicate that the lady was in a critical state of health. It was quite a relief to me to know that we would not have to go house-hunting again for a month or two at any rate. I took it for granted that Mrs. C. was really recovering. That was about 9:30 in the morning. I had planned to clean out the kitchen cupboards that day.

They were the old-fashioned kind going right up to the ceiling, and there were a lot of dishes and odds and ends belonging to Mrs. C. on the top shelves. By 1:30 p.m. the cleaning-out part was all finished, and I was ready to begin putting the things back in place again. My little boy had had a snack in the middle of the morning, and was hungry again. There was a pan of soup simmering on the stove, and he was sitting in his own place at the table expectantly. I was hungry too, and ready to call a halt for lunch. I picked up a dish that was handy—it was one of Mrs. C.'s from the top shelves—intending to fill it with the soup. Halfway down the length of the kitchen an invisible hand took hold of my wrist—the pressure of two fingers and a thumb was quite distinct—and an invisible force held me rooted where I stood. I felt instantly that the owner of the invisible fingers was Mrs. C. It was a battle of wills for a moment, and then the holding force faded away and I was able to move toward the stove and get the soup.

This experience was rather upsetting. I did not relish the possibility of a similar encounter at night—it was startling enough in broad daylight. Mrs. C. had been

devoted to her family and her home, and the walls of every room were hung with photos and portraits of all sizes. I had never liked this, and after my ghostly experience I liked it still less. It occurred to me that these family likenesses might be a special psychic attraction, so I went from room to room that same day and gathered them all up and stacked them in an empty closet in the spare bedroom where other things of Mrs. C. were stored. As I shut the door I said, "There, Mrs. C., if you want to look at your family portraits they're all in there and there's no need for you to go wandering all over the house." It seems rather silly at this remote date but it helped me at the time. I told no one about this experience for several weeks as I felt it was bad enough to have it happen, but to be laughed at would be just too much. I told my husband I was tired of looking at Mrs. C.'s family art gallery, which was true enough even if it did not tell the immediate and urgent reason. The next morning my neighbor asked if we had heard the news about Mrs. C. "What news?" I asked, but knew in myself what it would be. Mrs. C. had passed away in the very early hours of that Saturday morning. I was wrong in concluding that at the time I had felt the hand pressure she had already passed away. At that time she had fallen into a deep coma but had rallied a little later on.

This reminder of the reality of an unseen world just beyond this life was not a pleasant experience. My own excursion over the border in 1922 had been quite pleasant but I did not enjoy the situation in reverse. The thought that there was an unseen world all around in which persons newly departed or about to depart this life could, and probably did, move about unrestricted by walls and doors, invading the privacy of comparative strangers was very disturbing. The idea of Heaven I had as a child was different. The people I then envisioned as "lookers-on" were friends and well-wishers even though they were from the remote past, to whom my love went out as to an ideal company of spiritual guardians. But this incident of the soup plate was an intrusion. After a week or two I took courage and spoke of it to my husband. To my great relief he did not laugh at me or belittle the incident and my reaction to it. He looked at the matter much as I had myself, and thought my action in removing the photos and portraits a rather sensible thing to do. We stayed on in that house for another year, and there were no more visitations.

About this same period I had a very clear double-dream which I felt certain was a warning of the approaching departure from this life of a very dear old friend in England. This dream, however, has no bearing upon my awareness of the psychic body, so I will not go into any details at this point. It came around Easter, probably 1925. I asked an acquaintance who subscribed to the London *Musical Times* to look out for any mention of my friend's demise. This came in November, a small paragraph stating that he had passed away after an illness of several months. This was what I had expected from the content and nature of the two dreams.

About Easter, 1929, I had a very remarkable daytime vision; but this, like the dreams just referred to, has no bearing on the existence of the psychic body and I will deal with it later on. In 1930 or thereabouts—such records as I kept in those days were spasmodic and undated—I began to find myself occasionally upon waking in an unusual posture. As far back as I can remember, I have always slept

curled up. Any attempt to lie on my back or straight out, as in some sicknesses I have been obliged to do, gives me a rigid, uncomfortable feeling and prevents me from sleeping. The posture in which I occasionally found myself on waking was all the more remarkable. I would be flat on my back, my feet crossed one over the other and my hands crossed on my breast, for all the world like an effigy on a medieval tombstone. Accompanying this posture was an exquisite sense of health and happiness, a most delightful and indescribable state of being bathed in happiness through and through. Whenever this occurred my mind would be, for a few seconds, a complete blank, as though the slate of memory had been wiped clean. I had no recollection whatever on these occasions of having dreamed, and for a split second my own room and furniture seemed unfamiliar. Dream experiences in more recent years provide a partial explanation of this phenomenon, but we will defer the explanations until later. At the time this was happening I had not the faintest idea why or how.

Then came my first experience of leaving the physical body voluntarily and consciously during sleep. I had lain down for an afternoon nap. I woke in the psychic body and stepped out of my sleeping body into the past. From the courtyard of a medieval castle I climbed an outside stairway to a small, dirty and cheerless room. It was bare of furniture, except for a rough settle against one wall. It had a rather primitive built-in fireplace. I returned from this astral journey into the past, laid myself down upon my sleeping body and melted into it. There was no distress or emotion other than a pleasant curiosity in this experience while it lasted, but on waking I did not like it at all. Looking back from the vantage point of my present understanding, it seems as though someone in the relation of a spiritual guardian kept trying to get me to develop my psychic awareness, and every time he succeeded in extending my contacts I would rush to slam the door of my consciousness and put up the shutters. Perhaps I have as much courage and faith as most. My fears were due principally, I think, to lack of understanding; and of course there was no one in my physical environment who knew any more than I did myself.

To sum up my progress at this point: I knew of the existence of the psychic body. I suspected it had something to do with the dream experiences, and I was not interested in the idea of psychic contacts and communication.

CHAPTER 3

FIRST EXPERIENCES IN DREAM TRAVEL

There have been many experiments in recent years in telepathic communication, some on a very large scale. It would be interesting to have a combined report on all these so that some conclusions might be arrived at regarding the laws or principles common to the various types, because there appears to be more than one way of perceiving things telepathically. One is by projection of the psychic body during sleep; another is by being in sympathetic unity with some living person participating in the events or at the place seen; and still another is by psychic impression from someone in the life beyond death.

The only way I have been able to judge whether on those occasions, when I have perceived sounds and scenes at a distance, I have been in the psychic body or perceiving through the mind of some person physically present, is by noting whether I was taking part in what was going on or whether I was an unnoticed and apparently invisible onlooker.

When our son went overseas with the R.C.A.F., it was many weeks before we heard that he had arrived in the south of England. Then a letter came saying he would be shortly getting two weeks' leave and would be visiting his father's relatives. Well, there was another gap in the arrival of mail and we were wondering what was happening. Then one Sunday morning I woke with the certain knowledge that he was at that moment visiting his aunt. I told my husband immediately. "That's impossible," was his response. "But I've just seen him sitting down to Sunday tea at your sister's," I asserted. My husband was unconvinced. He was quite sure this could not be. He argued that our son's leave was past by several weeks and therefore he could not be in G. at that date. But at noon a telegram arrived from him saying he was at his aunt's. A letter followed in due course explaining that on his first leave, immediately on his arrival at G., he had had to go into hospital for observation. His illness turned out to be of a minor nature but delayed by a month his intended visit with relatives. This explained how he came to be still in G. when in the ordinary course of events he would have been at his base in the south of England or at a new posting.

I wrote telling him what I had seen and heard; that just before waking on that particular Sunday I had been in an upstairs flat which I was sure was his aunt's place, as I had seen her and her daughters and recognized them from photos. I described the scene as I had experienced it. The table was laid for tea and two of the girls were seated. The other one, who seemed to have no chair to sit on, fetched what looked like a box or low stool with a tapestry cushion on top. It was much too low and she was making the others laugh with her pantomime of eating from this awkward position. Her mother, who was standing with the teapot in her hand ready to pour tea, told her she had better fetch another chair. My son, who had taken off his tunic and was in his regulation shirt and black tie, was sitting with another young man on the far side of the table. It seemed a very lively and happy Sunday teatime gathering.

Our son's answer to this letter corroborated everything I had seen and heard. He explained that the stool with the tapestry top was a hassock. Well, that was a close enough description, and needless to say I still have his letter.

Now that was actual "astral travel," as it is called by some people, because I stood in that room as an invisible outsider, yet thousands of miles distant from my physical body in a place quite strange to me. I did not see it through the eyes or senses of any person there. I saw and heard everything and everyone objectively and at the exact time the scene was taking place, making allowance for the difference in times at each place.

The first experience I had of such dream-travel was at the unveiling of the Holyrood Memorial by Edward, then Prince of Wales, following the First World War. I was present at this ceremony in the psychic body as one among hundreds of spectators in the open courtyard, and was quite surprised to discover that no one around seemed aware of me.

Then, in the same way, I was present at a state ball at Buckingham Palace during the reign of King George V. Both these experiences revealed to me in great detail scenes with which I was unfamiliar and events which I was unaware were pending. Unfortunately, I made no record of my dream-travels at that time and the details have faded from my mind. I do know that two or three weeks later I read accounts in the London and Scottish illustrated papers which tallied closely with what I had seen at the time of the actual events. Several years later I read an article on Buckingham Palace, illustrated with photos and describing the rooms I had seen. These were specially designed so that one room could be opened right out into another for the holding of large state assemblies such as the one I had witnessed.

There were several other dreams of this kind connected with the Royal Family, but I have no means of verifying them, so I am not including them in these accounts of actual dream travel.

Another type of dream travel which has occurred in recent years appears to have taken place by the help of persons in the life beyond death. In these the scenes observed were actual in effect though perhaps not in time, and contained extra information imposed upon the original. One of the most remarkable of these concerns the terrible ordeal of Captain Eddie Rickenbacker and his companions when their plane crashed far out in the Pacific. The dream occurred before it was known that the plane was in difficulties about 6 A.M. P.S.T., October 22, 1942.³ I saw a plane coming down in a curious, soundless glide as though without power. It was coming down the side of what looked like a long, steep roof. There was no scenery or other background visible. To avoid the tedious business of checking

³ Mrs. Park's unpublished correspondence contains a letter from Eddie Rickenbacker corroborating how her account of the details of these events corresponded with his experience of receiving invisible help during his ordeal in the Pacific. She first wrote him on Feb. 4, 1943 and he replied in April of that year.

back on the various items later, I will explain each detail as I go along, but it must be remembered that the explanations have been added to the original record in the light of the story of Captain Rickenbacker and his companions after their rescue. To continue: the steep slope, which looked to me like a long high roof, was the immense rolling wave on which the pilot so skillfully brought the plane down. This scene faded out, showing that what I had seen was upon a different wavelength either of time or of consciousness from that which followed. After a short blank I found myself in a room where there were several men. There was a woman standing near and a little behind me. She was in a floor-length robe of plain gray stuff, by which I knew she was from the world beyond death. I knew that the men had come down in the plane I had seen previously, and that they were in a dangerous situation, though I did not understand the exact nature of the danger. One of the men seemed to have the idea of phoning for help. I saw him and another heavily built man getting into a sort of conveyance, which I thought was a small, low, open car. While they were trying to get this conveyance started, another man was calling out advice and some kind of warning. The men appeared to go out in this conveyance through the side of the room. What I was actually seeing was the men getting into and floating one of the rubber boats. The impression I had that one of the men wanted to phone for help could indicate that he was the wireless operator, or it could relate symbolically to the man who, according to later reports, gave himself to reading the Bible and praying. I turned to look at the man who had called out the warning. He was an exceptionally tall man. He had a long face and a high forehead, with a small lock of hair right in the front, and bushy eyebrows. I saw this man quite distinctly. The woman who was with me told me his name, the spelling of which I could not figure out after waking, but thought it had sounded German. I saw this man standing on what looked like a long high platform attached to the room we were in. It had large letters or figures on it—so large that I could not see their entire outline and so could not read them. The man looked very anxious and tense. I saw him take a packet of cigarettes out of one of his pockets. This was after the other men had gone away. The platform with the large writing on it was of course the wing of the plane, and Captain Rickenbacker was the man I saw. He referred to that packet of cigarettes in his account of what had happened, which account was not published until January, 1943. This scene also faded out, and I then saw a man with dark wavy hair handing over three oranges to the men I had seen at first. I thought there were four really, but one was rotten. The man had something white on below his jacket. He said something about being rationed and that the oranges were all he had. I thought from this that he must be a grocer and that the white garment was an apron. I also thought that there would not be much food for the men in the oranges, as they were small and wizened. This incident of the rationed oranges was also mentioned in Captain Rickenbacker's story, and he stated too that only he and Captain Adamson had been fully clothed. So what I took to be a white apron must have been the man's underclothing.

The woman who was with me was tall and well built, with strong, broad shoulders. I thought she must be a European, as she looked much too heavily built to be British or American. I knew at the time from the style and color of her dress that she was from the astral world immediately beyond death. She seemed to be closely linked with one of the men whom I saw, but which one I do not know.

The day following this experience, when I picked up the morning paper, I saw there on the front page a large photo of the tall man I had seen— Captain Eddie Rickenbacker. Of course, there was no account of the tragedy, because it was not known then what had happened, only that the plane was overdue and had not been heard from for many hours.

Another experience, this also a partly relayed type, occurred on Sunday, December 24, 1944. I found myself on a beach beside the sea with a tall woman who reminded me of a friend of long-standing. As this friend was still in the flesh, I know that it was not she, but it could have been a close relative of hers. The woman has been with me on astral flights many times, but she has not given me any clue to her identity. She seemed to be afraid of the water on my account, and I was explaining to her that I enjoyed investigating in it. This part of the experience appears to refer to my psychic adventures. In the company of this lady I visited a friend in England and the scene observed was corroborated later in every detail, as in the other instances of astral travel previously related. This friend was with a group of young men, one of whom was lying on a bed. He had a very bad cough, which I thought might indicate a serious health condition. The other young men were annoyed at his continual coughing, and one of them threw a pillow at him. My friend informed me by letter that I had witnessed an actual scene. On waking I saw, while my eyes were still closed, an Egyptian name spelled out in large block letters. I think it possible that this may have been the earth-life name of the man referred to hereafter as “The Teacher,” but as I did not see or hear him on this occasion I cannot say of a certainty that it is so.⁴

⁴ Viewing my experience as a whole, I have come to the conclusion that the teaching only began with the manifestation of this person as “The Teacher” and that the title refers to the Holy Spirit manifested in several different spirit-guides, according to the nature of the instruction called for as I have progressed. Olga Park

CHAPTER 4

A DAYTIME VISION AND ITS EFFECTS

Before I launch into a description of this vision I must go back over the years and trace the outline of my religious experience and outlook up to and including the conditions, inner and outer, at the time the vision occurred.

My parents were Wesleyan Methodists. My father had been christened in the parish church of his native village, his parents and grandparents were buried in its churchyard, but that was before the Wesleyan chapel was built. My mother's family too, with the exception of one sister, were Wesleyans. So I was brought up a Wesleyan. What I have learned from others of their early impressions of religious teaching and worship makes me realize how very fortunate I was in my early teachers. Others who attended the same chapel and school do not seem to have been so well instructed. My thoughts often go out in grateful love to those who first taught me the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, and who instructed me in the truth and beauty of the "Word of the Lord." I received by far the most of this at day school.

I was naturally artistic, and I suppose my artistic sense and my religious sense were interwoven. Even as a small child, without knowledge of other ways and styles, I had a strong dislike for the heavy cloth dresses, boned and padded and buttoned as they were in that period, and for the horsehair furniture and over-draped mantel shelves, and most of all for the rostrum and gallery style of nonconformist chapels with their conventional dado-patterned walls and ceilings.

Opposite my childhood home there was a Benedictine abbey and around the corner was St. Thomas' Church. At every hour of the day from early morning to night the abbey bell tolled for prayers, and people went hurrying past to this Anglo-Catholic church. I was very curious about a religion in which worship and prayer appeared to be so much more a part of every day's business than in the church of my parents. This is not a reflection on my father and mother or on their religion. They believed in prayer and practiced it daily, but their simple devotions were different from this church-attendance type. St. Thomas' was always open, and occasionally I went inside. I liked the stillness, the alone-with-God feeling, the colorful figures on the stained-glass windows, the stories from the life of our Lord carved into the stone pillars.

One Christmas two cousins came to visit us, and I begged off my regular Sunday school and went with them to the parish church. That simple but worshipful service made a lasting impression upon me, and today I have only to tune myself back to that Christmas Sunday to hear the voices of the boy choristers singing, "See Amid the Winter Snow." My father was much concerned about my preference for the Church of England service, and I suppose he was not altogether ignorant of my little visits to St. Thomas', though I had no deep inclination to the Anglican faith and ways. He gave me a very serious talk in which he explained that I was not old enough to know all that was involved in the choice between one type of

church and another. He said that until I was of age to take over all the decisions of my own life he expected me to attend the church which he judged right according to his conscience. As I grew older, however, I did take advantage of visits and holidays to attend church with my cousins. Then, shortly before my marriage, I began to attend an Anglican church in the suburbs of the Canadian city where we lived, and a few months later I was confirmed there.

As I related earlier in this narrative, we moved to Westville in 1924.⁵ Wherever we had lived I had always volunteered for Sunday-school teaching, and I did so here also. Then after a few months I joined the choir. The care of my home and these church activities kept me fully occupied, but I was not so busy that I had no time to read and to think, and I was really doing some hard thinking. Largely as a result of my early environment I was inclined to be narrowly dogmatic and to take the Scriptures quite literally. The young vicar of the church where I was confirmed had tried unsuccessfully to correct this. I am ashamed now when I look back to some arguments I had with that earnest and intelligent young man. It was he who first astonished me by suggesting that no one passed into the presence of God at death or even into Heaven directly. The rector at Westville also went to work to broaden my views and improve my religious education, and he really succeeded in opening up the doors of prejudice which guarded the dogma of my religious belief. The unsettling of my church connection which followed was not his fault, but due to events and conditions around me at a time when my intellect was challenging the faith by which I lived. Troubled conditions developed in the church. The rector moved to another charge; changes were made in the Sunday school; our beloved organist-choirmaster died.⁶

All this occurred at a time when my faith in a personal God, in the Virgin birth, the virtue of the Christian sacraments and the literal inspiration of the Bible was undergoing a critical examination. At no time of my life have I been so unhappy and depressed as then, when my church life was in upheaval and the very foundations of my faith since early childhood were shaken. I had lost my implicit trust in God, and with it went my secret happiness, my sense of inner well-being and my belief in an ultimate good.

In addition to these personal, spiritual and social-religious problems, family and in-law problems were acute at that time, and my husband was much discouraged through lack of preferment in his professional career. He seemed to be in a niche where his years of conscientious service and experience went unnoticed. Recognition and advancement passed him by, and this discouragement was affecting his health.

This, then, was the background situation: from childhood my whole life and interest had hung between home and family on the one hand and church and artistic activity on the other. Now the whole structure seemed to be tottering. Looking back at the situation I can see that affairs were in a very minor and

⁵ An area in Vancouver now known as Kerrisdale.

⁶ Mrs. Park's eventual reconciliation with the Rector through an "out-of-the-body" experience is described in *An Open Door*.

temporary depression, but my sense of hopelessness came from the breaking up of the religious ideas upon which my whole faith in God and life had hitherto depended. The core of my prayer-life was shattered.

Upon this inner negativism and outer chaos there flashed a remarkable daytime vision. I use the word “flashed” purposely, because the vision appeared to be in what one of my invisible friends has called “the middle of time.” I was busy ironing when, suddenly, I was in a large church of cathedral style, with side chapels. It was unlike any church I had ever heard of. On my left was a small chapel for prayer and meditation. The walls were covered with murals depicting scenes from the life of our Lord. One of these, which I noticed particularly, was the Transfiguration. In the centre of the chapel was a single prie-dieu. The atmosphere of this chapel was rarefied as though innumerable prayers and meditations had created a spiritual current that swept the soul upwards and bathed it in a healing and exalting peace.

The cathedral had a large nave, and there were the usual lectern and Bible; but there was no pulpit and there was no visible altar. In the chancel at the place where I expected to see the altar was a plain door, and over the door was this inscription: “If any man thirst let him come unto me.”

There were two chapels on the right of the nave. The one nearest the chancel I can only describe as a “consultorium,” for in it were the records of all the Christian witnesses and the experiences of all the Saints. I had the impression that this room of witness, as it were, was in the charge of a tall man in the plain brown habit of a Roman Catholic monk. I did not see him but I had the inward impression of his being there. (The indefiniteness of this figure was probably due to its being a projection of the person giving me the vision.)

On the right of the nave, but nearer the place where I had entered, was a baptistery. The “font” was in the floor, and was obviously for adult baptism, but the room was so small that I judged it could only be used for single and private baptism.

In describing this vision I am obliged to use language which gives the impression of time and place, as though I entered the church and walked around. Actually it was timeless. I was aware of the whole and of every separate part and detail all at once, and there seemed to be an unseen guide with me of whom I asked questions, for I was astonished by the unusualness of what I saw. At last I exclaimed aloud—that is physically, “What church is this?” thinking in my mind it must represent some sect I had never heard of. “It is the Church of our Lord,” replied the voice of the unseen guide, and so the vision vanished and I was ironing in my home just where I had been when the vision broke through the barriers of the earthly consciousness. Never since have I had a waking vision of such magnitude and with such detail.⁷

For many weeks afterwards I was quite overawed when I thought of this

⁷ This vision is also described in *An Open Door*.

experience. It seemed so like a vision one might expect to be granted a saint or a recluse, and, of course, I was not the latter and I knew very well I was not the former. I was completely puzzled as to its meaning and its purpose. I felt within myself that something was expected of me, but what that something was I had not the faintest idea.

Every psychic experience produces a vital change within. It means that something has been added to the "I know" within by direct instead of the normal indirect means. And this psychic vision had made me inwardly aware of an ideal of which I was outwardly unconscious. From then on, no church service satisfied me. They were all alike barren of that which I had in a split second of time experienced. My close associates had already left the church where I had been active for five years or more, and I left too.

For three years I had no church home, and during that time I set myself to the intensive study of the gospels in the hope that I might find there some clue to the interpretation of the vision. Unconsciously, I was looking at it from the space-time aspect of the earthly mind, and thinking, "If the vision-church is the 'Church of our Lord,' as the voice said, then all the churches I have known must be wrong."

Then one day I learned from a friend that the Unitarian Church was in need of an organist, and I thought, "Here is a job to do, anyway." I knew very little about the Unitarian viewpoint, and on enquiry I was told they were "seekers after spiritual truth." Well, that was my goal, too, and their "Unitarianism" seemed to me to run parallel with my own rebellion against a too literal interpretation of Christian doctrine. So for a short time I was organist for their services. I was happy in my office, which to me was a spiritual service, but I was not happy in my association with persons of that faith. My sojourn among them taught me many things I could not otherwise have known. I learned, too, that unity is a thing of the spirit, not the mind, and that the attitude known as "liberalism" means only that people agree to listen to the other fellow's ideas for the privilege of expressing their own in turn; but when the talk is all over, no new creation arises because no synthesis has been arrived at.

The realization of what I was really seeking was to dawn upon me later. Meanwhile, I was still cherishing in my heart the vision I had for an instant felt and seen. I had the idea that someday, somewhere I should hear of or find such a church. One or two close friends to whom I spoke of the vision had suggestions of their own to offer. One thought it represented a unity of Christian sects; another thought it paralleled an experiment that had been tried in England; another, a particular sect in the U.S.A. My father thought it was a Jewish synagogue. These various suggestions recall the warning of Our Lord about the manner of His second coming: "If any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there'—believe it not...Wherefore if they shall say unto you, 'Behold, he is in the desert'—go not forth; 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers'—believe it not."

I was looking outwardly for something that was inward. I know now that there is no such church, if one means by that a building or a religious organization. The vision represented an experience and a work, my experience and my spiritual

work, and without doubt he who brought the vision is he who appears later in these records in the vision of the seven-branched candlestick.

CHAPTER 5

PSYCHIC INTRUSIONS

To most of us here in the physical realm all psychic incidents appear to be intrusions because they burst through upon one unexpectedly and often without any conscious invitation. This unpredictable factor can never be wholly eliminated, though the setting of a place and time for the “quietness” favorable to reception does, by opening a regular channel, do away with the irregular ones. If there is a door where visitors can knock or ring for admittance there will be no need for them to climb through a window.

Psychic manifestations may be pleasant or again they may be unpleasant. I have experienced both kinds under various conditions, so that I have come to the conclusion that one’s own wishes and inclinations, religious beliefs and disbeliefs are not the factors which determine whether one develops psychic sensitivity or not, or what the nature or quality of any particular manifestation will be. Especially is this so in the early stages of psychic awareness. After a time the level of reception becomes settled and an organized group of spirit-helpers is attracted, among whom there is always a “doorkeeper.”

It has been my happy experience to receive only the most exalted inspiration and comfort at my regular times of daily prayer, so that I can only conclude that regularity of time and place for the practice of spiritual aspiration does help the spirit-workers to establish protected conditions. Some may be surprised at the implication that any but the most spiritual kind of communication could come as one prayed, but it is possible, for prayer is a psychic state. In fact, once the psychic body has begun to be sensitive anyone over the border can direct an impression to it or upon it, just as a stranger in the Street may address one unexpectedly or a rude child may make an impertinent remark. The saints and hermits of old suffered much mental distress through their ignorance of the psychic laws. They all testified to psychic intrusions and supposed them to be temptations of the devil, whereas they themselves and their way of life were the cause.

The unpleasant intrusions which I experienced in the early days of my unfolding were not from “unclean spirits” in the Biblical sense, but from persons in the world of spirit who had not shed the forceful ideas and ways of their earth life. The first of this type occurred one evening following attendance at an Oxford Group meeting.

I had gone at the invitation of a friend. It was a gathering of ladies—all strangers to me. We sat in a circle. The leader asked someone to pray and then, following around the circle, each one gave her testimony exactly as the Wesleyan Methodists used to do at the weekly class meetings I had sometimes attended with my father when I was a child. There was an overwhelming pressure of emotion, and the more sensitive persons were overcome and melted into tears. I was one of them. It is at this point in a revival meeting that people begin confessing their sins. I had

nothing spectacular to confess and nothing urgent to “share,” as the Oxford Groupers put it, except that I had never loved our Lord half enough for all His love to me. I went home thoroughly disgusted with myself for such emotionalism. Of course, I did not then understand the psychic conditions and forces involved in such a meeting. That same evening, while I was busy at my sewing machine, a hand was laid over mine, forcibly interrupting what I was doing, and a man’s voice said, “Give your testimony to the movement in the church you attend.” This made me angry, first at the force opposing my will and interrupting what I was doing, and second at the command—it was a command and not a request—to impose a similar force upon others. I refused, saying mentally, “I shall do nothing of the kind. They have their own faith. Why should I impose the ideas of the Group movement on them?” So the impingement faded away. I was much shaken by this incident, as it was obviously an “influence” I had picked up at the Group meeting. It caused me to wonder about the underlying forces at work in such movements. Since then, I have come to the conclusion that no matter how good the intention of the organizers or how excellent the characters of the individuals assembled, such gatherings provide conditions highly favorable to erratic psychic manifestations.

The second incident also happened during an evening, but on this occasion my husband and I with one or two friends were sitting in front of the fire talking about this and that, and the talk drifted back to Sunday-school days and the teaching received, especially in relation to the life after death. I do not remember all the details, except that I was surprised to find that neither of our friends had been taught to believe in a self-conscious life beyond death functioning through a spiritual body. Their idea of life apart from the physical body seemed to be of spirit without form or substance or anything recognizable as individuality. This shocked me greatly, as it robbed a large part of Christian worship, its hymns and Scripture, of meaning. Of course, such a vague world of spirit could not possibly communicate with us here in human fashion, and I think that as far as one of our guests was concerned the wish was father to the thought. Since we were relating what we had been taught in Sunday school, I ventured to tell my own impressions but these did not weigh at all against the opinions already voiced. I thought it best to say as little as possible under these conditions and went on quietly with my knitting. Then, while the guest referred to was still talking, a strong hand gripped my left wrist and there was a heavy impingement on my back between the shoulder blades. I tried to will it to go, but it did not budge. I prayed for help and presently the hand was withdrawn and the weight lifted. I said nothing of this at the time. In my own mind I was convinced that the intruder was a deceased relative of the lady who had been speaking. It could well be that he was attracted by the nature of the discussion and anxious to offset her argument with a little firsthand evidence of his own.

Both these incidents brought with them a heavy, forceful and depressing condition which was most disagreeable. In contrast to them there were others, during the same general period, of a highly spiritual character. These occurred in a little room which I had set aside for my own use, where I could study or write or have strict privacy for my personal devotions. This room, after a short time, acquired a spiritual atmosphere such as one feels in a quiet church. It was not a

condition which I just imagined or which arose merely as a reflex of my own mind, for whenever I was perturbed or anxious, just to enter that room was to feel a benediction that restored my peace of mind. Many a time at the close of a strenuous day I have felt as I knelt to pray the touch of etheric hands as soft as the caress of butterflies' wings, yet with great strength, making sweeping strokes upwards and outwards, drawing my tiredness away, and leaving in its stead a healing and heavenly peace. I did not realize it then but actually I had begun to build the first side chapel in the sacred temple of my vision.

Kneeling in the little room one Sunday morning early, I saw psychically a hand—a very finely formed hand—holding out to me the sacred paten.

Then one time when my mother had come to stay with us to rest and regain her strength after an illness, my psychic forces became greatly depleted and I felt as though my life energies were flowing out at the solar plexus. I began to feel exhausted to the verge of collapse, and I went into my little sanctuary and knelt down, saying, "Dear Lord, what shall I do?" Immediately a man's voice, not at all like the one who had tried to impose his will on mine, said with distinctness and authority, yet without any suggestion of compulsion, "If you will it to stop, it *will* stop." I was startled, but not too startled to try the advice. I willed the psychic flow to stop, and it stopped the same instant.

These incidents, the latter especially, introduced a new element into my conception of prayer. Here I had called out to our Lord and a man had answered. I knew it was not God who had spoken to me direct. Of course, saints and ascetics of all ages have declared that God spoke to them, but I was quite sure the person who had spoken to me was not God nor even the Lord Jesus. The hands that I had felt draw out the hurts and fatigue of daily living impressed me as being a woman's. The hand that had held the paten had been a man's, but it was a long, slender hand with delicately formed fingers, south European perhaps, certainly not British—the hand of a scholar, an aristocrat or a recluse.

These particular intrusions which took place during prayer were exceedingly pleasant and brought an atmosphere of peace and spiritual exaltation; demonstrations of an inner plane of life where beings in all things similar to us on earth but having superior knowledge and psychic skill ministered with spiritual power to "them that call upon the name of the Lord." This could only mean that God was served for the answering of our prayers by the "spirits of the just made perfect." The forceful type of intrusion meant that "unprogressed" spirits also were able to impress their wills upon men, but this idea was not so strange to my religious conceptions as that the spirits of the just were angelic messengers.

It must be remembered that, at the time these incidents were breaking through, I had not read any psychic literature, that I was not seeking psychic unfoldment, and that I knew nothing of the laws governing psychic phenomena nor of the explanations of spiritualists.

Then a close relative became interested in psychic phenomena and the possibility of spirit-communication—not through me, as in fact he was not aware

of my experiences, but through a friend in whose family there was a spiritualist medium. He spoke to me about psychic things, and I was keen to find, if possible, an explanation of my personal experiences; but the disagreeable nature of some of them had set me against the idea of free traffic with the unseen world. He soon sensed that I was afraid of becoming too open to psychic impressions and asked me why. I explained that I objected to my privacy being invaded by uninvited and possibly undesirable persons at any hour of the day or night, irrespective of where I was or what I was doing, and to the impingement upon me of objectionable psychic conditions apparently beyond the control of my will. He agreed with my objections in part, but thought the disagreeable conditions could be overcome only as we learned more about psychic manifestations and the laws that governed them; that if one had a clear conscience and a good intention the only harm that could come from psychic contacts would be by reason of ignorance; and for himself he had concluded that the best course was to find out all possible on psychic matters from books and from the spiritualists who had gained knowledge by experience.

CHAPTER 6

THE RELATION OF THE LIFE BEYOND DEATH TO THIS PRESENT LIFE

Up to this point no one will have had any great difficulty in going along with me over the background of my psychic experience. All that has happened, so far, has taken place in this world, as though the door between it and the next had opened inwards and a hand or a picture or a person had come through to me on this side; but much that follows is as though the door opened the other way—outwards into the life after death—and it is going to be more difficult to understand. However, I will do my best to make it intelligible, because it does help in the living of this life to realize what that next life is like and to know that happiness there depends on a right attitude here. The Scriptures testify to this, and the Christian Church is constantly preaching it, but for people to know it is a different matter.

Most people are in a mental fog with regard to the nature of the next life. They may believe in a heavenly world as the home of those who have passed away from this one, but it is only an accepted belief and a very vague one at that. They do not begin to visualize it. In their conception it is a strange non-substantial world with formless spirits floating around; and some things which I shall describe presently may seem to support that conception, but I do want to make it clear that we must not think of that world as being unsubstantial to those who live in it. It may seem unsubstantial to us because we are insulated by a physical body which makes this physical world temporarily substantial to the indwelling spiritual self. Released from the physical body, the soul finds the physical world increasingly unreal and the etheric world the real and substantial one. The next thing we must realize is that it is not a “shadow-show” world. The people there are just as real and just as human as the people here. Those who have not seen and talked with the people in that other life tend to think of them in the past tense and after a while to fictionalize them.

Another attitude which is a barrier to understanding that world is the awe which Christians feel towards it as the “throne of God” or the “seat of His judgment.” You see, at the same time that we are thinking of it as non-substantial, we are also thinking of it in terms of time and location; as though God were more there than here. And we think of the apostles and saints as being with God in the sense of being in the same place.

It is right and proper that we should have reverence for the saints—the great spiritual victors—for to get one glimpse, one small ray of the presence of one of them, fills one with a sense of holiness that never fades; but we must never think of even the most exalted, or even of our Lord Himself, as remote or as having lost any of their human characteristics. And this applies to our thought of, and attitude to, those nearest and dearest to us who have passed into that life beyond. They have not become solemn-faced saints in the remoteness of portraits on canvas or glass; and they have not lost interest in us or in our ways and conditions, nor have they changed in their own essential interests. It is true that Christ and those who

dwell with Him are themselves transcended far above the realms of personal attachment and temporal interests. For them love itself rests upon unity with the will and purpose of God, but they have not lost any of their feeling for us in our present way of life, nor the realization of what personal attachments mean to us, nor how important they are to our full development. And for our loved ones—even those who have been many years of our earth-time over there—they are just as they were here, except that they are living in conditions which seem very strange to us. It is not a strange way of life to them, because they are part of it.

The situation of one trying to describe that world is somewhat as though one visited a foreign country in which conditions were so different—gravity, density, refraction, etc.—that one could neither see nor hear except by special aids which adjusted one to the conditions temporarily. It might be a wonderful experience, and one might enjoy it perfectly oneself, but one would find it well nigh impossible to describe to others on one's return; and, in fact, it would be like trying to demonstrate one type of refraction by another. The result is distortion. As my dear mother said to me on one of her earliest visits from over there, "Such mutilated work!"

All the accounts of those who have told in detail what they have seen and heard in that life do read strangely, because what one sees of that life from this plane of consciousness is seen in things and ideas of this present life. There is a very close connection, of course, between the things we can perceive of that life and the actualities of it; but if we take everything literally and as from the standpoint of this life we shall not be able to get any true conception of conditions there at all. Many popular misconceptions of that life and its relation to this one have arisen through accepting accounts of visions and communications literally. Nevertheless, we are connected with that life and actually part of it right along, for just as the physical body corresponds to the physical world, the psychic body, which permeates and surrounds it, corresponds to, and is part of a psychic world. I would say also that we have a third, or spiritual, body corresponding to, and part of, a still more highly refined world, which Saint Paul calls the "third heaven." I am not altogether clear on this point, but those I have seen who have come from that exalted plane of consciousness have manifested in a sort of etheric shell or mask of their earth-life form. Behind this, the glorified spirit with human features and the form enveloped in flowing robes of pale golden light could be seen withdrawing from the shell at the end of the manifestation.

If we are functioning in all three bodies while here in this life we shall be making contact with all three worlds at one and the same time, for the "Kingdom of Heaven is within," as our Lord taught his disciples. Yet it has the equivalent of space and form in which those who have passed from this physical world live and move in mutual self-awareness and social relationships.

Comparatively few people are conscious of contact with the unseen worlds and their inhabitants. Some are vaguely aware of other-world impressions and feelings. I do not refer here to spiritualist mediumship, which functions by group concentration, but to the individual psychic awareness which is the fruit of spiritual growth. Some few function consciously in the psychic or soul world

during sleep, which is the way in which my own psychic sensitivity began. This occurred with me at the time that I became aware of the man named in these records—The Teacher. That is to say, I do not think my consciousness of that other world came involuntarily, but that it was induced by The Teacher directing his forces upon me as one person might shine a light upon another. There was never at any time any coercion of the will or forceful interference with, or possession of, the physical body.

My first contact with this man was on the occasion I have described in Chapter 2, when the white dove was struck by the hawk. I did not see him then face to face. I was only aware of him standing by. It was not until twenty-six years later that I saw him clearly and began to receive instruction from him.

In March 1940, I woke one morning with the recollection of having been in a strange place—a large room down the length of which was a special table on which were laid out in bas-relief maps of the Mediterranean and the civilizations which were cradled there. The whole thing impressed me as the image of a large symbolic man, with the head at Babylon or thereabouts and the limbs stretching down either side of the Mediterranean Sea. The temples of Egypt, Greece and Rome, as though representing the religious systems of those civilizations, stood out in miniature on this relief map.⁸

On waking I had only a hazy recollection of the instruction I had received but a very clear impression of the instructor, for he stood right before me to my waking sense, though my eyes were still closed, impressing his appearance upon me with his large magnetic eyes. He was of slight build, about five feet five inches in height, lean face, wide forehead, sallow complexion, large dark eyes and straight black hair not clipped short as we are accustomed to see a man's hair, but falling straight on either side of the head to the ear lobes; no hat or turban, a long, loose, collarless coat or cloak of dark blue cloth, voice of light baritone quality, manner serious and cultured. His English was perfectly spoken but in a careful, deliberate style. I noticed particularly a certain relaxed ease in his posture and movements characteristic of a man in holy orders or of one who leads a life of contemplation. He wore sandals.

My awareness of this Teacher was a red-letter day in my dream-experience. It would seem to have been carefully timed to usher in a new and very trying period of my life when many loved ones and acquaintances would be passing over the border into the life beyond. Without the help of The Teacher I should have been sad indeed, and perhaps I should have fallen a prey to some of the unprogressive influences often met with as the result of psychic overreaching.

Now at this time I had neighbors who talked along theosophical lines of “adepts” and “masters” who lived self-determined and self-extended lives in the remote fastness of Tibet, as though these were members of a monastic hierarchy in telepathic contact with world affairs, exercising occult influences upon them; none of which seemed to me sensible or desirable. But no one had told me that there

⁸ This experience was the basis for her book *Man, the Temple of God*.

were teachers in the realms of spirit whose particular mission was to instruct those of earth who might be ready in the “mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Nevertheless, I entered into this relationship with The Teacher with joy and confidence. It was a far cry from the time when I had first realized with astonishment that God sometimes answered prayer by the ministry of the “spirits of just men made perfect.”

CHAPTER 7

THE WORK OF THE TEACHER

The Teacher of whose work I am about to write was, in the terminology of spiritualism, a “guide.” At that time I had heard of the “guides” of spiritualist mediums, and supposed The Teacher to be one, though it must be remembered that when I first became aware of him I knew nothing whatever about spiritualist experience and terminology. My first contact with a medium came in an ordinary social way through mutual acquaintances, and through this medium I met other people of spiritualist experience. It was such a relief to find people who were not afraid of contact with the life beyond death, and who were undoubtedly experienced in psychic matters, that I made the mistake of supposing them to know more than they did and of consulting them about the interpretation of my private visions. My friends in spirit cautioned me about leaning on the interpretations of others, and The Teacher gave me one or two visions and spoken warnings to impress upon me that all mediums were not at the same spiritual level. “Do not despise your faculty of discrimination,” he said on one occasion; and when I was in some confusion, due to my failure to distinguish between psychic receptivity and spiritual enlightenment, he gave me vision after vision designed to explain the condition. So I came to understand that a medium is just a channel. The quality of what is received depends on the type of spirit communicators attracted by the earth-audience and by their environment.

The Teacher explained to me the law of the higher overcoming the lower; the Spirit of Christ overcoming the spirit of the material and temporal consciousness. This overcoming is not apparent in this present life to the materialistic mind, because the cycles of cause and effect cannot be seen whole; but in the spirit-realms, where time is eliminated, everything is seen in its proper relation to Divine law. If this law were fully understood and observed by professing Christians, the violence and greed and aggression all around us would melt away and the righteous way of life would be adequately protected without armies or atom bombs. In fidelity to this principle of the higher overcoming the lower, the Christian apostles and martyrs and the spiritual heroes of all faiths have laid down their lives with little prospect of immediate benefit to the spiritual conditions of their own times. How much bolder and more effective should our witness be to whom is available the help of the spiritual hosts of every race and age!

To the present day I am not certain of the identity of The Teacher.⁹ He has

⁹ At the time of this writing in the 1940's, Mrs. Park was not certain of the Teacher's identity, but by the time of writing *an Open Door* in the seventies she came to identify him with the one referred to in the Gospel of John as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” She also thought that this same person was the man who in his old age received the visions that formed the basis of the book of Revelation, John of Patoms. Early commentators and theologians identified the author of the fourth gospel with John the son of Zebedee, but Mrs. Park did not think that the source for John could have been a fisherman, because it was full of Greek concepts and could not have been written by an uneducated person. Recent scholarship suggests that the fourth Gospel, distinct from the synoptics in form and style, was written much later (between 88-90 A.D.). Mrs. Park often

always spoken of himself as “thy Teacher.” His work with me has been to acquaint me with the nature of the life beyond death and to assist me to construct a protected pathway upon which others besides myself can come and go safely. He is a person of great patience, strong concentration and unwavering spiritual judgment, with a masterly skill in the construction and presentation of allegorical tableaux.

When he first began to take me visiting in the life beyond death, it was not a totally conscious experience. There are several kinds of contact with that life of varying degrees of awareness. Some are just impressions, as of still pictures upon what my father and mother call “the psychic envelope.” Some are molds which if need be can be animated. These are built from the surplus psychic substance which forms the clothes of the soul-body.

Conditions in miniature can be built of this substance into which the consciousness can enter as into actual experience. Then there is the arising in the soul-body, to which I have referred in previous chapters. On some occasions I have risen consciously in the soul-body and returned consciously to the physical, but on my first visits with The Teacher I would fall asleep in the normal way and wake up in the etheric world just long enough to see something or somebody; and then I would be instantly awake in the physical, with the full recollection of having been out and of all that I had heard and seen.

On the first visit of this kind, I found myself in the etheric world walking beside the Teacher down a narrow passage, opening off which was a small room like a Sunday-school classroom. In this room a man was teaching a class of young boys from the Bible, which lay open on his knee. The man was an uncle by marriage on my mother’s side of the family, who had died at a ripe old age some months previous. In his later years this uncle had become very irresponsible, living away from his family, though he was very fond of them and not estranged from them at all. He was then very happy-go-lucky and too fond of his glass and the company that goes with it. My mother used to speak of him regretfully at times, saying he had been a very fine man in his early years and an earnest Christian; but that he had grown careless, getting wrapped up in business and in making money to the exclusion of spiritual things, and had drifted into the loose ways of his associates.

I stood looking in at the earnest scene before me a moment, and the Teacher said, “He made many mistakes but he is on the right road now.” And then I woke in bed with the consciousness that The Teacher was standing by.

Now the scene I have described of my uncle was to show me that he had gone back into the past to make a new beginning. You see, the life next after this is not a world of thought independent of feeling. It is a world whose structure is in soul-substance; a world of embodied feelings and desires. One finds there what one

commented on its difference from the synoptics and suggested that particular passages must have been added at a later time by the early Church. She felt that its author or the source for its central account must have been an educated Jewish man with access to Greek learning, possibly a priest or someone high in the temple system in Jerusalem.

has built here. If one does not like what one finds, it is necessary to go back on the beam until one comes to a place of right desire. I do not think that my uncle stayed in that room of the past like a fixation, but that it was for him a factual condition as some psychic experiences have been to me, into which, having entered, he would find a path leading into more hopeful surroundings with new opportunities for happy and helpful living.

It is only my own thought, but it seems to me very probable that he was able from that point to tune in upon the vibration of one or more of those Sunday-school boys of years gone by, and to lead their thoughts and their attention in their latter years to the ideals and way of Christ which had been the theme of those Bible lessons, and to help them build brighter conditions for their own homecoming than had awaited him at his own.

Two months later, the Teacher came again and took me in sleep to the living room of our old house at Westville. Here I woke in the astral consciousness—that is, the borderland where the psychic conditions of this life exist as things. I was standing beside the Teacher in front of the fireplace. There had been a fire there, quite a good one it seemed. There were a lot of ashes, but they were quite cold. I put my hand down and felt them. I turned to speak to the Teacher about this, and saw that another man had come in. He was quite a small man, elderly, with a small neatly trimmed beard. There was something familiar about him. I felt I must have met him at some time, but I could not recollect the circumstances or his name. He said, looking toward the stairs, “Your friend is going away, but we are planning to have you visit him in my car.” So I awoke. It was very early morning and still dark. I lay for quite a while thinking about this, especially the remark of the elderly gentleman, wondering what he could possibly have meant by his “car,” and who the “friend” was who was going away. What the Teacher had to do with the matter, I had not the faintest idea. After a while I fell asleep again. This time I dreamed just in the ordinary way. In the dream I saw a funeral car coming along the main highway toward the city from the east. On waking I was at once apprehensive about my parents, neither of whom was in very good health at the time, and I went to spend a few days with them on that account, but found them quite all right.

While there I dreamed again of a funeral. This time I was with crowds of people, and the funeral appeared to be of some public or rather well-known person. I asked a young woman who was standing near me who it was who had died; and I awoke as she was telling me, with the impression that she had said “Mr. Smith.” This was rather extraordinary, for although at the time it did not answer my question, since it was not the name of the friend whose funeral had been pre-visionsed, yet I recalled some weeks later that this was the name of the elderly gentleman who had appeared beside the Teacher in the first warning. The “friend” passed away the night of the third dream. He was the former rector of X,¹⁰ whom neither my husband nor I had seen for over ten years. The funeral I

¹⁰ Mrs. Park’s friend had been the Rector of St. Mary’s Anglican Church in Kerrisdale, a suburb of Vancouver, B.C., where she had attended regularly 10 years prior to this experience. His name was Charles Sidney McGaffin.

attended in the dream was fulfilled in every detail, exactly as I had seen it in the dream, with the exception of the young woman of whom I had asked the question.

One morning several weeks after these incidents, immediately after waking and before I had opened my eyes, I saw an angelic figure floating a short distance above the floor, robed in soft flowing garments of white light and with a most beautiful rainbow aura around the head. Again a few weeks went by, and I was visiting with my parents and awakened one morning just at dawning to see in mid-air, several feet away, a miniature seven-branched candlestick, in the center of which the same angelic figure was standing with the image and radiance of Christ shining through him. At the time these manifestations occurred I did not understand them. They were alive, and yet in miniature, as though at a great distance.

I thought they were connected in some way with the passing of our friend, the Rector, and this may be so but only indirectly. They were symbolic projections of the messenger who had manifested in my little sanctuary many years before by the voice and the hand. As I have gained understanding by experience, I have come to know that they constituted a message for my assurance and guidance, to the effect that I was under the protection and inspiration of a Messenger of the Heavenly Sanctuary standing in the light of the radiance of the Christ realms. The Messenger was in the “image of Christ”—that is, purified, perfected and ascended, clothed in white spiritual robes and radiating the wide auric light in perfect balance of color and form. There are examples in the Scriptures for every type of psychic manifestation and experience; and with regard to the appearance of the Messenger in the “image of Christ,” we have the word of Saint Paul in his second epistle to the Church at Corinth that this is the Heavenly state to which every Christian will at length attain, for he writes that, “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

About six months after the death of the Rector, The Teacher took me to visit again on the other side of this life. I awoke to find myself on a mountain summit. There was a cloud rolling across the face of the mountain at my feet. The Teacher stood nearby. Beyond the cloud was a low-roofed building like a monastic retreat. The Rector was sitting on a bench, rapt in thought. He had on his usual outdoor hat and coat. His face and eyes bore the same sad look that my uncle’s had shown. The Teacher said I might speak with him but would not be able to cross the cloud barrier. The Rector came nearer, and we spoke briefly. The thing he was so sad about seemed to be that his work on earth was unfinished. As in the case of my uncle, he also was returning upon his path of life seeking the place of right desire. I think the mountain retreat was an attempt to perpetuate a fixation carried over from this life, which my visit with the help of the Teacher helped to break up.

About a year after the Teacher had first appeared, he came and took me again to visit over the border. I awoke standing beside him on the deck of a boat. It was not a large boat but such as carry passengers and their effects to outlying places

along the seacoast. The people on the boat had bundles which looked as if they had been gathered up hastily, and the people themselves seemed to be in an unhappy and apprehensive state of mind, so that I thought they might be refugees from a bombed village. I now judge them to have been persons in transit from this plane of consciousness to the next, as they were all in clothes of a drab shade of brown. There were two persons whom I noticed particularly—a lady and her daughter—who are now both in the world of spirit. At the time of this experience they were strangers to me, but I met them in the flesh shortly after that.

Being aware that the purpose for which I was on the boat was to see the work in which our friend the Rector was now engaged, I asked The Teacher if it was possible for me to do so. He replied that it was doubtful whether this could be managed without interrupting him in his work. However, he consented somewhat dubiously and directed me to look up to the captain's bridge at the front of the boat, and there I saw the Rector standing in an attitude of deep concentration, directing silently as by spiritual force the ship's course. He was no longer sad but had a steady radiance and his bearing expressed confidence and poise. He was still in earth-style clothes, but the color was no longer a dull gray like that of the overcoat and hat he had been wearing on my former visit. He had discarded them and was in a pure white shirt and dark blue trousers the same color as The Teacher's cloak. I did not move or speak but he seemed to feel us looking at him, and it broke his concentration. Obviously, this was what The Teacher had foreseen. As he turned and saw us, he seemed struck with amazement. It was plain that just for a moment he thought I too had passed through death. Then he reached down to grasp my hand in a very human handclasp, and, the touch passing through me like an electric shock, I woke. Following this, I occasionally visited over the border and watched him, from a short distance, at his work. This was the inner-plane side of the same work to which he had been dedicated here on earth.

Another contact with that world, which occurred in March 1940, was of a lady I had known in my teacher-training days in England. I woke in the heaven world in the home of this lady. It was not greatly different from such a home as she might have had in this life, though I had never been in any home of hers previously. The visit seemed to be a long one. Judging by similar experiences in recent years, which I have taken pains to time, I should think it would be about two and a half hours. We talked of mutual friends and interests, the failing health that had closed her earthly life, and of the course of my own life and experience since we had last met. There was such happiness in that visit as can never be experienced here on earth, and at parting I felt a great longing to stay; but as we stood together after a short walk across pleasant moorlands, there arose at our feet a white cloud which spread wider and wider until my friend faded right out of sight. My last glimpse of her was of her beautiful gray eyes and the soft white scarf-like folds that enveloped her head.

And now I will conclude this chapter on the work of the Teacher with the words of the Psalmist, which are very dear to my heart and seem most fittingly to describe those things which he showed me from time to time: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

CHAPTER 8

MORE ABOUT THE PSYCHIC BODY

Of the exact nature of the soul-body I am as ignorant as anyone else, but I know how it feels and how it behaves.

To go back over the records a bit: when I felt the touch of the fingers of Mrs. C. (Chapter 3), they were distinctly and proportionately formed, but soft and velvety as if boneless. There was such strength in her presence that for a moment I was not able to move, yet this strength was not in the fingers. They did not grip me. Then there was the occasion of the afternoon nap when I stepped consciously out of the body and came back consciously into it. The soul-body had form while I was out in it, but my return was as a melting or flowing back in. Well, that is how the soul-body is—a fluid form. Some of us remember occasions in early childhood when we crawled through windows or between bedrails or fence palings too narrow for us, and almost got stuck, and how there was a ridiculous expectation that one's head and shoulders would squeeze themselves smaller and flow through—well, that is about the best idea I can give of the soul-body. It is a body that knows its own form but can flow in and out and adapt itself. While its own substance is not physical, it appears either to merge with or to clothe itself with an invisible but sometimes tangible substance drawn from the physical body. I believe this substance is sometimes passed along in healings. It is also used by the spirit friends in materializations—the enclosing of spirit forms in physical substance. The soul-body is attached to the physical body in us all at the navel, just as the unborn infant is attached to its mother by a fluid cord of this vital substance. By this the soul can project itself out of the physical body into the etheric. I have many a time awakened from sleep in the early morning hours to find the soul-body projecting itself out from the physical by an upright and rhythmical motion of this substance. This would be followed by a moment of unconsciousness just as when one falls instantly to sleep; and the next thing, I would be fully conscious in the etheric world.

In waking life the psychic or soul-body permeates and envelops the physical body, and in the case of the average person the consciousness—the “I know”—identifies itself with the physical. But during sleep the “I know” is withdrawn from the physical to the soul-body, and it is the activity of the “I know” in the soul-body that causes dreams. It is not the activity itself that is the dream. A dream is just a fragmentary recollection, like a little snapshot taken just as the “I know” is changing back again from the soul-centers to the physical-centers.

This activity of the “I know” during sleep tends to bring about self-consciousness in the soul-body so that it learns to function rationally apart from the physical; and as long as there is perfect harmony between the two states of consciousness, this is a very healthy condition. The soul-body then habitually floats just above the physical body during sleep and, instead of being a mere punchball for registering the dissatisfaction of the “I know” with everyday living conditions, it tends to become a mirror of impressions from the larger field of soul-

consciousness which is the borderland between this life and the life after death.

Perhaps I should say a word or two of caution to help persons beginning to “sit in the silence” or in developing circles. The balance between the physical and the psychic consciousness is a very delicate adjustment, and the artificial or premature separation of the two, especially by hypnosis, is inadvisable and risky as it is an imposed or induced negative condition. There are undoubtedly occasions when persons in poor health of body or mind can be helped by hypnosis, but this should only be permitted when exercised by a recognized and conscientious physician of experience. Even psychoanalysis can be an unwholesome interference. All life processes are delicate adjustments, and while it is a fact that things appear to go wrong of themselves sometimes, more often it is because of man’s interference or by reason of the neglect of basic principles.

When the separation of the psychic body from the physical occurs with persons of honest intention and balanced emotions, it is a health-promoting condition because it tends to rest the body and quiet the nerves, and facilitates the reception of helpful suggestions for the solution of life’s many problems and for happy fellowship with loved ones from over the border.

Where it is the habit of the soul-body to flow out during sleep and float just above the physical body, and this happens with quite a lot of people, especially towards the early morning hours, it is always possible for the “I know” to enter into conscious fellowship with the guardian Spirit or Teacher appointed to light one’s path of progress and to instruct and train one for higher service.

Now I feel I should stress, at this point, the fact that this process towards a self-conscious soul-body is a natural one and that it will proceed in a general evolutionary tide regardless of whether we are religious or not. But if it proceeds without the safeguards of religious idealism, and apart from the direction and protection of the Christ spheres, we shall arrive at the point of psychic awareness without the capacity for selection between constructive and destructive impressions; between truth and fantasy; between willful manipulation and Divine manifestation. In Chapter 5 on “Psychic Intrusions” I gave instances of both kinds of impressions, and all the way along I have observed the need to exercise moral, spiritual and intellectual discrimination because the psychic world consists of many planes or levels of consciousness and not all persons in the heaven world are at the same spiritual or experiential level.

Psychic impression or suggestion is far more potent than the spoken word and can lead one astray. The physical body, which we may deplore as a barrier between us and our loved ones in spirit, is also a protection for those who are not morally disciplined or spiritually enlightened. In my observation, those who dedicate themselves to serve as mediums between this world and the realms of spirit are protected by the organization of spirit-guides and helpers to the extent of the requirements of their path of service as long as they are obedient to their own spirit-guidance.

CHAPTER 9

“THE LAST ENEMY” FACE TO FACE

One year after our friend the Rector passed on, the call came for my father; and, in rather more than a year again, for my mother. By this time I had lost all fear of death and of communication with the life beyond. Death was no longer for me a departure from the loved and familiar, but an awakening as from an ordinary sleep in a world where all loved things and scenes and friends of this life are rediscovered with more intense delight and keener perception of beauty in form and color. This did not mean that I was ready to see my loved ones go with a casual *au revoir*, as it were, but that in the sorrow that came there was strength and sustenance in the knowledge that it was not God's will that death should separate us, and in the assurance that presently there would be the comfort of constant fellowship and occasional communication.

I received two warnings of my father's approaching death. The first was from the Teacher, who showed me an allegorical tableau representing the joy of the Christian soul on leaving the imprisonment of the physical world, with its temptations, sorrows and fears, and entering into the beautiful sunlight and freedom of heaven. The second came, I believe, by way of the psychic activity of a spiritualist medium with whom I had had one or two sittings. I dreamed I was standing with this person in front of our home when there passed by along the pavement nine black-robed figures who I thought were nuns. They carried in their midst a recumbent soul which radiated light. This scene was in the darkness of night. On waking I felt certain that it indicated my father's passing within a short time, as of nine days or nine weeks, for he was in very poor health at the time. It made me very sad and apprehensive, and I wished I had not seen it. No matter how surely one may know that death is not the end, and even that it is not a total barrier to communication, one dreads the parting and the collapse of the outer form—the physical tabernacle—the endeared vehicle of the soul's communion through the years.

My father was ill only a few days, and I was alone with him when the end came. Counting from the night of the dream, it was the beginning of the ninth day. He woke from a gentle sleep and called to me, and was gone. I felt as though my heart had gone out of me with his last breath, and yet I knew beyond all earthly knowing that I should presently meet him and talk with him again. Death is like that; it plucks out one's very heart no matter what one's faith; and like Mary we fall at the Master's feet crying out the reproach, "If thou hadst been here my brother had not died," and almost in the same breath, "I know that he shall rise again." But for the body, which has touched us in its briefly borrowed life with tender love, and spoken words of counsel, faith and truth, we are sad. It is unbelievable at first that it lies forever dead, without meaning or purpose any more; and within oneself there is a hollow emptiness and a numbness for the healing of which even Faith and Knowledge must call upon the aid of Time. In telling of such a parting, the bare records become more warmly personal and alive. There is a hymn by Charles Wesley of which my father was very fond in his

early years:

Leader of faithful souls, and guide
Of all that travel to the sky,
Come, and with us, e'en us abide,
Who would on thee alone rely;
On thee alone our spirits stay,
While held in life's uneven way.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,
This earth, we know, is not our place;
But hasten through this vale of woe,
And, restless to behold thy face,
Swift to the heavenly country move,
Our everlasting home above.

Raised by the breath of love divine,
We urge our way with strength renewed;
The church of the first-born to join
We travel to the mount of God;
With joy upon our heads arise,
To meet our Captain in the skies.

It is difficult to understand how one who had sung such words could have so lost the inspiration of them as to descend to the belief that he would sink into unconsciousness at death and be raised up at length in another physical body. Yet a few days prior to his passing, he had expressed this to be his idea of death. He came to visit me from the world beyond death in the early morning of September 30 that same year. I woke in the etheric consciousness to find him talking of his experiences after death. I was so fully conscious that I did not realize at first that I was not in the physical body or in the physical world, as I appeared to be. As soon as I realized this, I said to him, "Why, you must be visiting over the border." I asked him how he had come, and he replied that it was only with great difficulty that he was able to return to me. "But I was determined to let you know," he said, "that death was not as I had thought." He told me he had awakened in a hospital, and that he had been visited there by a friend who had explained to him what had happened and had told him where he was. At first he had wanted to argue the point, on account of the exact likeness of the psychic body to the old physical body, but then he had begun to realize that he was talking with one whom he knew to have passed through death. Then he had recalled what I had said about a "spiritual body" one evening when I had told him and my mother of my crossing over the border at Jamey's birth. He said he had a better understanding of the Scriptures and quoted a number of passages to me, not realizing that long conversations are lost in the transition of the consciousness from the psychic to the physical. Describing the difficulty he had had in coming to visit me, he showed himself as very weak and only able to stand and walk by holding on to first one familiar piece of furniture and then another. This weakness is actually lack of faith, which in the etheric world causes the disintegration of form. The pieces of furniture were memory structures connected with home and family. He

said he had to summon all his will-power and faith to be able to come to me in that way.

This calls to mind the effort of Peter to walk on the water and how, when his faith that what he was doing could actually be done faltered, he was no longer able to stand but began to sink beneath the waves. So I suppose that if my father's faith and determination had faltered, his manifestation would have faded and failed, and perhaps he would have found himself back in the hospital of which he had spoken. He was dressed in his black suit and was very thin and pale, and his eyes had the same tired, sad look that I had seen with my uncle and also with the Rector. These physical appearances have special spiritual significance, but I must leave the explanation of them to the next chapter dealing with borderland conditions.

My father's passing drew Mother and me closer together. She also sometimes had had prophetic dreams and a slight psychic awareness in her earlier years, of which she told me now for the first time. She said my father's death had made her realize that we ought to be ready at any time to welcome the call to leave this world; and that we ought often to think about that world toward which we are always traveling; and to learn as much as we possibly can about it all the way through life, not pushing the thought away from us until we are old. She said she thought children and young people should be taught to think of that life as the goal and purpose of this one, for which this life was to prepare them. Of course, that is the aim of the Church's teachings, but what my mother meant was that the reality of the life beyond death needed to be made common knowledge rather than mere religious belief. She received much comfort and help from a book I had given her, *The Gospel of the Hereafter*, a very orthodox conception of the life after death, but affirming the fact of communication. She had only finished reading it when her own call came.

My father had begun to prepare me for this parting as early as March the previous year. Just as I was settling down to sleep one night, but was still fully awake, I had seen him with my inner eye standing by my bed. He had his hands in his pockets in characteristic fashion, and moved from one position to another, which was a habit of his when talking. He was no longer weak and pale or in black clothes. I heard his voice with his own distinct accent and manner of speech. He said, "I'm afraid your mother will not be with you much longer. She will be coming over here very shortly. I would have liked her to have had a better idea of this life first, but she doesn't do too badly."

Then towards the end of the same year I had two or three dream-visions, which later events proved to be exactly prophetic. One of these indicated the exact moment at which my mother passed away.

Two months later I saw her clairvoyantly. She seemed to have just awakened in the spirit consciousness, though I gathered from her remarks that she had had several brief waking intervals. It struck me as rather odd that my father, who had thought he was going to sleep till a far-off general day of Resurrection, should have wakened fully conscious in the next life; and that Mother, who was looking

forward to a fully conscious awakening, should have slept so drowsily. I cannot recall anything in my psychic experience that would explain this.

On this first visit, Mother tried to tell me of some peculiarities of conditions there. She said, "Your dad tells me that when he first came over here he went off by himself; he was so upset at the thought that others could read his thoughts and feelings." I did not hear all she said, as my psychic hearing began out of focus and gradually became clear, just like the sound from a radio that has been turned on after the announcer has begun to speak. As the sound of her voice became clearer, I could see her quite distinctly. She laughed a little self-consciously at what she had said about my father, as if she wondered what I would think of such conditions. Her remark only confirmed what I had previously concluded—that in the life after death the personal thoughts and feelings are actually visible to others on the same wave-length or plane of consciousness.

CHAPTER 10

BORDERLAND CONDITIONS

During the interval between the passing of my father and then my mother, many friends and neighbors of former years, besides one or two close relatives, passed into the life beyond death, about whose approaching departure I had been forewarned. How such advance information is discerned by friends in that other world, in relation to the timing of events here, I do not know; but one can suppose that there is a pattern of relationship between us and other people which is discernible to them there. Most amazing is the fact that they can know about the present conditions of persons one has met only casually, even twenty or thirty years ago, and with whom one has had no contact since.

For instance, in July 1944, I dreamed I was crossing a short bridge in order to throw a cord to a lady whom I identified with a friend still in this life. Then I awoke and, before I had opened my eyes, I saw a spirit-messenger standing in a narrow dark room. He seemed to have caught the cord I had thrown, and said, "You did not throw it far enough." He then pulled out more of the cord and reached forward to throw it to someone in the room where he was, but behind me. He then showed me a psychic picture of a woman between sixty and seventy years of age, of medium height and full figure. She had on a hat of turban style, which, of course, dated the period, and a dark blue coat, and she was entering a house which had a lot of steps. I recognized her as a woman I had known back in 1913. We had been neighbors, friendly enough but not close friends.

After seeing this picture, I heard the woman talking as though she were standing beside my bed. I was fully awake but had not opened my eyes. She said she was waiting for her "passport." Then she started talking about her drapes and carpets and curtains, and something about a vacuum cleaner, and how nice it would be to live in a small apartment suite. "That's what I always said I would do if ever I was left a widow," she said. All this was interspersed with complaints about not being able to go where she wanted, or to do what she wanted until someone got a passport for her. She kept up an incessant chatter and I gathered she did not know she had passed through death. The remark of the messenger, that I had not thrown the cord far enough, meant that I had not gone back far enough on my path of life to pick up the vibration of my contact with this person. The announcement of her death was in the newspapers the same evening. How this contact was made, or what its immediate purpose was, I have no idea. It is highly improbable that the woman had had any contact previously with either the messenger or any of my friends and relatives in spirit. When I knew her she had had nothing in common with their interests. She was not musical or artistic or literary, and in religion she was a Christian Scientist. Perhaps some good was achieved by her contact with me, or perhaps it was an attempt to help which was unsuccessful.

Another comparative stranger who communicated with me was a young British naval officer whom I had met years ago through a young friend living with us at

the time his ship was in port here in Canada. We had invited him to dinner on her behalf. He was a very nice fellow. I believe he corresponded with the young lady for a short time, and we sent him a parcel the following Christmas—that was the extent of our contact with him.

This young man appeared in a dream manifestation, March 14, 1944, and showed me that he had been killed in a naval engagement. I do not suppose I would have recognized him, beyond thinking he looked familiar, but he gave me his surname. He took me psychically right into the conditions in which he had died, as though I were he. There was a square sort of erection upon which there were three or four guns firing fast and furiously. I was standing flat against the side of this gun turret trying to maneuver myself into a place less exposed. Then I was hit and fell, but I did not feel any pain. I did not feel either fear or surprise but just accepted it as what was to be expected in the circumstances. This undoubtedly had been the attitude of the young man himself.

The following year he made another appearance in which he showed me a mushroom-shaped hat with a hole in the top. I thought he must have been wearing this at the time he was killed. Holding the hat in his hands, he said, "I was in the navy." On this occasion he gave me a message of spiritual guidance. There was a most beautiful golden aura around his head. I later heard from our young lady friend that he had been killed in action.

Another young man who came during those years, though I do not know whether he was in the services or not, because he did not give any name, was a tall, broad-set fellow with a free and easy athletic bearing and a generous smile. I thought he must have been connected with St. Mary's parish at some time, because he said, speaking of the Rector, "We didn't know what to make of him, nor what he meant by God." He gave me the name of the high school he had attended. He was brought to me by a young man unknown to me, dressed in the flowing robes of an angelic messenger, who did not come near or speak but stood as in the doorway of my house. The young man whom he brought was in front of him inside the house, and was wearing ordinary dark blue trousers and a close-fitting jacket called, I believe, a windbreaker. He was brought to me for the purpose of contacting the earth-life vibration again from the angle of his new life. Just as a person who has come to live on a new continent and is homesick for the old can often be cured of that sickness by visiting the old again, so he was brought to be cured of his homesickness for the old earth-life. Like the young naval officer, he also gave me a message of spiritual guidance. He has visited me several times since.

Another instance of contact with neighbors of years gone by occurred in June 1946. I was greatly astonished one evening during my regular prayer period, to see in a psychic projection a former neighbor of thirty-seven years back. With him were his father and mother, whom I had met at that time. The aged mother was sitting in a large easy chair, just as I had seen her in life. It did not occur to me that this manifestation had any particular significance; I thought they merely wished to make me aware of their friendly interest: but two days later I was taken in the psychic body to visit their eldest son who lay dying. This was an effort to

effect in him a condition of psychic awareness immediately upon his passing, to offset his persistent refusal through the years to believe in life after death. I was able to accomplish this, as he both saw and heard me; but when I began to speak of the life beyond death into which he had now entered, he refused to listen and the contact was cut. This experience was confirmed by the announcement of his death in the evening papers the following day, and later by contact with another member of the family. This lady confirmed the fact of his dying under the conditions I had experienced, and told me also that the day before he had expressed his utter disbelief in any persistence of consciousness after death.

Another person to whom I was taken in the psychic body on a similar mission was a French lady who did not know she had passed on. She was still in the earth-consciousness, though not in the physical body, and was greatly distressed because of the occupation of her ancestral home by Laval and his following. She complained to me that they were damaging her beautiful furniture, placing lighted cigars on the finely polished tables and such, and that they ignored her as completely as if she were not there. This lady, who was a devout Roman Catholic, was almost as distressed by what I told her of the nature of the life beyond as she had been by the abuse of her beautiful home by political gangsters. She said, "We were taught that communication with spirits was of the Devil." She looked very puzzled, because what I told her did explain why she was being ignored, and that she was herself a "spirit" trying to impress her objections upon persons still in the flesh. The Teacher was with me on this occasion, enabling me to converse with the lady in her own language and with understanding. I expressed to him the hope that I had been able to help her; to which he replied, "She will remember later what you have said."

To such as this lady, their friends and spiritual helpers on the other side are still invisible; but one who is in this life, and in the psychic body, can make himself or herself partially visible by drawing upon the finer substances of the physical body.

On another occasion I was taken to help the husband of a close friend of my mother, an Englishman whom I had never met. I did not know he had passed on until the Teacher told me. The man was in a state of deep confusion, utterly unable to distinguish between the world he was in and the world he had left. At the time it seemed that my efforts to help him were of no benefit, but a year or so later I saw him again in very happy conditions.

For most persons this condition of being lost is quite temporary. A lady once came to me during my evening prayer period, saying, "Where are the dead who die in the Lord?" She had been a teacher in the same Sunday school with me. She was a very earnest, unselfish person, but completely wrapped up in her family; and since death to her meant a complete separation from them she was unwilling to go. To her question I replied, "You are looking earthwards. If you will sing the hymn, 'Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord,' you will be able to turn around and look Heavenwards, and you will find the conditions you are seeking." I then felt within myself the condition of a soul bathed in tears of restored joy and hope, and I have not seen or heard the lady since.

CHAPTER 11

PURGATORY AND PETER'S PENCE

When I was a young girl in England, I came across the strange idea among one or two Irish Catholics that it was helpful to the departed soul if a penny blessed by a priest were placed in the hand of the corpse. Belief in such magic springs from primitive superstition, of course; yet, as I have come to realize, underlying this and also those practices and beliefs of Christendom which were challenged by the Protestant reformers, such as the confession of sins to a priest, prayers for the dead, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, there are certain psychic actualities of great spiritual import.

In the Protestant tradition, confession to a priest is held to be nonessential to salvation, and by some to be even sinful; yet we read in the Scriptures, "Confess your sins one to another" (James 5:16). Whether this means confession to a priest or church elder, or that acknowledgment of injuries done must be made to the one who has been injured, I do not presume to say; but I do know that confession of mistakes and ignorance as well as wrongdoing made to any person who can and will listen is the great common need of the unenlightened in the conditions in which they find themselves after death. Those who had not learned to reach out to the Father in Heaven while they were here cannot do so there; yet they may have come to the realization of former sins and errors. In this state they seek some person on the physical plane (for they are looking backward and are not aware of the higher planes of consciousness), who, like the wedding guest in "The Ancient Mariner," can hear their confession.

This act of humility, in my observation, has the effect of purging the soul of the shadows of past conditions, and many a one has returned to me later in brighter garments and with a happy and hopeful outlook, showing himself or herself radiating the light of spiritual love. It is demonstrated in actual conditions in the life that follows this that the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

Most of those communicators who were strangers or casual acquaintances have been brought to me, or I have been taken to them in the first instance, for the purpose of removing some condition blocking their spiritual happiness and progress. My experience has been that this giving of help, as of a cup of cold water from a living spring, links the person helped with oneself in spiritual fellowship, and is paid for in psychic service.

Those in the life beyond sooner or later begin to realize the actuality of the Christian teaching that "no man liveth unto himself"; that we are all "members one of another." They come to know many other all too lightly regarded sayings of Jesus and his apostles, the disregard of which in this life is manifested as poverty there.

If we consider the thousands upon thousands, Christians and non-Christians,

religious and nonreligious alike, who are passing into that life day by day wholly unready, their interests solely in this present world and their conception of value confined to the possession of goods or money to buy goods, then we can realize to some extent how utterly destitute these persons are in a world where the capacity to live happily and, in fact, to live consciously at all depends upon one's spiritual resources. How can one live in a world where full consciousness depends upon one's capacity for love if one has never learned to serve and to give? How can one live elegantly in a world where the things in one's environment are the direct effect of one's thoughts and emotions, if these same thoughts and emotions are the offspring of fear and self-interest? What are these people to do? What *can* they do to better their lot, supposing they sincerely regret the misuse of their earth-life and are seeking the opportunity to serve? Well, contrary to some narrow religious ideas, it seems that they are able to achieve spiritual progress, according to the individual capacity, by service to those still in this life and, after a little while, to bewildered souls newly arrived in spirit. From all I have observed, such benefit is a demonstration of the spiritual law to which Jesus referred when He said, "With that measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

Persons in spiritual destitution have shown themselves to me as in rags, begging or stealing from us in this life; for goods and values appear to be in relation to the vital condition there and cannot be traded or dealt with as independent commodities. Again we have a simile in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, for the wise virgins said they were not able to share the oil in their lamps and counseled the foolish virgins to go and buy some.

One of the many strange features of the life after death, which I soon noticed when I began to see people from over the border, was the difference in style and color of attire between those newly crossed over and those who had left this life several years past. Those newly passed through death, and especially those without psychic knowledge, were in clothes of the current mode of black or dark gray material. After a time, as they began to get a better understanding, they appeared in shades of brown or khaki, and then in light gray, and finally in cream or white. With this change of color in dress there followed a noticeable change to simpler styles. First, the closed neckband and tie were discarded, and then the coat. As a general rule the women retained the earth styles longer, but at length they also changed to the free-flowing garments of spirit. These changes took place for everyone I contacted. There were no exceptions. I have never been given any explanation of the process, but from observation over the years, I have come to certain conclusions. First, certain conditions of soul are expressed in certain colors; second, these states of being follow one after another like second teeth or the changing color of the hair in this physical life. In brief, it is a vital process. White is a sign of spiritual purity or synthesis, and in the higher spheres the white robes of those who have progressed are adorned with living jewels of special significance, according to their color, quality and placement. The auric radiance of these ascended ones is very brilliant and differs in color and variety with different individuals, but the whole condition is a vital process. On all planes of spirit the state and progress of each soul is manifest in the style and radiance of the attire and cannot be hidden or simulated. How truly did Paul speak when he said, "Then shall we know even as we are known."

After five to ten years—the period varies with different persons—the clothing substance appears to be greatly attenuated and is of a glistening bluish white, flowing round the form in a spiral fashion. This is not necessarily their actual appearance in spirit, but could be merely a type of manifestation. One is hampered in estimating actual conditions in the heaven-world by the fact that all we here can see are the manifestations. Some of these are intended to convey a true idea of the life, dress and other conditions there, but by far the most are projections which are in themselves symbolic messages of guidance and help.

Of the condition of children in the life beyond death I have little firsthand knowledge. I have seen children in rags and in clothes of dingy gray and black, but these gave me the impression that they were children from the earth-life—that is, visiting in the astral during sleep. A friend of mine with over forty years' experience in mediumship service tells me that the underprivileged children of earth are taken during sleep into the astral consciousness and given the affection and guidance and instruction denied them in their earth-plane circumstances by the ministrations of organized bands of helpers working under a qualified spirit-guide. As I have myself cooperated with these bands during the sleep state, I can corroborate this description of the children in the astral dressed in dingy gray garments or in rags like street urchins. I have been visited occasionally by children from spirit, some of whom I knew to have passed through death and some whom I had not known previously. These were all very radiant and their dresses dazzling white, but in some manifestations children have shown themselves in color to convey a special message. They have toys and books just like children in the physical world. They are taught to help their loved ones on earth by prayer and the sending out of happy and loving thoughts.

Relative to the purgatorial planes, and the money equivalents that characterize conditions there, I should like to point out that the mere persistence of consciousness at various levels of awareness and, it may be, even of self-satisfaction after death, is not to be confused with eternal or everlasting life in the scriptural sense; neither is it to be identified as the heaven in which those awaken after death who have accomplished their soul-purging in this life. The purgatorial planes are judgment conditions, not in the sense of punishment by an offended God but of the discard of nonessentials—purifyings from falsities, the return to the fresh simplicity of the child-soul.

It has been demonstrated to me many times that the love of God and the help of Christ are available instantly to all who are able to exercise the outreaching of the soul which we call prayer. This ability is largely the fruit of the past, which explains the saying that there is no forgiveness of the sin against the Holy Ghost either here or hereafter; for it is clear that the failure to link oneself with God's channels of help or the deliberate refusal of such opportunity must result in the retardation of one's spiritual development.

Quite good-living people, including sincere Christians who pass out of this life without psychic knowledge or understanding of the life after death, find themselves in a state of confusion and sadness due to literal-mindedness, religious

or social bigotry, false habits of thought, ingrown fears, frustration fixations and sometimes rebellion at death itself, though this latter seems to be comparatively rare. In many respects religious people are at a greater disadvantage than some of the unreligious, because they are walled in by fear of mistakes and of incorrect belief and by their mistrust of individual experiment.

All through life many people lean on that religious system and its theology to which they happen to belong either because of hereditary and family influence or temperamental inclination. They never move out of these protective grooves, and so the truth and factuality of their beliefs are never seriously challenged. Their faith is not real because it is not truly individual. It is only an accepted group concept. The purgatorial condition of such people is a painful and often slow process of readjustment. This points up what Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day, that the harlots and publicans would get into the kingdom of heaven before them.

Generally speaking, young people become rightly adjusted more quickly than older persons, because they are not so fixed emotionally and have not become so set in wrong attitudes. In order to shed these attitudes it is necessary, as in the case of some whose after-death conditions I have described already, to retrace the Path of Life to a point which I have called the "Place of Right Desire"; and it is very helpful to contact the vibration of some person in the physical world who is more or less stationary at such a point. Hence, prayers for the dead are a Christian duty, for by so doing we are helping to purify and enlighten the planes of purgatory, which are like a dense cloud surrounding and pressing upon the spiritually unprotected in this life. We can and we ought to radiate into those planes the light and power of the spirit of Christ. That this is one of the functions of the Christian Church is stated in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, "To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10).

It is not possible for individual souls to receive help from the higher realms directly until the Place of Right Desire has been reached, because the Path of Retracing is a solitary path of personal experience; and no matter how much and how lovingly friends and teachers in spirit may desire to help, they are only able to strengthen existing links until the upward return has begun. It will be seen from this that even a deathbed confession has great significance and value, and that the ministry of such should not be neglected. Of course, there are many who are not even unconsciously seeking the Place of Right Desire, and they are greatly to be pitied, since they do not realize that there is anything higher or better than the conditions in which they find themselves.

Thanks to the Christian writings and teachings and the spiritual leaders of all races and ages, there are few persons who have not had, at some time in this life, a bright and earnest spiritual desire. By "spiritual" I mean a wholly generous and unselfish desire to serve for the betterment and happiness of others. Such a desire stands like a guiding light at the crossroads of past choice in the life after death, for it is a spark from the spirit of Christ.

This description of that life may seem to many to be too symbolic, but the condition is actual there, which here is an abstract idea. In terms of time, we live in this life a matter of days or weeks or years; but in terms of the psychic world we travel a path of experience leading from one set of conditions to another by choice or undirected inclination. So, immediately after death, some persons find themselves in a hospital, and others tossed about like a stick or leaf upon great waters; and one finds himself in a market place of thieves or in a miser's attic; and another in the ruins of a house he has torn down or that has caught fire and burned down. And since that place or building is what we here would call a "past condition," it cannot be changed, and the person in it can only get rid of the fixation by moving out of it. The road out is by memory—not the memory of mind but that of feeling. Those who have emerged from such conditions tell us with joyful accents that they have "awakened."

CHAPTER 12

COMMUNICATION BY SYMBOLS AND PICTURE LANGUAGE

Of all the strange features of communication with the world beyond death, the use of symbols and pictures instead of words seems to be the most difficult for people generally to accept. Some persons tend to despise pictures and symbols divorced from language, as a retrogression—a reversion to primitive conditions of communication. This attitude is due partly, no doubt, to the feeling that their interpretation is too haphazard. It is true that only by practice can one gain certainty of meaning. Of course, when one is more or less constantly receiving picture-messages, one is compelled to give some thought to their meaning and to acquire some degree of skill in interpretation. This is accomplished by getting back to the fundamental idea behind the picture. Symbols and pictures are the foundation and origin of language, but we have lost the links between the two through the substitution of sounds for images.

Now sound is a much less satisfactory medium of communication between the life beyond and this physical state of being, because it can only be perceived in sequence and does not lend itself to clear memorization as sight does. Those newly passed from this life naturally try to communicate with us here by speech, only to find to their dismay that they cannot be heard except by psychics or spiritualist mediums; or even when they are heard, what they say slips right through the psychic consciousness of the receiver without registering in the brain-mind. Hence, there is no memory-impression, and what has been heard cannot be recalled. The first time my father communicated directly to me from spirit he talked continuously; and on my return to the physical consciousness, I remembered snatches of what he had said, but most of it was lost. Now, when he comes, he says just one phrase, in which his message is greatly condensed; or he shows me an article or a picture which conveys the message symbolically.

I suppose that from time immemorial there have been certain universally recognized symbols. Poetry and religion have preserved the most important, but we quote them casually and glibly with scarcely a thought of their origin.

Directly one begins to get communications from that world beyond time and place, one finds that common religious terms which to us are figurative and abstract have a deep and vital meaning in that life; and one begins to perceive in this the evidence that the Scriptures were psychically received.

If, in reading the Scriptures, people could realize that there is a soul-world which is to the soul-body what the physical world is to the physical body, such phrases as “hunger and thirst after righteousness,” “treasure in Heaven,” “outer darkness,” “let your light so shine” and many, many more would have new significance for this present life. Just as in receiving communications from those in the life of spirit we have to translate the picture or symbol into language, so in reading the Scriptures we have to translate the language back to the picture.

Some of my friends seem to think that the ability to do this is a special gift, and I suppose one has to have a certain natural aptitude or interest in learning; but above all, it is the fruit of contemplative thinking. This habit I formed very early in life. I remember when I was about nine years old asking my mother the meaning of the scriptural phrase, "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Mother's answer did not completely satisfy me, and in my mind I kept worrying at the thought until I got hold of the word "appetite." This word gave me a new picture. It suggested contrast and choice; as though there were a lot of people at a table laden with food of a particular sort, for which only a few had any appetite, the rest disliking it so much they went hungry rather than eat. So the phrase took on a clearer meaning for me. In spirit-communication the process works the other way round. What one has to do is to get at the idea behind the picture.

Take for instance, the symbol of the "door." A door is a means of entrance to and exit from an enclosed place or building. It may represent, therefore, deliverance or protection or a change of condition; or it may signify authority, for it represents the power to shut in or out. Besides being a symbol, the door is an actual condition in the soul-realms. The exit from the body, when this takes place in full consciousness, is a passing through a door. Similarly, the psychic conditions of the personal earth-life are a house through the door of which communicators from the life beyond this enter and depart. Hence the significance of Jesus' words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," and the warning, "He that does not enter in by the door but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Light is thrown on this cryptic passage by spiritualist practice and experience; for the medium of every properly organized group has an authority or "strong man," in spirit called a "doorkeeper," by whom all would-be communicators are admitted or rejected.

Many symbols frequently found in the Scriptures are in common use by spiritual teachers from the heaven-worlds. The "rod," for instance, signifies a spirit-guide or leader and feeder of a flock or group. An "altar" signifies a dedicated soul-structure; a "throne," attained authority; a "sceptre," delegated authority; a "temple" or "church," a psychic group-structure. The reason Saint John saw no temple in the heavenly Jerusalem was because the city was itself the temple or house of God. The reality had taken the place of the symbol.

Turning to more ordinary and personal symbols of communication, we find our friends over the border using articles of food, dishes, water, fire, furniture, clothes and the various modern means of communication and travel, such as the typewriter, letter slot, telephone, automobile, bus, streetcar, train or airplane. One of the earliest symbols mentioned in these records is the fireplace or household hearth. A fire in a fireplace symbolizes the warmth of human affection—family love, friendship. The dead ashes were a symbol of friendship that had lapsed, a fire that had gone out. Fire unrestrained is a symbol of destruction. It is often used to indicate the destructiveness of human anger or passion. A threefold flame represents the activity of the Christ-spirit. A knife or sword is frequently used to denote a separation. A cup is used by my mother to indicate a brief friendly contact. If the cup is pure white, it signifies an exchange of spiritual experience; pink edges or flower decoration denote personal happiness and affection; gold edges or bands

denote spiritual dignitaries; yellow, spiritual joy; blue, religious devotion or spiritual inspiration and communion. A book is a symbol of a course of experience. If it is open, the experience has begun; if one sees it closing, it is an experience just finished. To hear a voice, as if speaking through a trumpet from above, denotes a call to serve some particular spiritual cause—the Divine purpose or will. A river signifies the psychic stream or continuity as of a family or race. It is by passing through such psychic conditions that one arrives at one's own special place in the life beyond—the “place prepared.” The sea represents the trackless, limitless communal psychic condition. Hence, Saint John says that in the “new heavens and earth” there shall be no more sea (Revelations 21. 1). A candle is a symbol of personal spiritual understanding—awareness and radiation. A virgin's lamp is a symbol of dedication—dedicated spiritual radiation. The seven-branched candlestick or lamp stands is the symbol of the radiation of the spiritual understanding and power of Christ.

Birds and animals are often used as symbols. The white dove in the Christian tradition signifies the Divine spirit; but in my experience, a descending dove signifies the spiritually integrated soul; an ascending one, spiritual aspiration. In general, birds represent the soul either temporarily disembodied or departing. The dog has varied meanings. In Bible times it was the symbol of unspiritual souls, without reverence or discrimination, just as the dog of those times had an appetite for anything whether clean or unclean—a scavenger. Even today it is sometimes used to indicate an inferior and unenlightened soul, though it may also indicate loyal affection and protective service. The cat is a symbol of a psychic organism or projection.

Flowers are much used as symbols in personal messages. In my own experience they signify principally various types of psychic expression of a spiritual quality, some degree of unfoldment or progress. This is so when they are given by spirits from the higher realms, as for instance by teachers or guides. When brought by relatives or friends, they usually signify a particular person, often a child. Trees are symbols of vital relationship with some particular upsurging of spiritual purpose. Water is always a symbol of the psychic consciousness; fire, of the spiritual consciousness.

This condensation of language into a single visual image enables those in spirit to give a message which is so swift in itself as to eliminate time and place. It is astonishing how much the psychic eye can see and transfer to the brain-mind in a split second—as, for instance, the vision recorded in Chapter 5. Language and sound can be perceived with equal swiftness, but can only be transferred in sequence.

Communication with one another by those in spirit is not confined to sight and sound but is also achieved by a sort of still awareness. Nonetheless, the sights and sounds and ways and means of human contact and fellowship in this mortal life are never lost or forgotten.

CHAPTER 13

VISIONS OF INSTRUCTION AND GUIDANCE

Although I have had hundreds of contacts with the life beyond death of a personal character, by far the greater part of my psychic experiences have been visions of instruction and guidance. Yet I have made so many mistakes in interpreting them, I have been so lacking in discrimination between Divine guidance and psychic suggestion, and so dull to learn and understand that I must take my seat with the veriest novice at the bottom of the class. I can only hope that others, who may think they could never begin to understand and interpret the conditions of soul and spirit about which they may be reading here for the first time, will take heart at this; for no one could possibly be more set in a narrow groove of fixed orthodox ideas than I was at the beginning. The fallibility of my own ideas and judgment has been so fully demonstrated to me that hereafter I must always marvel at the great patience of the Teacher, and at the remarkable way in which a channel of usefulness is being found for everything I have experienced— mistakes as well as true knowledge.

The first vision of instruction was the one of shipwreck and the long climb over precipitous cliffs in the dead of night. I am not able even yet to interpret all the features of this dream-vision. It seems to cover the whole of my spiritual experience in this life, and so is not yet all fulfilled.

A year or two following this vision, there was another in which I was making a dedication of a sacred vase. This was back in very ancient times.

A peculiarity of many of the visions of guidance is this impingement upon me of conditions in the distant past. Many times, in visions both waking and sleeping, I have been in the temples of Ancient Egypt. No useful purpose would be served by relating in detail all I have seen and heard, but one feature of them is important; they were all used prophetically in relation to my personal situation and conditions at some future date.

These visions of the past were not a slipping back in time-consciousness by race-memory, nor can I say definitely that they were memories of previous incarnation experiences. This is not to say that reincarnation may not be a part of the general process of evolution. I myself incline to this belief, and there is much in the New Testament to support it. The visions of instruction can be interpreted in its favor but do not supply proof. All that I can say is that they were impingements upon my psychic consciousness of past experience-material, whether my own or another's, to forecast and guide my spiritual course. The individual actively participating was not always of the same sex.

To explain more clearly, I will use a scene from my own childhood days. It was at a farm where the annual Sunday-school picnic was sometimes held. There was a small, clear-flowing stream that wandered through the pastures, gradually became sluggish and muddy, and finally turned a large area of meadowland into a

treacherous swamp, all because the waterwheel was not in use. But let us suppose now that I have passed away from this life, and after many centuries in the spirit-realms I am appointed to give spiritual help to some person in the earth-life to whom such a scene might serve as an instructive parable—a person who possibly had never seen a waterwheel and had no previous knowledge of its nature and use. Such a person would then be entering into my past experience for the purpose of his or her own spiritual guidance. It was something of this sort that I had in mind when I wrote in my Introduction of a figure out of the Past entering the Room of the Present and taking an active part in affairs. Such a person brings the past with him and links it up with the future right here in the present. To us dwellers in time this is a most strange condition; yet how full of instruction and inexpressible understanding is one such moment! One knows thereafter in a vital way quite different from the knowing which comes by reading or being told.

One may have read, for instance, of Saint Paul and his imprisonment at Rome, but the most vivid description of the apostle is a dead thing in comparison with one fleeting glimpse of him as he sat at work at his simple loom, chained by the foot; in his loneliness making overtures to a little sparrow pecking furtively, in hasty approaches and retreats, at crumbs he has thrown down for it. This, of course, is a parable. The sparrow represents myself, but it is a real scene and a real sparrow from the personal experience of Paul.

One may have read of the colossal monuments, of the pyramids and of the statues and images of the temples of ancient Egypt, but how different the actual experience of finding oneself among them back in the days of their new completeness and symbolic power! How different to walk down an avenue of gigantic stone animals or to stand in one of those temples beneath the wings of a god-bird or before the stone figure of a Pharaoh enthroned, with feelings and thoughts all one's own and strictly of this twentieth century, but on top of these, as it were, an awareness of the feelings and thoughts of the dwellers in that bygone age!

One may have a mental picture of the sands and the sun of Egypt, but how different to stand upon those sands which burn and glisten in the vivid light; to take and run them through one's fingers and then to find oneself another person in another age doing things with speed and skill quite alien to modern ways of life, and in such actions prophesying one's own future.

Most of us have read in the Bible of Solomon and his wealth and power. One may have formed a certain estimate of him and pictured his way of life and the palace and temple that he built; but what a readjustment of one's conceptions when, one morning, his times and city are imposed upon the familiar scene of one's personal surroundings and the man himself, seated in the porch of his house, arises and lifts from the ground a small brown bird which has been pecking around there, and carrying it in his hand says, "Come, little one, it is time to return to the nest." So he places it in a nest on the top of the city wall beside one of the gates. One feels and knows in that brief moment the real Solomon, just as he was in his earth-life with his virtues and his faults, his appearance and dress just as of old, but with his eyes literally and actually flames of fire. From this latter

item one can only conclude that he comes from those planes of being which in the Scriptures are called the "Throne of God"; and one meditates in awe that this manifestation brings with it clear guidance for an impending situation. Such manifestations are comparatively rare even in my prolific experience, and the condescension of such great ones is amazing. How great is the distance in capacity of mind and understanding and in the powers of life between a spiritual Solomon and a small brown sparrow!

At a time of indecision, when I was about to throw in my lot with a certain religious group of apparently well-intentioned, spiritually minded people, I found myself in the psychic consciousness with a camp of strangers in the wilderness. The occasion was that of striking camp in the gray dawn amid herds of cattle, goats, sheep and some camels, with all the noise and bustle and vivid odors of such a situation. This was a parable of the conditions into which I contemplated entering.

On another occasion, I was shown a psychic moving picture of two men walking along a highway bearing a third man between them, suspended horizontally from a pole, his feet and hands bound. I exclaimed, as they passed before me, "How can he possibly walk if you keep him in that position?" But they just kept on as they were and took no notice of me. This was not an actual situation or incident but a movie-parable of the condition of the average member in some church groups.

There have been three visions of the entire spiritual pattern of my life. The last of these occurred on Good Friday, 1946. The visions given by the Teacher or by spirits from the higher spheres are easily distinguished by their simplicity and clarity from those which come through friends and helpers of less experience and wisdom. The latter, I have noted, tend usually to be too ambitious, with too much detail, which fogs the message. Yet the former relate to a much wider area of experience and are amazingly prophetic.

The methods employed in the visions of guidance and instruction have been varied. Some have been no more than vivid dreams, which I knew to be psychic communications only by their content. In this connection it must not be assumed that all vivid dreams or even visions are spirit communications. Only by the content of the dream or vision can it be distinguished as a "message" and not just the psychic perception of subconscious images. Because the soul in sleep is somewhat loosened from the dense body of earth, it receives all kinds of impressions, and in the early stages of psychic unfoldment most of these are merely the visual awareness of problem conditions connected with one's environment. As the soul becomes more aware of its spiritual nature and powers, it gains courage and confidence and ceases to pay attention to these shadows, and so becomes receptive to the higher vibrations of spirit communication.

Much of my instruction has been by what is called "astral travels." This may be past, present or future, in full or in partial consciousness. On such occasions I have either been taken out of the physical body in a psychic sleep and awakened in a proscribed environment or set of conditions, or I have gone out into the same

in full consciousness under the direction of the Teacher or his helpers. Such experiences have always been under the absolute authority and control of a qualified guide. I certainly would not recommend anyone to practice the release of the psychic body or free-will experimental wandering, as I have heard that some members of occult groups do. When one is ready for such experience a responsible guide or teacher will appear to take charge.

The various psychic procedures experienced by me, and indeed by hundreds of others, are all described in the Bible. Daniel speaks of being in a deep sleep out of which he was awakened and made to stand upright in the soul-body. Ezekiel describes another procedure, which I have experienced many times, in which the psychic substance is drawn out from the head in such a way that one feels as if one were being held by someone clasping a lock of hair. Then one is drawn backwards and upwards through the ether as comfortably as floating on water.

The most beautiful and happiest visions of all are those which have manifested themselves in my little sanctuary during meditation upon the ever-living communion of Jesus in the early hours of Sunday mornings.

The chief manifestation at these times has been the "Voice" which speaks in scriptural language messages of inspiration, encouragement and guidance. Also, at these times many symbols of great beauty have been shown me in the living light and colors of the spirit-world. Such manifestations are made possible by the fellowship of those on the heavenly planes who minister to us here on earth by the power and in the spirit of Christ. Among these are our own loved ones; for the ties of kinship welded in love for the Master and dedication to the service of the kingdom of heaven are never broken; and although those in heaven learn to render nameless service, the pattern is interwoven with the lives of their loved ones here on earth, and we recognize them in their message and in our reaction to their presence. This is the very crown and summit of human love and joy.

CHAPTER 14

INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

One of the most frequent questions asked me by persons who know of my psychic experiences is, "How do you know what it means? Granted you have had these experiences, how do you know your interpretation is right?" Well, as a matter of fact, it is not always right. Neither is the interpretation of messages by mediums always right. The proof of the rightness is in the fulfillment. The interpretation of symbols and impressions is part of the constant training and education of every medium and psychic; and as this progresses, the interpretative impression of each experience becomes clear and definite. Sometimes messages and visions apply to conditions far in the future, and the determination to have immediately satisfactory explanations can be the cause of mistakes and wrong decisions.

In due course I learned not to be influenced by what seemed to me in the psychic state a *fait accompli*, as the French say, already an accomplished fact. I would feel myself going somewhere, or in the company of certain people, and I would take it for granted that I was being guided to that end, when actually I was merely experiencing the ultimate result of unchecked tendencies. The will to choose and the power to decide were still mine. In the psychic state, however, I had entered into the accomplishment of the fact, the final and completed state of the tendencies, and this confused and influenced my judgment. This is one of the problems of psychic awareness. To enter into any such condition now does not influence me one way or another; it merely provides me with added knowledge of the trend of circumstances.

Gradually I learned the meaning of various symbols by careful observation, attention to detail and from my knowledge of Scripture and good poetry. For instance, on one occasion I was standing beside the Teacher in the psychic consciousness dressed in a flowing white robe at the hem of which a blind scorpion was hanging by its large ugly mouth. I asked The Teacher, "Why does it keep hanging on when it does not belong?" He replied, "It is hungry. Feed it and it will go away." This recalled to my mind the phrase Milton uses in his poem "Lycidas"—"blind mouths"—which helped me to understand the meaning of the incident.

Many things shown me have explained Bible phraseology which is generally regarded as mere poetic hyperbole. For instance, in the spirit world persons who are happy and unfrustrated radiate a golden light from the head, and this is what the Scriptures mean by "joy upon the head" and "the crown of joy." It is an actual condition which exists even here in this life for some, and can be seen by psychics; and, of course, when such persons arrive in the spirit-world their radiance shines with intense brilliance. The light in spirit is the radiation of the people who dwell there. Those in "outer darkness" are in that condition because they have no light to radiate. Kindly, loving and generous natures give the sunniest radiation. Persons who are moving toward spiritual synthesis radiate the

whitest light. These are the “pure” or single in heart of whom Jesus said, “They shall see God.”

My many contacts with the life beyond death have made me realize what a great work Jesus has done and is still doing for mankind. I do not mean in the narrow interpretation of His death as a sacrifice for sin. His work not only benefits this earth-life but the realms of spirit right up to what the Bible calls the “throne of God.” As Paul says in his first epistle to the church at Corinth, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.” Also, in his letter to the church at Ephesus, he wrote, “. . .that in the dispensation of the fullness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth.” To me this means that the purpose of Christ’s descent as Jesus into this physical world was that He might make good His right to reign over all substantial beings and planes—power in the spirit-world being attained here in this life. If this were not so, Jesus would not have needed to become incarnate on earth for His own perfecting, as Peter in his Pentecostal sermon, and also the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declared, but could have directed His entire mission from heaven.

A condition that puzzled me for a long time, in connection with viewing this physical world from the psychic consciousness, was the fact that it could be either past, present or future. I wondered if those in spirit dwelt in an idea-world? Yet I knew that it was not unsubstantial. Things there do have size and substance. What this substance is, I do not know. I have felt cloth of various kinds over there, and other materials, and the sense impression of them is exactly the same as in the physical, yet it is thought-controlled. Connected with this sense perception in the spirit world is the way in which persons in that life make impressions upon the psychic or soul-body of persons in this life. Then there is the deeper kind of impression, which is called very suitably “overshadowing.” My waking in the posture of a medieval tomb effigy was an impression of this kind.

Once one’s psychic perception is quickened, one may receive also impressions of pain and sadness from souls looking backward. These are so actual sometimes that one can only know they are psychic impressions by the lack of supporting causes from physical conditions. There is nothing harmful in any way about such impressions, providing one recognizes them as spirit messages and not one’s own personal conditions. The intention behind them is either to get help or to establish identification.

A word now of counsel to those who are developing the psychic consciousness: on retiring to sleep at night always leave pure and positive impulses on guard. Do this not in fear or as a religious duty but as an outgoing of the soul in love and confidence, as a child reaching drowsily for a good-night embrace. Spiritual desires are the wings of the soul.

Prayer, when properly understood, is the great strengthener and healer, because it is the channel between the souls of men and the throne of God. Its substance is faith, and faith works by radiation. On this, as on a beam of light, our spiritual and psychic conditions are radiated, and on the same beam the answer returns.

Without this radiation life sinks to the level of the physical struggle for survival. With this radiation all adverse conditions are brought around to serve our highest and happiest fulfillment. The love of God is then able to bring about for us fulfillment in the place of frustration. It is not important to the effectiveness of prayer that we should have a particular intellectual conception of God, but it is vital that, in the words of Paul, "we believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him." On this basis, the prayer of an Australian aborigine may be as effective as that of an Italian or English archbishop. In the first half of my life I had the idea that prayer was a private communication channel between God and me. I know now that it is a radiation upon a specific psychic wave-length or vibration, visible to the psychic and spiritual consciousness and accessible to all in harmony with it, and that our loved ones in the heaven-worlds meet with us when we pray. Anyone who will set aside a particular place and time for daily prayer is certain to get psychic manifestations sooner or later, especially if that place be secluded and kept solely for prayer and spiritual reading. Love attracts love, and we cannot radiate love to God without gathering in our friends in spirit.

Few professing Christians realize that life after death is just another phase of this life. Writing on this theme the late Stewart Edward White gave his book the significant title *The Unobstructed Universe*.¹¹ Life on the earth-plane does not stand alone. It is interlocked here and now with the invisible realms. The heaven-life is closely tied in with this physical earth-life and our loved ones are still part of the pattern of our life after they have passed through death. They are in a new relationship to us and to this life, and have to readjust themselves and learn a new technique of functioning there and of communicating with us here. When they have accomplished this, they can bring about better conditions for us as we raise ourselves into spiritual accord with them. Owing to the backwardness of understanding in this physical world, their part in the mutual pattern of things goes unrecognized and unappreciated by us in the main. The idea seems to be quite prevalent that by communication with those in spirit we are retarding their progress, but this is contrary to all fact and experience. Indeed it is a hangover from the religious superstition that this physical world is essentially evil. It is no more evil for those in spirit to communicate with people here than to do the same when they were here in the flesh. In this connection, it is important to realize that no one here in the physical world can command the manifestation of any spirit. Our spirit-friends and guides are always with us, whether we are aware of them or not; and when we provide favorable conditions they endeavor to help us to attain closer contact with them; but not even a medium determines who will manifest and when.

In regard to the projection of the soul-body beyond the physical, I have mentioned already that the going out is usually leisurely and full of incident and the return instantaneous. The explanation is that the going out is affected by the centering of the consciousness in the soul-body. This body then leaves the

¹¹ Stewart Edward White, *The Unobstructed Universe* (NY: E.P. Dutton, 1940). Mrs. Park corresponded with Stewart Edward White, a prominent writer on the life beyond death, in 1941. He wrote her a personal letter of commendation for *Between Time and Eternity* when it was published by Vantage Press and encouraged her in her psychic studies. Letter from Stewart Edward White, dated 29 April 1941, unpublished correspondence.

physical and enters into the other-world life through the consciousness within; but usually, in returning, the consciousness leaves the psychic wave-length in an abrupt changeover to the physical and the soul-body snaps back into the physical like an elastic substance. Time and space are eliminated in this operation. It is possible, however, to return in the soul-body by stages, and I have had this experience many times. One moment I would be standing by my sleeping form and the next waking up in it.

The conditions which I have experienced and which I have tried to explain are all referred to in the Scriptures, though it is clear that the men and women through whose channels they occurred did not understand the psychic laws which they themselves demonstrated. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, gives his understanding of the realm and powers of the heaven-worlds and their relation to this in the spiritual purposes of God. However, in the light of present-day spirit communication and manifestation and advanced psychic knowledge, we can and ought to review the fixed theological conceptions hitherto held to be Christian. I suggest that spiritualist, Bible student, theologian and ceremonialist can meet on the common ground of a restatement of Jesus' mission. God does not wait forever on the cooperation of established organizations; and while the various denominations we call Christian are debating their intellectual differences at the hopeless level of literal interpretation of ancient writings, He is at work welding mankind together in a living spirit-empowered experience.

Man, if left to himself, gets bogged down in the vortex of his own past at the level of negative passions and attitudes. Religion becomes stereotyped and authoritative instead of freely inspirational, looking backward instead of within. At such a crucial period, Jesus came to clear a highway for man's upward progress. That work is still continuing and will continue until the two sides of life are harmonized and brought into alignment with the purposes of God. First, the heaven-life has to be perfected; then, with the help of the dwellers in those realms, the-earth-life will become permeated with spiritual truth and power so that the two phases of consciousness will finally be freely interchangeable. This ideal state is described in Revelations, Chapter 22; but the glorious fact is that the individual who so aspires can have a foretaste of that ideal here and now. The declaration of Jesus, that by Him men could go "in and out" and find pasture, has been sadly neglected by those who regard themselves as His sheep.

This is my interpretation and understanding of that which I have experienced, viewed in the light of the New Testament records of Jesus and His work.

CHAPTER 15

THE VALUE OF IT ALL

Now some will surely ask what is the value of such experiences? And for myself I can answer that through them I have been set free from fear: fear of death, of separation from loved ones, of sickness and sorrow, and what is generally regarded as disaster. My happiness and sense of well-being are not dependent upon traditional beliefs and theories about the spiritual nature of man and the possibility of the continuity of life after death but upon a demonstrable reality. As regards evidence of the life after death, there is no lack, and my little testimony is as a drop in a bucket; but the means by which its reality were demonstrated to me is perhaps somewhat unusual and therein it may have special value for persons of orthodox restrictions who would be glad of the assurance of a happy continuity of life after death, but are not prepared to let go of the leading strings of religious authority.

The incidents I have related cover only a small fraction of the records at hand, but there is no need, I think, to add further instances, no matter how interesting in individual detail they may be. To me it is all indisputable testimony of unseen worlds interlocked with this, the physical, and of the continuance of individual personality with particularized memory and love and creative thought beyond death; but it is not presented with the idea of convincing anyone that these things are so. Conviction can only come from personal experience in its own due time. I present the story of my own psychic awakening merely as a personal testimony that the joy of communication with loved ones gone before is possible for us all even without psychic knowledge or spiritualist affiliations. It is more sensible, however, and in most cases more satisfactory, to avail oneself of the help of those with experience and training in direct contact.

To make clearer the thread of spiritual guidance running through my experience, here is the concentrated outline:

First, there was a child's love of love and a dedication that blossomed into a happy confidence in the Heavenly Father. Then, after many years of taking my limited religious understanding for granted as the be-all and end-all of the Christian faith and way of life, there came a seeking for me out of the realms of spirit and the consciousness we call eternal. From this seeking I tried to run away—to hide. It persisted against my will and desire until a time of intense distress had created an emptiness of self. Then came one from the invisible world who called himself "Thy Teacher," bringing visions of comfort and guidance and at length communication with loved ones beyond death—the bridging of the valley of separation. Gone was my fear of death and those we call "dead"; gone also the dread of loss and change and of the normal conflicts and hurts of life. Then came the dawning of a new and vital understanding of the Christian faith—of all faiths, in fact, and of the experiences of psychics and mystics.

That is the story. Its immediate value for you, the reader, will depend upon the

extent to which you have cultivated those attitudes of heart and mind which open the door of the kingdom within.

To those who are sincerely seeking the truth about life and human destiny, the faculty of psychic knowing is what Paul calls “the power of salvation.” It seems to me that this power is an ever-present potential in us all, and that upon the release and control of this inner force—this “power,” as it is called in the New Testament—depends the conscious awareness of communicators and communications from the life beyond death. We may well pray, “Take not thy Holy Spirit from us”; yet God does not do that. It is man who, by misunderstanding and misuse and denial of the power, cuts himself off from it. The mission and function of the Christian Church might be stated as the fostering of the emergence and control of man’s inner forces at the Christ level; which purpose has been scarcely glimpsed. In my early years, being a Christian meant living according to the prevalent Christian standards by the power of the will, strengthened, of course, by church fellowship, but there is much more to it than that. That is only the beginning—the uncertain first steps of the infant child. Even at its highest, Christian profession at the orthodox level is but a probation of discipleship in which we walk blindly and without understanding through conditions of a preliminary testing or initiation. But we are not supposed to continue indefinitely wandering along at this “blind-fool” stage; we ought to be making some progress toward a condition of fuller knowing. Many years ago I drew by inspiration a picture called “The Blind Fool.” It represents an ancient Egyptian symbolic teaching, I understand, to which indirect reference seems to have been made in the book of Isaiah (Chap. 35.5-10). In the picture is an Egyptian peasant with a stick over his shoulder, carrying as upon balances two bundles, one black, one white, and one behind him, one in front of him. Clad partially in an animal skin, he is walking along a narrow strip of sand at the edge of the marshes of the Nile, in the shallows of which a crocodile lurks. Under his feet, beneath the strip of sand, are the dogs of Hades. He is blind and walks this treacherous path by the aid of a staff around which two serpents are twined—in the Genesis story the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The scene is in dark shadow, because behind the man the sun is in partial eclipse. The figure represents unenlightened man as he walks through this earth-life. But note the contrast which the prophet Isaiah paints:

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped in the habitation of dragons where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men; though fools [they] shall not err therein.

The Hebrew scriptures point to Christ as the “Way of Holiness,” and the prophecy of Isaiah looks forward to the time when a vast company will travel this highway in the enlightenment of the spirit, seeing and knowing in fellowship with the perfected in spirit realms “with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.” The angels’ “glad tidings of great joy” are man’s reconciliation with God’s purposes and laws, the fruit of which is fellowship with heaven while here on earth; a

union of heaven and earth in every soul who has arrived at that spiritual attunement described by Jesus as having “eyes to see and ears to hear.”

This is not to say that fellowship with spirit and holy guidance is confined or reserved to professing Christians. On the contrary, it is experienced by people of all races and faiths whose channels of reception are not blocked by the fixation that God’s revelation of truth is limited to one particular race or religion.

This to me is the climactic purpose of God in Jesus—that all men should receive His help to live this life as sojourners in Time, but citizens of Eternity.