

TWO WORLDS

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90th year No. 4001

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When the pupil is ready...

EDITORIAL

LONG experience has proved that people will not accept spiritual truths until they are ready to receive them. There is an eastern saying, "When the pupil is ready the master will appear."

How does readiness begin? There has to be a catalyst at work for this to happen. Usually the catalyst is bereavement, sickness or a crisis which plunges the individual into the depths of despair and seemingly he has nowhere to turn for help.

Thus it is paradoxical but true that light is found in the darkness as peace is found in conflict.

Pain and suffering are too often regarded as mysteries. We believe they are integral parts of the divine overruling plan, which controls every facet of life, to bring self-awareness and an understanding of the purpose behind earthly existence.

Until the catalyst starts to work, most individuals are indifferent to the knowledge and experience Spiritualism has to offer. The most eloquent words fall on deaf ears. Books containing superb Survival evidence make no impact.

But when death removes the one most loved the individual who has shared this supreme affection asks vital questions. Does death extinguish life and love? Is there a world beyond the present one inhabited by those we have loved and think we have lost? If there is, can they communicate with us?

When our time to say farewell to earth comes, will we be reunited with our affinities and others on whom our affections were

centred and with kindred souls whose friendship we enjoyed and whose interests we shared?

Similarly, when disease ravages the physical body and the finest medical opinion says there is no cure, are there any other means by which health can be restored?

And when crisis engulfs us and all seems hopeless, is there anywhere that guidance can be found?

We are reminded of a visit paid to us by a canon who surprisingly offered £100 if Survival could be proved to him. When we replied that the after-life's existence was something he had preached for many years, he said, "Yes, that is so, but my wife has died and I want to know if it is true."

It is our view that pain, suffering and bereavement are part of the plan to draw attention to the fact that spirit is the only permanent reality. Then the divine spark within begins to be kindled.

People are ready to learn about the things of the spirit and to listen to the experiences of others who have had evidence of the after-life and enjoyed the benefits that accompany spirit communication.

At such a time Spiritualism becomes the guide-post pointing the way. It dispels ignorance, fear and superstition and offers knowledge.

The result is that life's purpose becomes clear. We incarnate into this world as part of the process of self-development that prepares us for the continuing life that follows death.

We learn that character-building and spiritual growth are the objectives all must achieve.

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Editor, Maurice Barbanell, who does not necessarily agree with views expressed by contribu-

tors. They are given liberty to express ideas, however controversial, on subjects which are the province of this magazine. Truth, in our view, will be advanced and never hindered by the honest expression of different viewpoints.

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OUR allegiance is not to a Creed, not to a Book, not to a Church, but to the Great Spirit of life and His eternal, natural laws."

Wisdom from the world beyond

Life and love are stronger than death

MEDIUMS always get a special welcome from Silver Birch, guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle, when they are invited to be present.

After the invocation with which he always opens the session, he said, as usual, "I am very happy to greet all my friends and to see whether we can learn from one another to our mutual advantage."

Then came the guide's greeting to the medium, Nella Taylor, to whom he has previously spoken: "I rejoice to see they are keeping you busy, that your powers are functioning efficiently and helping to serve others as you were served in the days when you needed this help."

To her comment that mediumship brought her the joy of service, Silver Birch said: "I think there is no greater joy than helping others who are brought into our orbit to show them the way to fulfil themselves, so that they may understand the purpose of their earthly lives and adjust themselves accordingly to derive what is necessary from day-to-day existence.

"It is always a privilege for me to welcome the instruments of the spirit into our midst. I do so because I am aware of the difficulties and problems that beset them and that being human, they need occasionally the encouragement from our world so that they may realise how important is the mission on which they are all engaged.

"While you must of necessity get bowed down with the cares of your earthly world, always hold on to those sublime truths which have been revealed to you. They provide a sure foundation to enable you to withstand what your world has to offer."—"Yes, I will remember that."

"There is nothing on earth that can do any harm to the real you as long as you are aware of what it is you have to achieve whilst you are in your world. So keep a stout heart, hold your head high and show that you are truly an ambassador of the Great Spirit."

Welcoming Nora Moor, who for many years has been connected with the Greater World Association—her husband Fred was its president—the guide said: "You are much brighter than the last time that I spoke to you. And you have learned to adjust yourself."

"I think so, with the help of Fred and the ones on the Other Side."

"You know he never leaves you."—"I realise that."

"Those whom love has joined together can never be parted. Death has no power over life and love. Life and love are stronger than death. Human love is the expression of infinite love. You are very fortunate to have been and to be the recipient of it from the one who is closest to you than anybody else in the whole universe.

"He is still interested in all the work that is being done, makes his contribution and sometimes thinks it is necessary to do so."

"Yes, I believe that," said the visitor, "but there is a lot of material work facing us."

"It is a very interesting challenge," commented Silver Birch. "You are privileged to be able to offer truth and the power of the spirit to those who are unaware of the richness that these can bring. There is no service in your world that is greater than showing others how to fulfil themselves.

"You are suffering in your world from the fact that those who are aware of eternal, spiritual realities are in a minority. Yet these provide the life lines which enable the power of the spirit to perform its beneficence and to ensure that the means will be available for those who are ready to achieve self-regeneration which is the great necessity in your world today.

"I always tell my friends that if they succeed in getting only one bereaved person to be comforted, one sick person to be healed, one perplexed person to find the answers, then the whole of their earthly life has not been in vain. You should rejoice in the fact that you are helping in this supreme task which is necessary in your world today where there is too much darkness, too much ignorance, too much selfishness and too much materialism.

"If the spirit is right the material will be right, because matter is only a reflection of the spirit. Without spirit, matter has no existence of its own. It is the spirit that animates all beings and endows them with life. You have the power of the spirit available to help in everything that you do."

"That is wonderful to know," said Nora Moor.

"It is a great truth. Sometimes you are apt to

forget it because you have to be concerned with the material necessities which, particularly in these days, can sometimes be very trying. But it was said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

"Your Bible also says, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' All this means that, if your priorities are right, and you ensure that you are in harmony with the natural laws, the spiritual and the physical ones, then everything else will fall into place.

"It also says in the same book: 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'

"It means that the natural law will provide all that is necessary if you are in harmony with its operation. The cause of all sickness, whether it is seemingly physical, is always to be found in the fact that the mind and spirit are not in harmony with the body. So there is nothing to worry about, at least I do not think so. But then I am not living in your world."

"You see it in a different aspect from us."

"Unless, when we come to you, we help you to realise the fundamental principles on which all life rests, we would be failing in our task. It is never our advice to say you should ignore your material responsibilities. What we do say is that they have their proper place and you must not neglect them. But equally it is wrong to ignore the vital spiritual principles which are the most important ones because they determine what will happen in your life. Is there anything you want to ask me?"

"There were many things, but you have been answering some of my questions. I am always grateful for the opportunity of being able to serve. I appreciate it very much, more than I can say. I am told I have work to do."

"You will not leave your world until you have done it. There is no religion higher than service. Service is the coin of the spirit. To serve is noble. I have said these things many times and they are always worth repeating.

"You are the living witness. Everything falls into place where you place your faith in the knowledge that has been revealed to you. Now I always tell my friends that, having added knowledge to faith they must add faith to knowledge because everything cannot be made clear to you whilst you are in your world. So rest content with what has been revealed to you. Face each dawn not with apprehension but with joyful anticipation as providing the

WE find great wisdom in the words of Silver Birch. Thank you on behalf of all of us.

We work steadfastly for spiritual growth first. In my 22 years' study of metaphysics, I have most enjoyed the last 13 years of being a teacher.

So far we have produced seven mediums, whose gifts are varied. We feel that spirit guides will be the next teachers about God to speak to earth. We are thrilled to be pioneers in this field.

Of course we are not really pioneers as you and your group have been. So I write to thank you. Silver Birch has already received our thanks.

Thanks to all in your circle who have given the world great help and new dimensions, and who have been (and continue to be) a great inspiration to us.—Helen Irwin, The Metaphysical Society, Staten Island, New York, USA.

herald of wondrous spiritual possibilities.

"Give my love to your friends in your work. Tell them we always admire those who dedicate themselves to the task of spreading the important truths of the work on which they are engaged. They have very good hearts and are being helped. They still, like yourself, have a lot of work to do."

Mentioning her husband, Nora Moor said, "He was one who got on with the job."—"He is still getting on with the job because you are his job. He says that is the most important of all."

"He once told me I was his counterpart on earth."—"Yes, you are affinities who were brought together. It is rare that kindred souls do meet and become united."

The third visitor welcomed was Myriam Leary, daughter of Kenneth Bannister, Mexico's leading Spiritualist, who has now passed on. The guide dedicated his centre and healing sanctuary in Mexico City. Said Myriam: "We all think of you with very great affection. So many people in the sanctuary have been helped by your teaching. They all have a feeling of love for you."

"I have love and affection for them as well. I am glad to see how things are working out

I HAVE great admiration for the philosophy and wisdom of Silver Birch. As an author and writer on Spiritualism, I introduce his teachings into Brazil. I wrote an article based on this guide's utterances in one of our daily newspapers. It was translated from Two Worlds.—Mario B. Tamassia, Brazil.

slowly and surely, and obstacles are beginning to recede. It is working out as your father has planned it."

"That is wonderful. I am sure he is backing us very much. I have felt a great deal of help."

"It is natural. You are very fortunate to have been brought into this knowledge at so early an age, so that you are aware of the tremendous power of the spirit that is around and about you. I do not have to tell you that your father, mother and Peter are always with you as they are with the other members of the family."

"There is still a lot of work to be done in Mexico. The darkness is greater in that land than it is in many others where I have communicated. But nevertheless progress is being made as more and more people become aware of what it is our world has to offer them and that is very important."

This visitor asked the guide a question. "You said that if the spirit is right then the material things will naturally follow and be right. How does that apply to animals in this world who are being born to be tortured, slaughtered and misused generally by man? Surely their spirit is right."

"No, that is not in the same category as the human spirit because man is given the responsibility of making the right choice; that is his free will. Man has the power of helping or hindering the evolutionary plan. Thus he has free will to decide, within limits, how he treats those who share the planet with him. Your world is full of many abuses. Not the least among them is the needless cruelty to animals and their exploitation. But it cannot be otherwise if man is to progress. Were he deprived of his free will he would not have the chance to evolve his individuality and develop. So this is the crux of the whole matter."

Said Myriam, "It is so difficult for us to understand how this is allowed to happen."

"If you use the words 'allowed to happen' it means you would rather humanity was robbed

of its free will. I repeat that if humans are deprived of their free will they cease to be anything but puppets and are unable to unfold the divinity within them. Their spiritual natures will not evolve and the whole purpose of earthly life will be missed. You are put on earth because life is the nursery, the school, the training ground for the spirit. The spirit can evolve only when it is exercised by meeting challenges and overcoming them."

A circle member joined the discussion by saying: "It does seem unfair to our mortal, human minds that because mankind is learning and sometimes making bad mistakes, the corollary must be the ones that pay are defenceless animals. It seems there is something amiss where man does the wrong things and the animals pay."

"How else would you have it?" asked the guide—"One would think that if a man did something wrong, then retribution would be on his head rather than on an animal."

Silver Birch answered: "There is the law of compensation and retribution. You are affected spiritually and automatically by whatever good or wrong you do. None escapes the law of cause and effect. Compensation and retribution are intrinsically parts of the natural law. There is compensation for those animals on whom cruelty is wreaked, just as there is compensation for those who suffer from the despotic acts of humans in your world for which they are not responsible."

Another circle member said, "I do not think man will ever be other than cruel to animals."

"No, that is not necessarily so. There will be a gradual awareness of man's responsibility to other forms of creation. I do not say there will come a time when overnight cruelty will finish. You are evolving in an evolving world. There will be heights and depths, rises and falls, because evolution is spiral in its effect. But the overall picture is a gradual shift towards progress, otherwise there would be no evolution. You must recognise that the plan is concerned, by infinite wisdom and love, so that provision has been made for everything and everybody."

Yet another circle member joined the discussion: "I was going to say it is our fault that animals are being treated cruelly. Gradually human beings are learning they must not eat them." To this Myriam Leary added: "I wish it were evident to man when he acted cruelly. He seems to get away with it."

The guide countered: "Nobody gets away with it, to use your parlance. The law will always fulfil itself. If you cannot see the results



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in your world, I assure you they obtain in ours. You cannot in any way alter the law of cause and effect. This law is immutable, inevitable, mathematical in its operation. Effect must follow cause.

"Nobody gets away with it. If people could, then the Great Spirit would cease to be the perfect justice that the Great Spirit is. There is another aspect which I always stress. It is that unfortunately you can only have the short-term, not the long-term, view. You see only what happens in your world, but the results are outworked in ours."

Mrs Leary told him, "We are impatient."—"That we know. Do the best you can to awaken responsibility in others. Help to bring nearer that time when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. Evolution must fulfil itself."

Said Nora Moor, "If we as humans were able to live more the natural, divine way of life, thousands of animals would not be subjected to experimentation."

"That is true. We must persist in our efforts to spread enlightenment and truth wherever we can. Every time we break down a barrier we must rejoice. The power of the spirit works by evolution, not by revolution. The people of your world must pay the price for divorcing themselves from nature and all its great powers which are locked within its recesses."

"Man is a spiritual being with spiritual attributes, spiritual potential, spiritual capabilities. Man has the power so to order his life that he is able to help others, particularly the animals, to evolve as well as himself. The plan must fulfil itself. Man can hinder and delay, but he cannot prevent it from coming into operation."

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Silver Birch said: "I know all the troubles you face. I have been in association with some of you for a very long time, according to the way you count it. I have seen many changes, witnessed your facing many problems, difficulties and challenges. When I look at you today I see you have come through without a hair of your head being harmed."

"Try to remember that every problem you encounter is a challenge. Every obstacle you meet is a challenge. Every handicap is a challenge. Your earthly life will constantly present you with them. None is so strong, none so powerful or mighty that it can in any way hinder your evolution. It is the way you meet these challenges which is the most important for you."

"You are not in a position to judge. You are not in a position to decide which are the most important events in your earthly life so far as your spiritual nature is concerned. Your assessment must of necessity be based on a faulty judgement because you see only a very infinitesimal part of a great whole."

"You can, will and must triumph. In doing so you emerge stronger in spirit all the time. The body is imperfect, the body is weak. You are human and the body will have to give way sometimes when the stresses and strains are too much for you."

"Spirit is part of the divine. Spirit potentially is perfection. That is your tremendous armoury on which to draw, the great reserve that you all have. If you approach every problem with that knowledge you will overcome. I stress this because it is an essential part of all our teaching."

"Do the best you can. Do the right thing all the time. As I have said so many times, when you fall down you can always pick yourself up. The Great Spirit placed the head at the top of the body, not at the feet, so that you should look up and not down. And that is the end of the sermon."

"I am told that my teachings have helped. They are not mine; they are given to me from those who are much wiser than I. But I rejoice that we find somewhere in your world receptive minds. It means they are ready and they can begin to receive more and more of the infinite bounty that the Great Spirit has to offer. We are all very privileged. Let us thank the Great Spirit for the fact that so much has been revealed to us. But as much as has been revealed, far more is waiting to be revealed to each one."

The guide closed the session with these words: "Let us pause to receive a benediction

from on high, from the power that infused life into each one of us, from the Great Spirit. It is a privilege for us to serve whenever we can.

"Let us always strive to live up to our highest ideals, to help those who are brought within our orbit, to give a word of cheer to the depressed, to try to make those who feel their burdens too heavy aware of the fact that it can be lightened.

"Let us always try to show we are truly ambassadors of the Great Spirit. Thus automatically we have the inner peace, tranquillity and repose that come to all those who are in harmony with the Great Spirit and the eternal natural laws. May the Great Spirit bless you all."

Aspiring to the highest we can reach

As usual Silver Birch's invocation followed this familiar pattern.

LET us try to put on one side any thought of trouble, worry, anxiety, care or fear. Let us try to achieve the closest possible harmony with one another, so that we may become united in a single purpose to add to our knowledge.

Then let us aspire to the highest that we can reach, the Great Spirit, the creator of all life whatever form it may take and the power responsible for the natural laws which govern, control, regulate and sustain every facet of being throughout the boundless universe.

We are aware that the power to whom and which we pray has been misrepresented throughout the ages, and that the Great Spirit is not a jealous, despotic, tyrannical deity who punishes the many and favours only the few.

We know that the Great Spirit is the epitome of love and wisdom, and that part of that divinity is within every one of us, so that there is an indissoluble bond created between the Great Spirit and all children on earth and elsewhere. It is a bond that, because it is spiritual, can never be in any way broken by events in your world or in ours.

We are aware of all the co-operation we receive from evolved beings of high spiritual attainment whose desire is to use us in the service of those less fortunate than ourselves, so that they may become aware of their true nature, realise that they are part of the Great Spirit, that the divinity within them can grow and enable them to share in all the richness that knowledge brings.

We pray that we may be worthy of the trust that is reposed in us as instruments of a divine dispensation.

This is the prayer of Thy Indian servant who always seeks to serve.

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Why free will is essential to human progress

God is not made in man's image

by PEGGY MASON

SOMETIMES, because I have contributed to this magazine for nine years, people write to me as if I were the Oracle of Delphi. I am always happy to do anything I can to help readers with their problems, sorrows or predicaments in life, having had plenty of my own, and having acquired a certain modicum of knowledge of both this world and the next, and, I hope, some wisdom—certainly some love and compassion.

But when a man writes to me from the United States asking me whether I think that if he had married the girl he loved many years ago it would have turned out happily, I confess I am at a total loss!

This reader rails against the gift of free will, regarding it as an unfair burden. He would like to know in advance the results of any step he might take in life. In the absence of any such information he hesitates to take any step at all, and ever afterwards wonders what *might* have happened if he had.

Personally, I cannot imagine anything worse than knowing the future! But the origin of my correspondent's inhibiting lack of adventure is fear. This leads inevitably to indecision, remorse, lost opportunities, loneliness, endless and profitless speculation, and the cry, "If only we knew in advance!"

My reader wishes that foreknowledge could be given in the form of dreams, and asks, "Is this free will really good for mankind?" There are things in life, he says, which one is unable to deal with without some means of knowing "God's will."

I think we are all familiar with this one. You want to do the *right* thing. But there are occasions and situations when it seems impossible to ascertain what the right or best thing really is. When it comes to making major decisions, what appears to be the only right course in the evening often strikes one as sheer lunacy the next morning.

This is really due to the shuttling back and forth of what one can term only the higher and lower mind. The lower instinctual mind of habit abhors changes, and fears it. It clings to the *status quo*, preferring to stick to things as they are, even if far from desirable, rather than make the great effort to embark on a change,

hiding behind the old adage, "The devil you know . . ."

It clings nostalgically to the past, and is afraid of an unknown future, thus producing a state of negativity which makes today a veritable hell of indecision and confusion. In this state one passes the buck, and cries out to know "God's will."

But this presupposes that what we call God is an anthropomorphic being made in man's image, entirely outside of ourselves, somewhere "up there" in the vast cosmos. Possessing, however, an all-seeing eye, "He" is watching on tenterhooks, as it were, to see whether Bill Brown is going to change his job, his home, or his wife, or go out and get drunk. It also presupposes that God has very definite ideas as to what is the right or the wrong thing in any given circumstances, and, moreover, that only one of many possible alternatives is "His Will."

But we are part of God. It was said long ago, "He is in us, and we are in Him—for *He is all that there is*—manifest or unmanifest." Whether or not we regard ourselves, and indeed every atom, as sparks of potential consciousness, first descending the involutionary arc of the circle from spirit into matter, and then ascending the evolutionary arc, ultimately attaining God-consciousness and unity in true sonship as gods in the spiritual hierarchy, the whole purpose of our lives on this or any other planet is *spiritual growth through experiencing*.

Human beings, having attained self-consciousness, cannot grow spiritually without choice, which means that free will is essential. A choice is made, in one form or another, every moment of our lives.

We are bound to make many mistakes, many unwise choices as well as beneficial ones; but whether "good" or "bad" we can only learn and grow through these experiences. Indeed, wrong choices, behaviour and thinking (one can use only as a criterion of "wrong" what is *non-loving* in the highest sense of loving) are often the means of our becoming aware of what is right, which we learn through the hard school of suffering.

We therefore have to look to the God within for guidance, which is the still, small voice of

conscience. "Be still—and know that *I* am God." One can do this only if the tempestuous waters of the emotional nature are calmed and stilled. Of course this is not easy when in an emotional situation, beset by conflicting human emotions and desires. But in moments of calmness and meditation one *can* receive a clear directive.

In that moment one can *know*; this is right, anything else would be backsliding, unproductive, or inhibiting to the purpose of one's incarnation—and by the same token, inhibiting to the progress or unfoldment of any other person's incarnation who might be involved, for "no man is an island."

Once one has received this clarity of vision about a complex situation one must fix it, and hold on to it with courage. One must face, and accept all the difficulties or heartaches which will almost inevitably ensue. And especially must we be prepared to meet and overcome all the reactionary onslaughts of the lower mind which will endeavour to cloud that clear vision and at times almost obliterate it.

When I was about 14, I chose a motto. It was, *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*, literally, "no footsteps backwards." There have been many occasions in my life when this motto has given me the courage to make decisions which, at the time, meant "going out in the darkness," my lower mind filled with fear or apprehension. But there is a further line to that quotation, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God."

I know a man who made a right decision, but for many long months was totally unable to face its ramifications. He endured the depth of suffering, depression, desolation and panic. That man has now been reborn on a higher level of consciousness, with far greater self-awareness, and also psychic awareness as well as spiritual, and now thanks God for the *privilege* of that suffering.

There are many states of consciousness. As one progresses from one stage to another, there is always a price to pay for that advance.

Children become self-conscious at a certain age (which varies) and it is usually a painful experience. Often, when they become aware of themselves as a separate entity, as "I," they are overcome with alarm, as if by a sense of aloneness and apartness from the universe, which seems antagonistic. All eyes seem to be on them at this time, causing bashfulness and shyness. They feel "separate," alone, and often misunderstood. The feeling of being alone, as a small "I" in the universe, can be terrifying.

Later comes *mental*-consciousness, which

brings man knowledge of himself and the world he lives in. Again there is a price to pay. The more he advances in knowledge the more keenly he feels and suffers, as well as enjoys. Capacity for pain is the price man pays for attainment. He becomes involved in a world of mental discomfort totally unknown to the animals.

He is aware of problems he never dreamt existed, unsatisfied longings, disappointments, the pain of others whom he loves, new wants, attachment to things, new questions, moods, introspection, conflicts, and the inability to understand himself, his origin, purpose or destiny.

Physical suffering is superseded by mental suffering, which is far worse. He feels keenly the insufficiency of life within the walls which surround him. And as he attains increased awareness of beauty in the mysteries of nature, music, love and relationships, his awareness of the cruelty, ignorance and suffering in the world is also increased.

Yet through this tumult and travail is born *soul*-consciousness or *ego*-consciousness, when the "I" recognises its own *reality*. It has nothing to do with thinking or believing. It is a *knowing*. It knows it is part of the One Supreme Reality underlying all the universe. It knows it is not confined to any shape, form, time or space. It knows it cannot be destroyed or hurt; cannot die, but is immortal.

In this certainty and consciousness there are peace, serenity, understanding and power. Then doubt, fear, unrest and dissatisfaction drop off like worn-out garments, to be replaced by fearlessness and a knowing which is beyond knowledge.

In due time this *soul*-consciousness expands into *cosmic*-consciousness in which the soul is constantly aware of the Oneness of *All* Life; knows that the universe which was once thought of as empty space is *full* of life, motion

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and mind. In this universality of which the soul is a part and an essence, any emotion born of separativeness is replaced by an overriding compassion. And fear is replaced by trust.

Fear, in many forms and of many things, has ever been the curse of mankind. How frequently the Nazarene prefaced his remarks with the words, "Fear not." So, in the matter of free will, let us not fear—even to make mistakes.

If we are mistaken we are not offending against a Person who sits in judgement on us. We offend against ourselves, and the God within us. As spiritual law is the law of cause and effect we shall inevitably reap the effects which we have caused—the beneficial effects as well as the less happy ones.

We are blessed with a faculty which the animal kingdom does not yet possess—imagination. Yet so often we allow this attribute of our innate divinity to become a monster and a curse, through fear.

Positive creation through imagining is replaced by the negative creation of a thousand "ifs"—"what should I do IF . . . ?" and we think up a

multiplicity of imaginary contingencies, all exceedingly dismal. We cross innumerable rickety bridges before ever we come to them, if indeed we ever do come to them, which is doubtful. For paradoxically the bridges we are called on to cross always seem to be the least expected—the bridges we thought only other people had to face, never ourselves!

Let us strive, therefore, to attain, and retain, that soul-consciousness which casts out fear and anxiety. Then we shall discover the "hid security" which the poet Rupert Brooke had found when he wrote those beautiful lines before his passing in the first world war:

*"... Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men
fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all."*

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The whole of life is founded on cause and effect

You cannot cheat the natural laws

by M. H. TESTER

PEOPLE who come to me for healing, or who write for help, ask a lot of questions. From these I have learned a great deal. In fact everybody who approaches me for healing, or for spiritual direction, is helping me to fulfil myself. I am grateful to them.

One of the most common questions I get asked is about free will and predestination. This is a subject which every religion has tackled at some time. There is an enormous variety of interpretation.

On the one extreme is the eastern mystic. He says, "It is written." He believes his entire life in every detail is predestined.

Nothing he can do will make a scrap of difference to the fate already marked out for him. He may sit starving in the dirt and squalor of a Bombay gutter. He will take no action to remedy this, believing all he has to do is to maintain an attitude of spirituality and his life will be worked out as it has already been completely prearranged.

At the other extreme is the atheist who believes nothing. He puts himself, his material progress, personal pleasure and comfort first. He is a materialist who does not believe we have a spiritual existence.

The only values he has are material ones. His progress is assessed by his wealth. His motto is, "I'm all right, Jack." He does not believe in any degree of predestination. He says he has complete free will.

Both these extreme views are wrong. Let us take a look at predestination. May I assume you were born a light European? This you cannot change. You might have been born a dark Negro, a yellow-skinned Chinese, or a Red Indian. That also you could not change.

Perhaps you are tall, thin, fair and have blue eyes. Your mother and father had certain characteristics, and so did your grandmother and grandfather. Some of these have been passed on to you. In terms of your appearance you are the product of heredity. This you cannot change.

You were born in 20th-century Europe. If instead you had wished to have been born of a nobleman at the height of the reign of Elizabeth the First in the 16th century, you would be disappointed. You cannot now arrange this.

You were born with certain basic characteristics. You were born at a certain point in earth time. The span of this life is known. So is the general pattern it will take.

The type of problems you will have to face are also known. It may be your problems will be financial ones, an unfaithful husband or wife, loneliness, drug addiction, alcoholism, bigamy, or any one of the many permutations of the trials and tribulations of life here.

When you, as a spirit entity, enter your mother's womb and take possession of the fertilised seed that is there, your memory of an earlier spiritual life is almost completely erased. I say almost because during your temporal existence you will, from time to time, have some degree of personal revelation. This, too, is known.

Within this overall design, you do have free will. But it is subject to natural laws. The whole of the universe is subject to natural laws. The most simple to demonstrate is the one of cause and effect. If you cut yourself, you bleed.

If you plant a daffodil bulb, in the early spring up comes a yellow daffodil. You do not have a sunflower, or a black tulip, any more than when you cut yourself what comes out of your veins is high-quality red wine. These are simple laws.

The whole of science, philosophy and life itself are founded on the basic laws of cause and effect. Natural laws govern your whole life on earth. Every major action you take has a reaction. The acts you do, the attitudes you adopt, the things you say, the thoughts you have, they are like stones tossed into a pool of water. The ripples spread in ever-widening circles.

Though your spiritual memory is erased when your body is conceived, some slight memory remains in your subconscious mind. Every individual in the course of a lifetime here is given an opportunity of having some degree of spiritual revelation.

The degree varies from person to person. There are as many variations as there are people. The extent of your revelation depends on how far your spirit has reached in its evolution.

For instance, you may be in pain and suffering. You may have a disabling disease like

osteo-arthritis, for which orthodox medicine knows no cure. Perhaps after years of pain and discomfort you come to a spirit healer and are cured. The pain, discomfort, stiffness and disability disappear. You are straight, fit and well again.

That healing is one of the moments of spiritual revelation available to you. If you are ready in your development, not only will you change physically, but there will be a moment of growth spiritually.

You will ask questions. You will find you want to learn more about the healing forces that have come to your aid and the spiritual implication of what has happened.

You will want to investigate the knowledge, understanding, happiness, serenity and uplift that this sudden spiritual awareness brings. It may be a lesser moment. Perhaps you are made aware of the right road to take. You may be faced with an important decision.

Perhaps in business you may do one thing and it would be morally right but commercially the poorer. Do the opposite and you may anticipate a gain of material riches, but condemn yourself to a major moral blunder that might never again let you regain the right road.

The moment may be even more simple. The alternative may be presented to you of doing an act of loving kindness and tolerance in place of stern, unyielding self-righteousness.

The laws of cause and effect cannot be altered. They cannot be ignored. They cannot be bent. Recognise the natural laws. Live according to your best interpretation of them. Accept every problem that comes to you as a test of your spiritual strength.

Recognise the opportunities for personal revelation. Always do what is morally right, even if at the time it might seem commercially or materially wrong. Within the framework of place, time, heredity, characteristics and race, you do have free will.

But you ask, "If I do wrong, will I be punished?" You are probably remembering what you were told as a child; do right, you will be rewarded, do wrong, you will be punished.

Punishment has a number of meanings. You are an adult, the father or mother of a child. You are responsible for your every action. If you act wrongly you will suffer from it. This is the law of cause and effect.

A wrong act may colour your whole life. Your conscience could trouble you. You will not be at peace. In old age you may find you are embittered and disillusioned. The life you

have led could, as it draws to a close, seem empty and useless.

If you act rightly, then you feel rested and relaxed. You have a sensation of warmth and happiness. People around you become aware of this. Things start going right for you.

If you continue always to act in the way which the small, inner voice tells you is morally, ethically and spiritually right, then when you reach the end of your earthly life you will find you are content and it has been a full, happy and useful existence.

I have talked about right and wrong acts. Some say there is no black or white but only shades of grey. They are wrong. Throughout your existence, if you live rightly, you will reap happiness and fulfilment. If you live wrongly, then you will meet futility and disillusionment.

Modern psychiatry finds excuses to justify human behaviour. This is a contemporary trend. It says a person was not responsible for what he did because he was provoked, had an unhappy childhood, or something happened to upset his psyche when he was a baby.

I suppose you could find some justification for almost every wrong act. There are those who seek to justify Hitler and Attila the Hun.

Do not let them do this. There is right, and there is wrong. There is white and there is black. As we evolve spiritually so we become more aware of this fact. I do not claim for one moment to be infallible. Nobody is. But there are some acts today which must seem wrong to any thinking and spiritually mature person.

Vivisection is wrong. Last year there were five and a half million experiments carried out on living animals, most without anaesthetics, for "medical research."

I believe this is morally wrong, inexcusable and a terrible indictment of human behaviour. I do not believe for one moment it can be medically right.

To cheat, to lie, not to keep your word, to mislead—all these are wrong. It is wrong in business life to act in any but the most honest, straightforward manner. Anything that is morally wrong cannot be commercially right.

It is possible whatever your business, commercial or professional life may be that in day-to-day dealings with people your code of behaviour can be right all the time.

The pre-natal memory you have of your spiritual life tends to make itself felt as you grow older. The small, inner voice of your conscience will tell you what is right and what is wrong.

If your behaviour is wrong, and your life

becomes futile and empty, the power you may be seeking will corrupt you. To this extent the operation of the natural law of cause and effect does create its own punishment.

You may ask me what happens when you die. "Will I be sent to hell? Will I be tortured? Will I face a day of judgement when my sins will be read aloud and my good deeds set against them? Will a sentence be passed on the balance?"

No, this does not happen. There is no heaven. There is no hell. There is no purgatory. What does happen is that when you have left this world and moved on to a greater existence, there will come a time when you will sit with your spiritual helpers and look back on the life you have led here.

It will be re-enacted in front of you like a television programme. Nothing will be left out. You cannot mislead yourself. As the programme that is your entire life in this world is unfolded so you will note your mistakes. You will see the right actions you took. You will observe with startling clarity the wrong actions and their results.

You make the decisions

When it is over and everything has been exposed, you will discuss the life you have finished with your guides and helpers. You will decide if you are ready to pass on to a further stage in your spiritual evolution, or if another life on earth is needed to give you more experience.

You may decide you need to learn more humility, and perhaps will choose the life of a crippled beggar. You may decide you need to learn more compassion, and will choose the life of a nurse. You may decide that you need to learn more and to understand better the weaknesses of others.

You may even choose to live a life of somebody badly incapacitated. Whatever you decide, you will have a period of rest and readjustment.

Then one day you are ready for your new, educational experience. You gather with your guides. A new life is chosen for you.

Then perhaps centuries after your first visit, you go to sleep again. Your spiritual memory is temporarily erased. You enter into the fertilised seed in a woman's womb. You have enrolled in a new course in the university of life.

This article forms one chapter in Tester's book, "But What Do We Tell the Children?" It is obtainable by post from Psychic News Bookshop at our address, £1.65/\$3.65.

When conviction is absent

REGARDING M. H. Tester's article on whether imminent death should be kept secret (April issue), I feel his opinion is dogmatic due to his knowledge of Survival. It is easy to theorise when the individual concerned is not very close to you.

My husband's illness was diagnosed as inoperable cancer. It was impressed on me that as he was a comparatively young man (41), he was not to be told.

At that time this was shattering news to me. I had no knowledge of Survival, or any particular religious beliefs.

He received every care and attention, was convinced he was going to get better and even planned his future life. I could not have told him, it would have been too cruel. He lived barely three months and was mercifully unconscious for the final three weeks.—(Mrs) E. Elliott, Pickford Lane, Bexleyheath, Kent.

Does not want to know

I FOUND the article very comforting as my brother is dying of cancer, but unfortunately he hasn't been told. My sister-in-law is a non-believer and doesn't wish him to be told.

However, despite your views, I do not think it is for us to pass our opinions on to those who are obviously not willing to listen. I firmly believe all people are not ready for the truth.—(Mrs) B. C. (Full address given).



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The truth about angels and haloes

by PROF IAN PARROTT

I HAVE referred to dissociation, implying a state where the normal senses are not in use. Anyone who walks along a pavement while thinking hard of some philosophical problem may be totally unaware of the people and things passed on the way. He may ultimately bump into a lamp-post.

This is an example of dissociation, the attention being elsewhere so that the eye sees less and the ear is almost completely unaware of sounds.

We must all have had the experience of being unaware of a clock ticking until it is pointed out to us, and in more recent times, the sound of the unheeded radio.

More dramatically, a man who lives near a rippling stream wakes one morning in the depths of a severe winter and he actually notices silence. Something he had been hearing without noticing, day in and day out, is now conspicuous by its absence because the stream is frozen.

It is usual for the trance state to be considered in this way, though there are some fortunate people who can "go off," as we say, and yet retain some sort of awareness of the here and now. Rosemary Brown, the musical medium, is one of these.

In June 1969, on one spectacular occasion in a BBC studio, she was able to talk to the spirit of Liszt, she said, and also to the living people who were present when she was writing down the piece called "Grübelei."

There are people who can see or hear sights and sounds from another dimension. These sights and sounds are similar to the images most people perceive in dreams, but they appear while the percipient is actually awake.

It seems clear that visitations from another dimension have been recorded on a large number of occasions in the Bible. Sometimes it is stated a person is warned "in a dream" (an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, for example), but the dream state is not always indicated.

One of the types of visitor is called an angel. We are told not only of the "Son of Man and all the angels with him" (Matthew 25, 31), but of "the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25, 41). So such a visitor is not necessarily good.

Here we can pause for a moment to think of

The writer is a composer whose published output includes books and articles on musical topics. He has finished a manuscript on Rosemary Brown's musical mediumship. Since 1950 he has been Professor of Music at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. He was educated at Harrow, the Royal College of Music and New College, Oxford.

all those materialists looking at medieval paintings and dismissing these beings as "purely imaginary." The fact that angels are depicted with wings simply intensifies the indulgent materialist's scorn. But here again, what if the materialist has got it all back to front?

If a visitor from another dimension is to appear, he will seem to travel at an impossible speed. Indeed, he does not use space and time in which to travel at all. No wonder he is difficult, if not impossible, to depict visually.

In most genuine ghost stories, the apparition disappears unexpectedly and inexplicably, or "very slowly it faded" or "he disappeared, as it were, into the wall," etc.

Surely the old idea of wings in pictures arose as an attempt, albeit a vain one, to pictorialise the non-material. The logical, but wrong-headed, J. B. S. Haldane, it seems, went so far as to calculate the muscular development of a lark and then reckoned that human-sized angels would have to be very plump to attain flight.

Although apparently occupying some "outside" point in space, all such "other-worldly" visitors come and go as do images in dreams.

A big joke also has been the idea of God as a benevolent old gentleman, with a white beard, riding a cloud. Where would all the humorous cartoonists be without that?

If the materialist thinks other people believe that one, he surely must be joking. This is again back to front. The medieval painter was attempting something so utterly impossible that no one but a joker would take him literally.

Maeterlinck was surely nearer the mark when he said God must be at least as high as the highest thoughts implanted in the best of people.

Another thing seen on old paintings has
(Continued overleaf)

Join this stimulating challenge on semantics

To me Spiritualism is orthodox

by W. H. MACKINTOSH

IT is the most natural thing in the world for us to want to be right in our opinions. Only a person or perhaps someone with a twisted sense of humour would embrace a belief the falsity of which he hoped to see demonstrated.

If we are convinced that our opinions are right, it is not unreasonable to declare this to the whole world irrespective of the willingness of the world to listen. But who has ever heard of anyone making a public announcement of his belief and then declaring it to be quite wrong?

Yet this is precisely what we do when we describe our beliefs as unorthodox or our attitudes as heretical. This strange definition of what we firmly believe to be true is intended to inform the world that we reject some currently accepted doctrine. We are supposed to be affirming that our view is right and that of the credulous masses wrong.

But if we are right and they are wrong, it is we who are orthodox and they who are unorthodox. As I said in a recent criticism of the pejorative use of the word "orthodox" it is derived from the Greek *orthos*, "straight" or "right," and *doxa*, "opinion." Orthodoxy means being right; it does not mean being wrong.

(Continued from previous page)

caused the materialist to smile in a somewhat patronising way as he murmurs, "Naïve." That is the halo in ancient iconography round a saint's head.

It could, of course, be just a mark of respect to put a halo round the head of Jesus or members of the Holy Family, etc., just as the great composer, J. S. Bach, put a colour of string tone behind the recitatives in the "St Matthew Passion," when Jesus himself was portrayed.

But what if we have got it back to front again? Just supposing that living plants and animals as well as humans "have fields of fine sheaths of sub-atomic or protoplasmic energy which permeate the solid physical bodies."*

At any rate in 1950 Semyon Kirlian and his

Spiritualism is indisputably orthodox. It is a new and strange turn of the argument to summon Spiritualists to support heterodoxy in preference to orthodoxy, that is to say, to call upon Spiritualists to proclaim the falsity of their beliefs when these have been proved right.

Those who believe Spiritualism is true, but at the same time insist on placing it in opposition to orthodoxy, ought to confess themselves crazy because they are arguing that Spiritualism is right but yet wrong. Such an argument is infinitely more absurd than any Alice-in-Wonderland fantasy.

Every religion claims, of course, to be orthodox. Every sect within each religion makes a similar claim in relation to other sects. This seems to be an unavoidable consequence of belief. It is always the other fellow who is a heretic, never oneself.

As the 18th-century Bishop William Warburton once wittily remarked, "Orthodoxy is my doxy; heterodoxy is another man's doxy."

Spiritualists ought not to think of themselves as heretics. They should eschew describing themselves as unorthodox or heterodox. In the past the so-called heretic did not regard himself as being heretical. In his view the real heretics were his opponents. He was utterly

wife discovered a way of photographing this "aura" by the use of a high-frequency spark generator. A living leaf, for example, was distinguished from a dead one in this way. This rediscovery of the ancient "astral" body took place—irony of ironies—in that state which was founded on the most materialist of philosophies, the Soviet Union.

A technical book has now appeared, "The Energies of Consciousness," which goes further into the business of Kirlian photography. Of course, Russian parapsychologists, committed to dialectical materialism, may have to object to anything non-physical. They seem happy to call the aura a "bioenergetic manifestation."

But, after all, while alive, we may all have haloes. These auras, we are told, flow outwards and blend to an extraordinary extent. Perhaps the Soviet researchers are dealing with the same fundamental, energy or life or spirit.

(To be continued)

*Peter Tomkins and Christopher Bird, "The Secret Life of Plants."

right; they were utterly wrong. He was orthodox; they were heterodox.

When Luther challenged the Pope's authority it was not because he thought the Pontiff was the champion of orthodoxy, but because he considered him to be a heresiarch. When Luther shook Europe with his famous 95 theses he was firmly persuaded that he was defending orthodoxy, not attacking it.

It is a sorry state of affairs when words like "orthodoxy" and "heresy" not only lose their original meaning, but come to signify the exact opposite of that meaning. It seems that nowadays people are far less concerned than they once were with being either etymologically or philosophically right.

As G. K. Chesterton has said: "Nothing more strangely indicates an enormous and silent evil of modern society than the extraordinary use which is made nowadays of the word 'orthodox.' In former days the heretic was proud of not being a heretic . . . He was orthodox . . . The man was proud of being orthodox, was proud of being right."

This assurance of the believer, this positive assumption that what he believes in is true, is not without its dangers. It may become an arrogant declaration of opinion which has no basis other than prejudice.

The possibility of truth being corrupted and turning into a rigid and unsupported assertion of personal likes and dislikes is always with us, but it does not warrant the rejection of truth.

We believe that Spiritualism is true and, therefore, right. Our reason for believing this is derived from both personal experience and logical necessity. Our belief rests on objective evidence and does not depend for its validity on any predilection of the believer. Since our belief is right, we are justified in declaring it to be an expression of orthodoxy.

Every religion and sect claims to be orthodox. What special claim to truth does Spiritualism have that we should prefer its orthodoxy to that of any other religion? It is a practical question and demands a practical answer.

We choose Spiritualism because its bearing on human interests is more immediate and its propositions more capable of verification than is the case with other religions.

The second of our reasons for choosing Spiritualism requires no further explanation in this context, but the first deserves to be amplified. Spiritualism concentrates on human beings in the very act of living.

There are plenty of philosophies which present us with a huge synthesis of all things, but

the wider the area they pretend to encompass the more shallow is the content of their teaching.

As a true philosophy Spiritualism is concerned with the instant. It is the present moment that really matters. The past is gone and cannot be recalled; the future has not yet arrived. But the shape it assumes will depend on what happens now. We are at the crossroads, but which road should we take?

The ultimate goal of our evolution is to turn the present moment into the Eternal Now. This is really what immortality means. The desire for immortality is not a paltry selfishness but a natural extension of the desire for life. If it is permissible to wish to make one's life as long as possible, then it is equally permissible to wish to make it immortal.

Spiritualism considers itself to be the embodiment of a great, universal truth. As I have already said, Spiritualism is indisputably orthodox because it embraces both "right belief" and "right worship."

It is not only an intellectual system apprehended by the mind, but a field of vision wherein the physical world is seen in its true relation to the spiritual one.

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Forecasting the year 2,500 when Spiritualism is the world's only religion

When churches become museums

by DR NASSIF ISAAC

THERE is a Chinese proverb which says, "The prisons are locked day and night, but nevertheless they are always full; the temples are always open but empty."

This proverb reflects the present state of many kinds of churches* of the innumerable religions. They are like whitened sepulchres which appear beautiful outwardly, but sheltering within the dead bones of the past and every impurity from ancient rites and doctrines conceived thousands of years ago.

There are magnificent buildings with few worshippers but more tourists, who come to look at the architecture. Vast wealth was wasted in first erecting and then maintaining temples, cathedrals, chapels, mosques, synagogues, pagodas, fanes, ashrams and several other styles of churches. All these would have no purpose if people were free from the curse of ignorance.

The interest in attending churches diminishes. Doubtters and freethinkers have appeared. To be religious has become an out-of-date affair. In truth no man can be entirely irreligious. Though he is not capable of accepting some forms of religion or dogma, he believes the "truth," if he finds in it an echo in his thoughts.

In 1965, I attended the 50th universal congress of Esperanto in Tokyo. In this distant land I participated in as many of the excursions arranged as possible. Without any exaggeration, the greatest number of visits were to temples. There are Buddhist and Shintoist temples. We simply went from one to another as though our Japanese colleagues intended vainly to convert us to either of these two religions.

Four years later, I attended the 53rd universal congress of Esperanto in Madrid. Similar visits to holy buildings were repeated. Our Spanish colleagues guided us from one cathedral to another. Some were richly ornamented with bronze and gold-plated statues, while miserable hovels surrounded them.

These slums—their occupants were devout Roman Catholics—existed despite the fact that the Vatican is the world's rich organisation. Its capital invested in many multi-national businesses is £2,000 million apart from owning priceless antiquities and cathedrals everywhere. The Roman Catholic hierarchy prefers to have golden and richly decorated great houses than good homes for the poor. Where priests swarm, there misery reigns.

Tourists have similar experiences in Egypt or any other Islamic country. They are able to visit mosques to admire the Islamic architecture.

The situation in present-day churches is they are partly shrines, but largely museums and monuments to the piety of the past, spiritual power-houses that have suffered a power cut which no one seems able to put right.

During my visit to one cathedral in Spain, I entered wearing my Arab head-dress. The caretaker asked me in Spanish to remove it. Not understanding the reason for this absurd request I completely ignored him. Still he followed me.

Finally a Spanish colleague explained the reason to me. He told me that traditionally it is an indignity for men to enter the cathedral with covered heads. I then showed him my shoes which were dirty. After a long argument I finally acceded to the request. I was acting according to the Arab proverb, "If you find people worshipping a bull, cut grass and give it to the beast."

In Japan, India and Egypt, I noticed that one removes the shoes and not the head covering. I think this is wiser.

In 1970, I went to the 54th universal congress of Esperanto in Helsinki. Here in Finland I encountered a more progressive idea about the churches of the future. In Hameenlinna, the official guide showed us a Christian church built in 1798. He said the architect planned it in a style which enabled it to be transformed into a theatre.

He foresaw the time when people would not have a tendency towards religion because they would search for knowledge instead of belief. As a consequence, all churches would become

*The word "Church" with capital "C" refers to the Christian Church, but with a small "c" means any other place of worship belonging to any religion.

obsolete. These signs have already appeared on the horizon.

The following news item appeared in the "Sunday Times" of January 2, 1977: "Since 1969, 600 Anglican churches in the United Kingdom have been demolished or put to secular use. Economic pressures, dwindling congregations and a shortage of clergy would have closed many more, particularly in rural areas, but for the grouping of several parishes under a single incumbent."

In Leningrad I saw a cathedral which had already become a museum, the realisation of what the architect in Hameenlinna foresaw. I witnessed the inevitable fate of today's churches. I foresee another kind of fate. People will simply make models of every different style of church and put them in the national museums of every country. Near every church they will place the respective "holy book."

On entering one of these museums in the year AD 2500, anywhere in the world, one will press a button and will hear the following in, I believe, Esperanto:

"In this room of ancient reliefs are models of churches. Each represents a separate religion or belief. They all lie dead and forgotten. Olympus is silent, Venus is now but a graven image. No longer does Jehovah speak to his chosen people. Many of the sacred temples of India are in ruins. The ancient religions of Peru and Mexico are forgotten.

"Religions, like nations, have their periods of birth, growth and decay. What is orthodox in one age is rejected in contempt by the next. Gods, like their creators, have passed away like those who created them.

"As you see, each model differs from the other, as indeed, did the religions. Each religion insisted it was of divine origin, that its teachings must be observed by followers, and that its records were sacred and divinely inspired.

"Incidentally, everyone who did not accept its teachings was condemned, but those who were its true followers would be saved from hell in the life to come. Each religion's followers were so simple and ignorant that they looked on all those who held other religious beliefs as pitiable and fit only for destruction. All religions taught that the only right way to heaven was that which was defined by their own particular revelation, and that all other ways were of the Devil.

"Followers of one religion boldly explained away all the writings of other religions as 'mythology' and termed the followers 'infidels.' They quite forgot they were 'infidels' to their

opponents. Each resented as impertinence the arrogant assumption that his Scriptures were myths or plagiarisms. One man's religion was another man's superstition.

"We have put aside such doctrines as false and egotistical. We know of no such favouritism on the part of the Supreme. He, God over all, shows no favouritism to any clique of His creatures in one particular corner of the earth. In all ages there has been a revelation of God, suited to the special circumstances of the time.

"Outstanding examples of such bigotry are the Inquisition and the Crusades in the Middle Ages which were done in the name of religion. The Inquisition was an ecclesiastical institution and tribunal, set up to search out and judge heretics and sorcerers, whom they punished, with the help of civil power, by death. The Church in the Middle Ages tormented the victims to death only because they had a little different concept from official Christianity.

"On the other hand, the Crusades were wars between two religions, Christianity and Islam. Christians, whose God was the bloodthirsty Jehovah, sent an expedition to Palestine against the Muslims to reconquer Jerusalem. Christians and Muslims warred against the unbelievers of their religions.

"These man-made religions were always curses to humanity. But we thank God because scientific progress has undermined the capability for belief and has made museums out of religions objects. It is evident that we, children of the 25th century, do not receive any longer inspiration in churches, or sacred books, or the sacraments or other religious ceremonies based on unscientific assertions. They have no appeal for the evolved intelligence of our epoch.

"The one and only 'holy book' in existence is the universe which is sustained by the Almighty's laws. From that, we can learn far more than from any other book in the world, however respected or revered it may be.

"It is impossible to give detailed clarification about the fundamental differences between these man-made religions. But as examples we describe some of the differences between Christianity and Islam, once considered as world religions:

"Christians believed that Jesus was crucified to redeem the world from all iniquity. Muslims did not believe either in the crucifixion or in the redemption. Says the Koran 4, 157:

"'And because of their saying, we slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger.

They slew him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them. And those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain.'

"The Koran, 2, 123, states, 'And guard (yourselves) against a day when no soul will in aught avail another, nor will compensation be accepted from it, nor will intercession be of use to it; nor will they be helped.'

"From the Koran, 5, 17, regarding Christians who believed Jesus was God *incarnated*, it states that Muslims believe this was a heresy. 'They indeed have disbelieved who say, "Lo, Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary." Say, "Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth?" Allah's is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. And Allah is able to do all things.'

"Muslims rejected the Christian belief in the Trinity. States the Koran 5, 73: 'They surely disbelieved who say: "Lo, Allah is the third of three, when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not from so saying a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieved."'

"Here are few examples of serious differences and conflicts between two of these man-made religions. Despite these differences, the adherents of each religion believed their creed was the only one inspired by God. What kind of god is he who dictates contrary instructions? In fact he must be a malicious god because he consciously sets up barriers between his creatures.

"Even if we study any of these so-called sacred books, we can still find many conflicting statements, which prove that these books are man-made.

"These man-made religions were separating people instead of uniting them. They had not succeeded because they caused contention between the adherents of the different sects. Religions were sources of strife instead of bases for relishing mankind's desire for a continuing peace which we have now in the 25th century. They have sundered and separated people instead of uniting them everywhere. They proved to be swords among people, when they should have been balm to heal all their wounds.

"We live in one of history's remarkable epochs. Thanks are due to the universal scientific religion of Spiritualism which has replaced these old religions and beliefs. They were just

symbols of the truth we have discovered. We have grown out of these beliefs. Our scientific religion gives us joy that transcends all material difficulties, and an irresistible desire to serve God and mankind by every available means whenever there is a need.

"We live in an age in which every individual is a priest because we no longer require shrines or those who array themselves in special garb to advertise their piety.

"Only in Spiritualism do we find emphasised the great, fundamental principles which had been accepted by all the past great teachers. Spiritualism is the only true religion for the present just as it has been in the past.

"Around its basic truths mankind in ignorance coiled superstitions which in different forms became embodied in the past religions, the relics of which you still find everywhere.

"During the last few hundred years Spiritualists were able to uncoil the false from the true, and reveal the truth which the various man-made religions have hidden in a black robe of superstition and ignorance.

"Now people of all nations have a common knowledge of the great facts of existence. All religious differences have disappeared. Mankind everywhere worships in one temple whose dome is the firmament inlaid with the sun, whose true priests are the interpreters of nature."

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Where Spiritualism has a vital part to play

How to build an ideal world order

by GORDON CHARLEY

I BELIEVE that Spiritualism is essential for the building of an ideal world order.

Spiritualism has been defined as the science, philosophy and religion of continuous life.

I would say an ideal world order is one that follows the divine laws.

The Lord's Prayer expresses it in a simple desire, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What is God's will? What and where is heaven? Those who solve these two mysteries hold the key to building an ideal world order.

If people can be convinced by their own reason and personal experience that death is not the end, it will tend to change their whole outlook on life.

The materialistic view that death is the end, and only the making of money and position matters, has led us where we are now. For many life seems to be a raw deal and has little real meaning.

Some of us remember how, during the last war, hope ran high. We thought to return to a land fit for heroes. We remember the disappointments of fighting men who were reduced to begging in the gutter, and those lean years when materialists seemed to prosper and get away with many a crooked deal.

Today we have no illusions. We see the same manipulators and profiteers with influence in high places.

We no longer expect the millennium. We ponder over the problem in our quiet moments as to how many thousands of workers will be kept in employment.

To fall back into the same old rut is unthinkable, but how to avoid it? The whole vast scheme of things seems beyond individual comprehension. We hope for the best and await the worst. Deep down we feel a great, natural urge.

We want to be happy. We want this life, which is very dear to us, but without all the snags of poverty, disease, suffering, sorrow, insecurity, fear, injustice and hatred.

We don't expect to get it for nothing. We are prepared to work very hard for it. But supposing we cannot achieve it in our lifetime, are we to despair? The Spiritualist says "No."

The Spiritualist believes that the more he

learns about the next life, the better he can cope with the difficulties of this one. It gives him a pattern on which he can mould his conduct, so as to get the best results despite all these adverse circumstances.

The Spiritualist is convinced of Survival; that life is continuous; that this short span on earth is but a small fragment of his existence; that one day he will find himself in a world where he can express himself fully.

The going may be hard in places, but he is sure of his goal. It is a world where he can do things he has always wanted to do; where he is always fit and well, feeling full of life; and where he can serve others.

It is a world with trees and flowers, hills and dales, streams and rivers, sand and sea, music and art, history and learning, science and culture, and a sweet companion with whom to share it.

This is the astral plane and it is as real as

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this earth. People who try to live a decent sort of life go there when they die.

Most of us have seen death at one time or another. We know how the physical body decays and becomes dust. If death is not the end, what survives? The individual spirit, the real you, and also your astral body.

When we die, we find ourselves in our astral bodies. These are identical with our present ones, except that they are complete, free from disease and have shape and beauty according to our mental and spiritual development.

What is it made of, and how can two bodies occupy the same place? To get the answers we must consider the atomic structure of all physical matter.

Early scientists thought that all matter consisted of minute particles so small that they could not be divided into anything smaller. They call these particles atoms. You could crowd a million in one inch.

Later, through the discovery of Röntgen and X-rays and radium emanations, they found that these so-called atoms were full of space.

Let me give an illustration. If a football were

placed in the centre of St Paul's Cathedral, and around the outer edge of the dome we were to rotate a couple of marbles at incredible speed and in all axial directions, it would have the appearance of a huge ball. That represents the relative solidity of the atom.

The atom, therefore, is now found to be nearly all space. We have a central nucleus or proton around which are whirling electrons. If we increase the number of protons or electrons, we get different elements.

If we removed all the space and crowded the protons and electrons together, the total substance of our bodies would hardly fill a thimble.

Our idea of solid matter therefore is pure illusion; we are mostly vibration and space. The whirling propeller is almost invisible, but if one trusted to one's eyes and walked into it, the result would be disastrous.

These atoms of the body have an etheric counterpart. This consists of etheric atoms far less dense and vibrating at a much higher rate.

When the spirit, or real you, controls matter, it does so through the etheric counterpart. It will be obvious that there is plenty of room for both to occupy the same space at the same time.

Doctors have asserted that the real individual is the brain and that when this is destroyed a man ceases to exist. Surgical science, however, like everything else, progresses. Cases are known where people have remained alert, intelligent and normal with half of their brain removed through tumours, and have lived for years after the operation.

This upsets the materialistic theory of existence. One case is recorded of an inmate of an asylum who was completely paralysed for years. Suddenly, just before he died, he recovered his reason and full mental faculties, and was quite normal.

When the surgeons made a post-mortem examination they found his skull was empty, except for a small quantity of water.

No, the real you is a spirit and can never die.

The astral body is joined to the physical one by a silver cord. This silver cord is mentioned in Ecclesiastes, 12, 6.

Whenever the astral body leaves the physical one, it remains connected to it by this cord, except at death. As a person dies the cord is broken. The physical atoms of the body no longer under control disintegrate to dust.

Anesthetics, drugs and shock throw the astral body out of alignment with the physical one. People who are killed suddenly, like soldiers, do not immediately realise they are dead. Their

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etheric bodies, being an exact counterpart of the physical ones, look just as real, as also do the surroundings, clothes, etc.

There are thousands wandering about in the astral planes trying to find out where they are.

What is sleep and what happens to the conscious mind during it? We now believe that when we sleep the astral body separates from the physical one and is regenerated by etheric forces.

It is stated that our astral selves often go to the astral world to meet our friends and get accustomed to the surroundings, so that when we pass over we do not find ourselves in a strange land.

How do we know this? We are mostly indebted to a young man named Sylvan Muldoon, who found he was able to travel in his astral body to various places and record what was happening.

He was able to see himself in his astral body and his physical one lying in bed at the same time. He saw the silver cord, estimated its thickness at various distances from the body, and found that it could stretch to any length.

Any sudden noise or shock pulled him back into the physical body.

Gerhardi, the novelist, has also related his experiences of astral projection. With training anyone can achieve it, but it takes time and patience.

Ice and steam are matter in two different states of vibration. We can detect these different vibrations by temperature.

When people in the astral plane lower their vibrations, and those on the physical raise their etheric vibrations, the two can mingle, just as ice melted to water and steam condensed to water can mingle.

In this condition we can see and talk to people of the astral world. Animals have this power and can see astral people and other astral animals. People who possess this faculty naturally are said to be psychic. Mediums come into this category.

But what of our real selves, the mind or spirit? Man has a conscious and a subconscious mind. F. W. H. Myers, classical scholar and psychic researcher, wrote two volumes about this subject. The subconscious mind is normally cut off from the conscious mind.

Persons can be hypnotised and, in that state, told to take down a book from a shelf and open it to a certain page at a certain time a week ahead.

They come out of their hypnotic trance and are unaware of the message. Yet a week later,

and at the precise hour, they go and do automatically what they were told in trance.

The subconscious mind seems to be like a treasure-house of previous experiences. It appears to be able to release to the conscious mind from time to time the necessary information and direction for its well-being. This would explain instinct, inspiration, and what we call a hunch to act suddenly without premeditated thought.

Then, again, the subconscious mind may be getting impressions from guides in the astral world. It may even be building experiences and knowledge unknown to our conscious selves.

I believe it retains a record of every thought and act. When it is withdrawing with the astral body, as in the case of a person drowning, the scroll is unwrapped and all the past life flashes through the conscious mind.

(To be continued)

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If we had planned it in the spirit world

Your 'enemy' might be your best friend

by PAT DOBSON

AFTER 19 years of what I felt to be the most disastrous marriage, I entered a Spiritualist church. I did not know or care what kind of church it was. I sought peace, quiet and perhaps a little inner comfort.

I received comforting evidence of love and complete understanding of my situation from my "dead" friends and relatives through the serving medium.

Prior to that day, unhappy as I was, I often wondered if my marriage was *meant* to be. I felt grateful to my husband, inasmuch as that if I had married a "different kind of man, I would not be the growing through striving person I was.

Since learning a thing or two about life, I one day had this spontaneous thought. "It takes a supreme 'goodie' to be able to play the 'baddie'." And this is how the thought developed.

If, as I have come to believe, when we are in the spirit world, we look at ourselves and decide we are lacking in some way and still have things to learn, then we opt for another stint of earth life.

We probably make plans so that this time round we will be faced with particular problems which will best enable us to learn what we feel is essential. Many people believe we choose our parents and our station in life to achieve this end. It could well follow that we also make appointments to meet those who will be our friends during life. What struck me suddenly was that we could well make appointments to meet our enemies as well.

Think for a moment of children playing in the streets. They may be acting the parts of cowboys and Indians, or cops and robbers, or even, in the days Jesus walked the earth, Roman soldiers and Israelites.

How many children want to play the baddies? It is innate in us all even as children, that we want to be the goodies. It is the generous soul who will play the character bound to be hated, despised and hissed. It is your best friend who, as a favour to you, and to enable the game to be played properly, will play the loathsome role.

So, let us go back to our plans in the spirit world. We need something or someone to

strive against, and problems to overcome. I can see myself there one day with a dear friend planning to return to earth for another crack at his or her failings and offer—*through love*—to play for the duration the "baddie" for him or her, so that this dear friend may get those hard lessons learned. For love I would do it. Wouldn't you?

Who is to say that those who have hurt us most are not our very dearest and most loyal friends? They are helping by giving us the problems we felt (when in the spirit world) we needed to enable us to get our earth "school-days" over as quickly as possible.

Of course, as we know, we cannot afford to remember our plans and our deal with the friend who is to play enemy when we are here. It wouldn't work if we did. I wonder if Jesus did not remember (if only vaguely) that Judas had made such an appointment with him—and such a sacrifice for him?

It would explain much. He was a marvellous man, a compassionate and most understanding soul. But his foreknowledge of what awaited him, and his acceptance of the role of Judas, makes me wonder.

Perhaps Judas was his very best friend, making sure the plan was carried through to the very end *for the good of us all*.

As Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." How right could he be?

I may be mistaken in this line of thought, but at least it makes one pause to think. Might not my "enemy" really be my best friend? It would do us all good to bear this thought in mind. It has helped me wonderfully. I hope it might also help those who read this.

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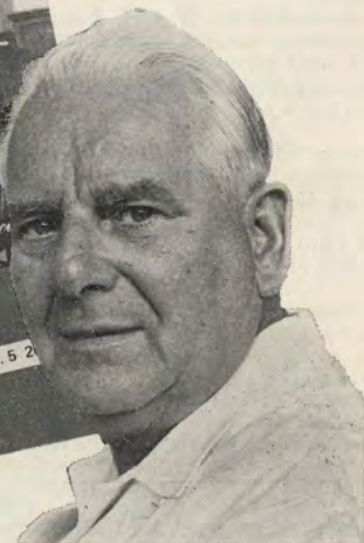
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