

## To Those Who Mourn

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Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;  
Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!  
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever;  
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!  
--Sir Edwin Arnold

"Tis but as when one layeth  
His worn-out robes away  
And taking new ones, sayeth  
"These will I wear today!"  
So putteth by the Spirit  
Lightly its garb of flesh,  
And passeth to inherit  
A residence afresh

--Sir Edwin Arnold

*Friend:* You have lost by death one whom you loved dearly, one who perhaps was all the world to you; and so to you that world seems empty, and life no longer worth the living. You feel that joy has left you forever, that existence can be for you henceforth nothing but hopeless sadness, naught but one aching longing for "the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still." You are thinking chiefly of yourself and your intolerable loss; but there is also another sorrow. Your grief is aggravated by your uncertainty as to the present condition of your beloved; you feel that he has gone, you know not where. You hope earnestly that all is well with him, but when you look upward all is void; when you cry there is no answer. And so despair and doubt overwhelm you, and make a cloud that hides from you the sun that never sets.

Your feeling is most natural; I, who write, understand it perfectly, and my heart is full of sympathy for all those who are afflicted as you are. But I hope that I can do more than sympathize: I hope that I can bring you help and relief. Such help and relief have come to thousands who were in your sad case. Why should they not come to you also?

You say: "How can there be relief or hope for me?"

There is the hope of relief for you because your sorrow is founded in misapprehension; you are grieving for something *which has not really happened*. When you understand the *facts* you will cease to grieve.

You answer: "My loss is a fact. How can you help me, unless indeed you give me back my dead?"

I understand your feeling perfectly; yet bear with me for a while, and try to grasp three main propositions, which I am about to put before you, at first merely as broad statement, and then in convincing detail:

1. Your loss is only an *apparent fact*, apparent from your point of view. I want to bring you to another viewpoint. Your suffering is the result of a great delusion, of ignorance of Nature's law; let me help you on the road towards knowledge by explaining a few simple truths which you can study further at your leisure.
2. You need be under no uneasiness or uncertainty with regard to the condition of your loved one, for the life after death is no longer a mystery. The world beyond the grave exists under the same natural laws as this which we know, and has been explored and examined with scientific accuracy.
3. You must not mourn, for your mourning does harm to your loved one. If you can once open your mind to the truth, you will mourn no more.

You may perhaps feel that these are only assertions; but let me ask you on what grounds you hold your present belief, whatever it may be. You think you hold it because some Church teaches it, or because it is supposed to be founded upon what is written in some holy book; or because it is the general belief of those around you, the accepted opinion of your time. But if you will try to clear your mind from preconceptions, you will see that this opinion also rests merely upon assertion for the Churches teach different views, and the words of the holy book may be and have been variously interpreted. The accepted view of your time is *not* based upon any definite knowledge; it is mere hearsay. These matters which affect us so nearly and so deeply are too important to be left to mere supposition or vague belief; they demand the certainty of scientific investigation and tabulation. Such investigation has been undertaken, such tabulation has been accomplished; and it is the result of these which I wish to put before you. I ask no blind credence; I state what I myself know to be facts, and I invite you to examine them.

Let us consider these propositions one by one. To make the subject clear to you I must tell you a little more about the constitution of man than is generally known to those who have made no special study of the matter. You have heard it said vaguely that man possesses an immortal something called a soul, which is supposed to survive the death of the body. I want you to cast aside that vagueness and to understand that, even if it were true, it is an understatement of the facts. Do not say: "I hope that I have a soul," but "I *know* that I *am* a soul." For that is the real truth; man *is* a soul." and *has* a body. The body is not the man; it is only the clothing of the man. What you call death is the laying aside of a worn-out garment, and it is no more the end of the man than it is the end of *you* when you remove your overcoat. Therefore you have *not* lost your friend; you have only lost sight of the cloak in which you were accustomed to see him. The cloak is gone, but the man who wore it is not; surely it is the *man* that you

love and not the garment.

Before you can understand your friend's condition you must understand your own. Try to grasp the fact that you are an immortal being, immortal because you are divine in essence, because you are a spark from God's own Fire; that you lived for ages before you put on this vesture that you call a body, and that you will live for ages after it has crumbled into dust. "God made man to be an image of His own eternity." This is not a guess or a pious belief; it is a definite scientific fact, capable of proof, as you may see from the literature on the subject if you will take the trouble to read. [A list of books will be found at the end of this pamphlet]

What you have been thinking of as your life is in truth only one day of your life as a soul, and the same is true of your beloved; therefore *he is not dead*. It is only his body that is cast aside.

Yet you must not therefore think of him as a mere bodiless breath, as in any way less himself than he was before. As St Paul said long ago: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." People misunderstand that remark, because they think of these bodies as successive, and do not realize that we, all of us, possess both of them even now. You, as you read this, have both a "natural" or physical body, which you cannot see, that which St. Paul called the "spiritual." And when you lay aside the physical you still retain that other finer vehicle; you are clothed in your "spiritual body." If we symbolize the physical body as an overcoat or cloak, we may think of this spiritual body as the ordinary house-coat which the man wears underneath that outer garment.

If that idea is by this time clear to you, let us advance another step. It is not only at what you call death that you doff that overcoat of dense matter; every night when you go to sleep you slip it off for awhile, and roam about the world in your spiritual body, invisible as far as this dense world is concerned, but clearly visible to those friends who happen to be using their spiritual bodies at the same time. For each body sees only that which is on its own level; your physical body sees only other physical bodies. When you resume your overcoat that is to say, when you come back to your denser body, it occasionally happens that you have some recollection, although usually a considerably distorted one of what you have seen when you were away elsewhere; and then you call it a vivid dream. Sleep, then, may be described as a kind of temporary death, the difference being that you do not withdraw yourself so entirely from your overcoat as to be unable to resume it. It follows that when you sleep, you enter the same condition as that into which your beloved has passed. What that condition is I will now proceed to explain.

Many theories have been current as to the life after death, most of them based upon misunderstandings of ancient scriptures. At one time the horrible dogma of what was called everlasting punishment was almost universally accepted in Europe, though none but the hopelessly ignorant believe it now. It was based upon a mistranslation of certain words attributed to Christ, and it was maintained by the mediaeval monks as a convenient bogey with which to frighten the ignorant masses into well-doing. As the world advanced in civilization, men began to see that such a tenet was not only blasphemous but ridiculous. Modern religionists have therefore replaced it by somewhat saner suggestions; but they are usually quite vague and far from the simplicity of the truth. All the Churches have complicated their doctrines because they insisted upon starting with an absurd and unfounded dogma of a cruel and angry Deity who wished to injure His people. They import this dreadful doctrine from primitive Judaism, instead of accepting the teaching of the Christ that God is a loving Father. People who have grasped the fundamental fact that

God is Love, and that His universe is governed by wise eternal laws have begun to realize that those laws must be obeyed in the world beyond the grave just as much as in this. But even yet beliefs are vague. We are told of a faraway heaven, of a day of judgment in the remote future, but little information is given us as to what happens here and now. Those who teach do not even pretend to have any personal experience of after-death conditions. They tell us not what they themselves know, but only what they have heard from others. How can that satisfy us?

The truth is that the day of blind belief is past; the era of scientific knowledge is with us, and we can no longer accept ideas unsustained by reason and common sense. There is no reason why scientific methods should not be applied to the elucidation of problems which in earlier days were left entirely to religion; indeed, *such methods have been applied* by The Theosophical Society and the Society of Psychical Research; and it is the result of these investigations, made in a scientific spirit, that I wish to place before you now.

We are spirits, but we live in a material world, a world, however, which is only partially known to us. All the information that we have about it comes to us through our senses; but these senses are seriously imperfect. Solid objects we can see; we can usually see liquids, unless they are perfectly clear; but gases are in most cases invisible to us. Research shows that there are other kinds of matter far finer than the rarest of gases; but to these our physical senses do not respond, and so we can gain no information with regard to them by physical means.

Nevertheless, we can come into touch with them; we can investigate them, but we can do it only by means of that "Spiritual body" to which reference has been made, for that has its senses just as this one has. Most men have not yet learned how to use them, but this is a power which can be acquired by man. We know that it can be, because it has been so acquired; and those who have gained it find themselves able to see much which is hidden from the view of the ordinary man. They learn that this world of ours is far more wonderful than we have ever supposed; that though men have been living in it for thousands of years, most of them have remained blankly ignorant of all the higher and more beautiful parts of its life. The line of research to which I am referring has already yielded many marvelous results, and is opening before us new vistas every day. This information may be gleaned from Theosophical literature, but we are here concerned with only one part of it, with the new knowledge that it puts before us as to the life beyond what we call death, and the condition of those who are enjoying it.

The first thing that we learn is that death is not the end of life, as we have ignorantly assumed, but is only a step from one stage of life to another. I have already said that it is the laying aside of an overcoat, but that after it the man still finds himself clad in his ordinary housecoat, the spiritual body. But though, because it is so much finer, St Paul gave it the name of "spiritual," it is still a body, and therefore, material, even though the matter of which it is composed be very much finer than ordinarily known to us. The physical body serves the spirit as a means of communication with the physical world. Without that body as an instrument, he would be unable to communicate with that world, to impress himself upon it or to receive impressions from it. We find that the spiritual body serves exactly the same purpose; it acts as an intermediary for the spirit with the higher and "spiritual" world. But this spiritual world is not something vague, faraway and unattainable; it is simply a higher part of the world which we now inhabit. I am not for a moment denying that there are other worlds, far higher and more remote; I am saying only that what is commonly called death has nothing to do with those, and that it is merely a transference from one stage or condition to another in this world with which we are all familiar. It may be said that the man who makes

this change becomes invisible to you; but if you think of it, you will see that the man has always been invisible to you, that what you have been in the habit of seeing is only the body which he inhabited. Now he inhabits another and a finer body, which is beyond your ordinary sight, but not necessarily by any means beyond your reach.

The first point to realize is that those whom we call the dead have not left us. We have been brought up in a complex belief which implies that every death is a separate and marvelous miracle, that when the soul leaves the body it somehow vanishes into a heaven beyond the stars, no suggestion being made as to the mechanical means of transit over the appalling spaces involved. Nature's processes are assuredly wonderful, and often to us incomprehensible, but they never fly in the face of reason and common sense. When you take off your overcoat in the hall, you do not suddenly vanish to some distant mountain-top; you are standing just where you were before, though you may present a different outward appearance. Precisely in the same way, when a man puts off his physical body he remains exactly where he was before. It is true that you no longer see him, but the reason for this is not that he has gone away, but that the body which he is now wearing is not visible to your physical eyes.

You may be aware that our eyes respond only to a very small proportion of the vibrations which exist in nature, and consequently the only substances which we can see are those which happen to reflect these particular undulations. The sight of your "spiritual body" is equally a matter of response to undulations, but they are of quite a different order, coming from a much finer type of matter. All this, if it interests you, you may find worked out in detail in Theosophical literature.

For the moment all which concerns us is that by means of your physical body you can see and touch the physical world only, while by means of the "spiritual body" you can see and touch the things of the spiritual world. And remember that this is in no sense *another* world, but simply a more refined part of this world. Once more I say, there *are* other worlds, but we are not concerned with them now. The man of whom you think as departed is in reality with you still. When you stand side by side, you in the physical body and he in the "spiritual" vehicle, you are unconscious of his presence because you cannot see him; but when you leave your physical body in sleep you stand side by side with him in full and perfect consciousness, and your union with him is in every way as full as it used to be. So during sleep you are happy with him whom you love; it is only during waking hours that you feel the separation.

Unfortunately for most of us, there is a break between the physical consciousness and the consciousness of the spiritual body, so that although in the latter we can perfectly remember the former, many of us find it impossible to bring through into waking life the memory of what the soul does when it is away from the body in sleep. If this memory were perfect, for us there would indeed be no death. Some men have already attained this continued consciousness, and all may attain it by degrees, for it is part of the natural unfolding of the powers of the soul. In many, such unfolding had already begun, and so fragments of memory come through, but there is a tendency to stamp them as only dreams and therefore valueless, a tendency specially prevalent among those who have made no study of dreams and do not understand what they really are. But while as yet only a few possess full sight and full memory, there are many who have been able to feel the presence of their loved ones, even though they cannot see; and there are others who though they have no definite memory, wake from slumber with a sense of peace and blessedness which is the result of what has happened in that higher world.

Remember always that this is the lower world and that is the higher, and that the greater in this case includes the less. In that consciousness you remember perfectly what has happened in this, because as you pass from this to that in falling asleep, you are casting off a hindrance, the encumbrance of the lower body; but when you come back to this lower life, you again assume that burden, and in assuming it you cloud the higher faculties and so lapse into forgetfulness. So it follows that if you have some piece of news that you wish to give to a departed friend, you have only to formulate it clearly in your mind before falling asleep, with the resolution that you will tell him of it, and you are quite certain to do so as soon as you meet him. Sometimes you may wish to consult him on some point, and here the break between the two forms of consciousness usually prevents you from bringing back a clear answer. Yet even if you cannot bring back a definite recollection, you will often wake with a strong impression as to his wish or his decision; and you may usually take it that such an impression is correct. At the same time, you should consult him as little as possible, for, as we shall see later, it is distinctly undesirable that the dead should be troubled in their higher world with affairs that belong to the department of life from which they have been freed.

This brings us to the consideration of the life which the dead are leading. In it there are many and great variations, but at least it is almost always happier than the earth life. As an old scripture puts it: "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the universe they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace." We must disabuse ourselves of antiquated theories; the dead man does not leap suddenly into an impossible hell, nor does he fall into a still more impossible hell. There is indeed no hell in the old wicked sense of the word; and there is no hell anywhere in any sense except such as a man makes for himself. Try to understand clearly that death makes no change in the man; he does not suddenly become a great saint or angel, nor is he suddenly endowed with all the wisdom of the ages. He is just the same man after his death as he was the day before it, with the same emotions, the same dispositions, the same intellectual development. The only difference is that he has lost the physical body.

Try to think exactly what that means. It means absolute freedom from the possibility of pain or fatigue; freedom also from all irksome duties; entire liberty (probably for the first time in his life) to do exactly what he likes. In the physical life man is constantly under constraint; unless he is one of a small minority who have independent means he is ever under the necessity of working in order to obtain money, money which he must have in order to buy food and clothing and shelter for himself and for those who are dependent upon him. In a few rare instances, such as those of the artist and the musician, the man's work is a joy to him, but in most cases it is a form of labour to which he would certainly not devote himself unless he were compelled.

In this spiritual world no money is necessary, food and shelter are no longer needed, for its glory and its beauty are free to all its inhabitants without money and without price. In its rarefied matter, in the spiritual body, he can move hither and thither as he will. If he loves art he may spend the whole of his time in the contemplation of the masterpieces of all the greatest of men; if he be a musician, he may pass from one to the other of the world's chiefest orchestras, or may spend his time in listening to the most celebrated performers. Whatever has been his delight on earth, his hobby, as we should say, he has now the fullest liberty to devote himself to it entirely and to follow it out to the utmost, provided only that its enjoyment is that of the intellect or of the highest emotions, that its gratification does not necessitate the possession of a physical body. Thus it will be seen at once that all rational and decent men are infinitely happier after

death than before it, for they have ample time not only for pleasure but for really satisfactory progress along the lines which interest them most.

Are there then none in that world who are unhappy? Yes, for that life is necessarily a sequel to this, and the man is in every respect the same man as he was before he left his body. If his enjoyments in this world were low and coarse, he will find himself unable to gratify his desires. A drunkard will suffer from unquenchable thirst, having no longer a body through which it can be assuaged; the glutton will miss the pleasures of the table; the miser will no longer find gold for his gathering. The man who has yielded himself during earth-life to unworthy passions will find them gnawing at his vitals. The sensualist still palpitates with cravings that can never now be satisfied; the jealous man is still torn by his jealousy, all the more than he can no longer interfere with the action of its object. Such people as these unquestionably do suffer, but only such as these, only those whose proclivities and passions have been coarse and physical in their nature. And even they have their fate absolutely in their own hands. They have but to conquer these inclinations, and they are at once free from the sufferings which such longings entail. Remember always that there is no such thing as punishment; there is only the natural result of a definite cause; so that you have only to remove the cause and the effect ceases, not always immediately, but as soon as the energy of the cause is exhausted.

There are many people who have avoided these more glaring vices, yet have lived what may be called worldly lives, caring principally for society and its conventions, and thinking only of enjoying themselves. Such people as these have no active suffering in the spiritual world, but they often find it dull, they find time hanging heavy on their hands. They can foregather with others of their type, but they usually find them somewhat monotonous, now that there is no longer any competition in dress or in general ostentation, while the better and cleverer people whom they desire to reach are customarily otherwise engaged and therefore somewhat inaccessible to them. But any man who has rational intellectual or artistic interests will find himself quite infinitely happier outside his physical body than in it, and it must be remembered that it is always possible for a man to develop in that world a rational interest if he is wise enough to do so.

The artistic and intellectual are supremely happy in that new life; yet even happier still, I think, are those whose keenest interest has been in their fellow men, those whose greatest delight has been to help, to succor, to teach. For though in that world there is no longer any hunger or thirst or cold, there are still those who are in sorrow who can be comforted; those who are in ignorance who can be taught. Just because in western countries there is so little knowledge of the world beyond the grave, we find in that world many who need instruction as to the possibilities of this new life; and so one who knows may go about spreading hope and glad tidings there just as much as here. But remember always that "there" and "here" are only terms in deference to our blindness; for that world is here, close around us all the time, and not for a moment to be thought of as a distant or difficult of approach.

Do the dead then see us? may be asked; do they hear what we say? Undoubtedly they see us in the sense that they are always conscious of our presence, that they know whether we are happy or miserable; but they do not hear the words we say, nor are they conscious in detail of our physical actions. A moment's thought will show us what are the limits of their power to see. They are inhabiting, what we have called the "spiritual body," a body which exists in ourselves, and is, as far as appearance goes, an exact duplicate of the physical body; but while we are awake our consciousness is focused exclusively in the latter. We have already said that just as only physical matter appeals to the physical body, so only the

matter of the spiritual world is discernible by that higher body. Therefore, what the dead man can see of us is only our spiritual body, which, however, he has no difficulty in recognizing. When we are what we call asleep, our consciousness is using that vehicle, and so to the dead man we are awake; but when we transfer our consciousness to the physical body, it seems to the dead man that we fall asleep, because though he still sees us, we are no longer paying any attention to him or able to communicate with him. When a living friend falls asleep we are quite aware of his presence, but for the moment we cannot communicate with him. Precisely similar is the condition of the living man (while he is awake) in the eyes of the dead. Because we cannot usually remember in our waking consciousness what we have seen during sleep, we are under the delusion that we have lost our dead; but they are never under the delusion that they have lost us, because they can see us all the time. To them the only difference is that we are with them during the night and away from them during the day; whereas when they were on earth with us, exactly the reverse was the case.

Now this which, following St. Paul, we have been calling the "spiritual body" (it is more usually spoken of as the astral body) is especially the vehicle of our feelings and emotions; it is therefore these feelings and emotions of ours which show themselves most clearly to the eyes of the dead. If we are joyous, they instantly observe it, but they do not necessarily know the reason of the joy; if sadness comes over us, they at once realize it and share it, even though they may not know why we are sad. All this, of course, is during our waking hours; when we are asleep, they converse with us as of yore on earth. Here in our physical life we can disassemble our feelings; in that higher world this is impossible, for they show themselves instantly in visible change. Since so many of our thoughts are connected with our feelings, most of these also are readily obvious in that world; but anything in the nature of abstract thought is still hidden.

You still say that all this has little in common with the heaven and hell of which we are taught in our infancy; yet it is the fact that this is the reality which lay behind these myths. Truly there is no hell; yet it will be seen that the drunkard or the sensualist may have prepared for himself something which is no bad imitation thereof. Only it is not everlasting; it endures only until his desires have worn themselves out. He can at any moment put a period to it, if he is strong enough and wise enough to dominate those earthly cravings and to raise himself entirely above them. This is the truth underlying the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, the idea that after death the evil qualities have to be burned out of a man by a certain amount of suffering before he is capable of enjoying the bliss of heaven.

There is a second and higher stage of the life after death which does correspond very closely to a rational conception of heaven. That higher level is attained when all lower or selfish longings have absolutely disappeared; then the man passes into a condition of religious ecstasy or of higher intellectual activity, according to the line along which his energy has flowed out during his earth-life. That is for him a period of the most supreme bliss, a period of far greater comprehension, or nearer approach to reality. But this joy comes to all, not only to the specially pious.

It must by no means be regarded as a reward, but once more only as the inevitable result of the character evolved in earth life. If a man is full of high and unselfish affection or devotion, if he is splendidly developed intellectually or artistically, the inevitable result of such development will be this enjoyment of which we are speaking. Be it remembered that all these are but stages of one life, and that just as a man's behaviour during his youth makes for him to a large extent the conditions of his middle life and old age, so a man's behaviour during his earth-life determines his condition during these after-states.

Is this state of bliss eternal? You ask. No, for, as I have said, it is the result of the earth life, and a finite cause can never produce an infinite result.

The life of man is far longer and far greater than you have supposed. The Spark which has come forth from God must return to Him, and we are as yet far from that perfection of Divinity. All life is evolving, for evolution is God's law; and man grows slowly and steadily along with the rest. What is commonly called man's life is in reality only one day of his true and longer life. Just as in this ordinary life man rises each morning, puts on his clothes, and goes forth to do his daily work, and then when night descends he lays aside those clothes and takes his rest, and then again on the following morning rises afresh to take up his work at the point where he left it, just so when the man comes into physical life he puts upon him the vesture of the physical body, and when his work-time is over he lays aside that vesture again in what you call death, and passes into the more restful condition which I have described; and when that rest is over he puts upon himself once more the garment of the body and goes forth yet again to begin a new day of physical life, taking up his evolution at the point where he left it. And this long life of his lasts until he attains that goal of divinity which God means him to attain.

All this may well be new to you, and because it is new it may seem strange and grotesque. Yet all that I have said is capable of proof, and has been tested many times over; but if you wish to read all this you must study the literature on the subject, for in a short pamphlet with a special purpose, such as this, I can merely state the facts, and not attempt to adduce the proofs.

You may perhaps ask whether the dead are not disturbed by anxiety for those whom they have left behind. Sometimes that does happen, and such anxiety delays their progress; so we should, as far as possible, avoid giving any occasion for it. The dead man should be utterly free from all thought of the life which he has left, so that he may devote himself entirely to the new existence upon which he has entered. Those therefore who have in the past depended upon his advice should now endeavour to think for themselves, lest by still mentally depending upon him they should strengthen his ties with the world from which he has for the moment turned. So it is always an especially good deed to take care of children, whom a dead man leaves behind him, for in that way one not only benefits the children, but also relieves the departed parent from anxiety and helps him on his upward path.

If the dead man has during life been taught foolish and blasphemous religious doctrines, he sometimes suffers from anxiety with regard to his own future fate. Fortunately there are in the spiritual world many who make it their business to find men who are under such a delusion as this, and to set them free from it by a rational explanation of facts. Not only are there dead men who do this, but there are also many living men who devote their time during the sleep of the body each night to the service of the dead, endeavouring to relieve people from nervousness or suffering by explaining to them the truth in all its beauty. All suffering comes from ignorance; dispel the ignorance and the suffering is gone.

One of the saddest cases of apparent loss is when a child passes away from this physical world and its parents are left to watch its empty place, to miss its loving prattle. What then happens to children in this strange new spiritual world? Of all those who enter it, they are perhaps the happiest and the most entirely and immediately at home. Remember that they do not lose the parents, the brothers, the sisters, the playmates whom they love; it is simply that they have them to play with during what we call the night instead of the day; so that they have no feeling of loss or separation. During our day they are never left

alone, for, as here children gather together and play together, play in Elysian fields full of rare delights. We know how a child here enjoys "making believe," pretending to be this character or that in history, playing the principal part in all sorts of wonderful fairy stories or tales of adventure. In the finer matter of that higher world, thoughts take to themselves visible form, and so the child who imagines himself a certain hero promptly takes on temporarily the actual appearance of that hero. If he wishes for an enchanted castle, his thought can build that enchanted castle. If he desires an army to command, all at once that army is there. And so among the dead the hosts of children are always full of joy, indeed, often even riotously happy.

And those other children of different disposition, those whose thoughts turn more naturally to religious matters, they also never fail to find that for which they long. For the angels and the saints of old exist, they are not mere pious fancies; and those who need them, those who believe in them are surely drawn to them, also find them kinder and more glorious than ever fancy dreamed. There are those who would find God Himself, God in material form; yet even they are not disappointed, for from the gentlest and the kindest teachers they learn that all forms are God's forms, for He is everywhere, and those who would serve and help even the lowest of His creatures are truly serving and helping Him. Children love to be useful; they love to help and comfort; a wide field for such helping and comfort lies before them among the ignorant in the higher world, and as they move through its glorious fields on their errands of mercy and of love they learn the truth of the beautiful old teaching: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye had done it unto Me."

And the tiny babies, those who are as yet too young to play? Have no fear for them, for many a dead mother waits eagerly to clasp them to her breast, to receive them and to love them as though they were her own. Usually such little ones rest in the spiritual world but a short time, and then return to earth once more, often to the very same father and mother. About these the mediaeval monk invented an especially cruel horror, in the suggestion that the un-baptized baby was lost to its friends forever. Baptism is a true sacrament, and not without its uses; but let no one be so unscientific as to imagine that the omission of an outward form like this can affect the working of God's eternal laws, or change Him from a God of love into a pitiless tyrant.

We have spoken so far only of the possibility of reaching the dead by rising to their level during sleep, which is the normal and natural way. There is also, of course, the abnormal and unnatural method of spiritualism, whereby for a moment the dead put on again the veil of flesh, and so become once more visible to our physical eyes. Students of occultism do not recommend this method, partly because it often holds back the dead in his evolution, and partly because there is so much uncertainty about it and so great a possibility of deception and personation. The subject is far too large to take up in a pamphlet such as this, but I have dealt with it in a book called *The Other Side of Death*. There also will be found some account of instances in which the dead spontaneously return to this lower world and manifest themselves in various ways, generally because they want us to do something for them. In all such cases it is best to try and find out, as speedily as may be, what they require, and fulfil their wishes, if possible, so that their minds may be at rest.

If you have been able to assimilate what I have already said, you will now understand that, however natural it may be for us to feel sorrow at the death of our relatives, that sorrow is an error and an evil, and we ought to overcome it. There is no need to sorrow for *them*, for they have passed into a far wider and happier life. If we sorrow for our own fancied separation from them, we are in the first place weeping over

an illusion, for in truth they are not separated from us; and secondly, we are acting selfishly, because we are thinking more of our own apparent loss than of their great and real gain. We must strive to be utterly unselfish, as indeed all love should be. We must think of *them* and not of ourselves, not of what we wish or we feel, but solely of what is best for them and most helpful to their progress.

If we mourn, if we yield to gloom and depression, we throw out from ourselves a heavy cloud which darkens the sky for *them*. Their very affection for us, their very sympathy for us, lay them open to this direful influence. We can use the power which that affection gives us to help them instead of hindering them, if we only will, but to do that requires courage and sacrifice. We must forget ourselves utterly in our earnest and loving desire to be of the greatest possible assistance to our dead. Every thought, every feeling of ours influences them; let us then take care that there shall be no thought which is not broad and helpful, ennobling and purifying.

If it is probable that they may be feeling some anxiety about us, let us be persistently cheerful, that we may assure them that they have no need to feel troubled on our account. If, during physical life, they have been without detailed and accurate information as to the life after death, let us endeavour at once to assimilate such information ourselves, and to pass it on in our nightly conversations with them. Since our thoughts and feelings are so readily mirrored in theirs, let us see to it that those thoughts and feelings are always elevating and encouraging. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

Try to comprehend the unity of all. There is one God, and all are one in Him. If we can bring home to ourselves the unity of that eternal Love, there will be no more sorrow for us; for we shall realize, not for ourselves alone but for those whom we love, that whether we live or die, we are the Lord's and that in Him we live and move and have our being, whether it be in this world or in the world to come. The attitude of mourning is a fruitless attitude, an ignorant attitude. The more we know, the more fully we shall trust, for we shall feel with utter certainty that we and our dead are alike in the hands of perfect Power and perfect Wisdom directed by perfect Love.

### **Books for Further Reading**

**The Other Side of Death** - C W. Leadbeater

**Death and After** - Annie Besant

**The Riddle of Life** - Annie Besant

**At the Feet of the Master** - J. Krishnamurti

**Theosophy Simplified** - Irving S Cooper

**First Principles of Theosophy** - C Jinarajadasa

**The Astral Plane** - C W Leadbeater

**Gods in Exile** - J J van der Leeuw

**Man's Life in Three Worlds** - Annie Besant

**Rationale of Reincarnation** - A E Powell

**Dreams** - C W Leadbeater

**Invisible Helpers** - C W Leadbeater

**The Secret of Happiness** - Irving S Cooper

## **Freedom of Thought**

### **(Resolution passed by The General Council of The Theosophical Society, 1924)**

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership.

No teacher or writer, from H.P. BLAVATSKY onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

## **The Theosophical Society**

The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together people of goodwill whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

## **Theosophy**

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It

restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching us to know the Spirit as ourselves and the mind and body as our servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

### **The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society**

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

### **The Theosophical World View**

**The Theosophical Society**, while reserving for each member full freedom to interpret those teachings known as Theosophy, is dedicated to preserving and realising the ageless wisdom, which embodies both a world view and a vision of human self-transformation.

This tradition is founded upon certain fundamental propositions: The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and inter-dependent whole. Every existent being - from atom to galaxy - is rooted in the same universal, life-creating Reality. This Reality is all-pervasive, but it can never be summed up in its parts, since it transcends all its expressions. It reveals itself in the purposeful, ordered, and meaningful processes of nature as well as in the deepest recesses of the mind and spirit. Recognition of the unique value of every living being expresses itself in reverence for life, compassion for all, sympathy with the need of all individuals to find truth for themselves, and respect for all religious traditions. The ways in which these ideals become realities in individual life are both the privileged choice and the responsible act of every human being. Central to the concern of Theosophy is the desire to promote understanding and brotherhood among people of all races, nationalities, philosophies, and religions. Therefore, all people, whatever their race, creed, sex, caste, or colour, are invited to participate equally in the life and work of the Society. The Theosophical Society imposes no dogmas, but points toward the source of unity beyond all differences.

Devotion to truth, love for all living beings, and commitment to a life of active altruism are the marks of the true theosophist.