

LIFE, DEATH,
AND
WHAT THEN ?

BY
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M.A.

SPECIAL EDITION

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE
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By C. JINARAJADASA, M.A.

When, two years ago, the peaceful life of the world transformed itself into one of warfare, there were certain words that suited better that transformation than any others that I know: "In the midst of life we are in death." We have always had the problem of death before us as a mystery which has been little explained, but I think thousands in these lands of the West will agree that that mystery has become more profound since the days of the war. For when the war broke out for us of the Empire, what did it mean? Thousands of young men, the flower of the land, at once volunteered for a cause that did not touch them personally; they sprang forward to a great ideal, they responded to a call from God. And what was their reward? The reward has been, for thousands of them, death; and so many of us have wanted to know why these, the flower of the land, should have been taken from our midst when we could have spared so many other men.

Now if you consider, in the light of such religious ideas about after-death conditions as you profess,

* A Lecture delivered in the Maclellan Galleries, Glasgow, on Sunday evening, 8th October, 1916.

the fate of those who have died, you will not find the problem easy to solve. It is quite true that all the religions of the world tell you that death is not the ending of man, that there is a life beyond the grave, and that life there is a happy one or an unhappy one according to what you have thought and felt and done before you died. Take the Christian conception of the life beyond the grave; there is a heaven of happiness and there is a place of pain, and after death you go to the one or the other according to what you have been in life. Think now of all those young men who have passed away. They were called suddenly from their ordinary occupations; no time was given them to prepare themselves, to purify themselves. Had they all lived to old age, perhaps some of them would have had more opportunities of purification and so a better chance of heaven. They were not, most of them, saints; and there would be nothing for them specially appealing in the ordinary conception of heaven. Nor were they all entirely sinners, so as to merit any kind of hell; they were like most of us, with good and evil in them. What is their condition beyond the grave? Where are they? There is the problem that so many thousands are asking. Is there any light to be had on this matter? We say yes, and not only light, but accurate knowledge.

It is true that there has been nothing in religious traditions that could be called real scientific knowledge, but that was only because hitherto men have not wanted it. For ages we have been satisfied to respond to the message of religion with faith; but in the modern world, with our scientific education, we desire to understand with the mind, not only to believe with our intuitions. It is because there is this new need of knowledge that there is a new possi-

bility of fulfilling that desire for knowledge; and I want to show you that there is a knowledge on the subject as precise, as definite, as anything that you will get in any department of science.

Now that seems a striking statement to make, does it not? Let me therefore show you first how this knowledge is gained; because, even if you may not immediately be able to accept it, still, if only you could see a rational method of gaining that knowledge, you would be willing to investigate. That is what I would like to do for you, to rouse in you the desire to investigate.

For a few moments I must take you away seemingly from my subject, to analyse for you how we know anything at all according to such facts as science has told us. I see you before me, and that knowledge is a fact of my consciousness. But how has that fact reached me? Now, says science, there is a mysterious substance everywhere called the æther, so tenuous and fine that it is finer than the finest gas that we have. This æther interpenetrates all substances; and the substances of the pillars, the walls, the tables and the chairs in this room, and of our own bodies, are porous to this mysterious æther. This æther is put into waves by the light that comes from the electric bulbs in the room. Some of those waves in the æther are reflected by your bodies, and are sent to my eye; and as my optic nerve is thrown into vibration by those waves, a particular centre in my brain is also thrown into vibration; and thence arises in me the knowledge, "I see." You hear my voice, but that is only because I throw into vibration, by means of my vocal chords and lips, the air in this room; those vibrations impinge upon your auditory nerve, and send a vibration to a particular centre in your brain; and then arises the con-

sciousness in each of you "I hear." So you see that the method of knowledge by any of our senses is by means of a response to vibrations, which vibrations are produced in a medium that exists between each of us as the knower and the thing to be known.

This world in which we live, which normally we know by means of our five senses, is, according to science, a larger world in reality than we are aware of; there are myriads of things which we do not see, which we do not hear, which we do not in any way cognise, because of our limitations. Take, for instance, the matter of sight. We know that when the sun shines, the sun's rays are composed of great series of vibrations; what is called the white ray of sunlight is a bundle of many such series. We can sort out these vibrations by means of a glass prism, and when we do so, at once there come before our eyes the colours of the solar spectrum—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. But science tells us that there are colours in the sun's rays which our eyes cannot see, that before the red, which is the first colour that we see, there are the infra-red rays, and that beyond the violet there are the ultra-violet rays; and those new colours are everywhere, and they come in with their shades into the objects round us, but our eyes cannot see them. Then, furthermore, we know that we do not hear all the possible sounds. There are some people who cannot hear the squeak of a bat, because its note is too high, and there are sounds too which can be produced by mechanical means with vibrations so slow that though they are really sounds our ears do not hear them. There are many, many other vibrations all round us in this our mysterious world to which we are utterly blind, deaf and insensitive.

Now supposing we were sensitive to some of those

mysterious things that are around us, the world which we look at would be quite different. It was Sir William Crookes, the great chemist, who many years ago took a very instructive simile. He said: Supposing you had a man who was so organised that he did not respond to the waves of light, as you and I do, but did respond to the waves of electricity, which we do not—for electricity to us must become light before we see it, or it must affect our nerves by a shock before we can feel it—if you had this peculiarly gifted individual, then, as he stood in this room which is now lit, it would be absolutely dark to him, because he would not respond to the waves of light; but wherever there was an electric wire, by means of the electric flow in it he would know the room and the things in it. If he were to be outside this room at noon, when the sun was shining, there would be no light in the world to him, it would be all dark; but wherever there was an electric wire, a telegraph wire, or a telephone wire, he would see light; wherever there were two atoms moving, creating thereby electricity, there he would see light; and he would see the world around him by means of electrical waves, but not by means of the light waves from the sun. I mention these things only to show you how limited in reality we are as regards knowing the world in which we live. The statement has been made by scientists that of the knowable world recognised by physical science—to be known of course by means of vibrations, the only method—we, constituted as we are, know only about one-eighth.

Now supposing you had a person with a nervous organisation so constructed that he began to see something, if not all, of the other seven-eighths of the world that science says is not known by us; then at once would he not see many curious mysteries of

life solved? Let me take a crude instance to suggest to you the line of solution. Supposing you had a man who could not see *water*, or *vapour*, but could see solid things. Supposing, then, you took him to the seaside; he would not see the water, he would see stretching before him a vast emptiness, and in this hollow he would see fishes moving about unsupported in the air, or what is to him air, and so breaking all the laws of gravity. But supposing he could see the water, then at once he would know that those mysterious breakages of the laws of gravity were not such at all, that the fishes were using the very laws of gravity as they moved. Similarly too, when the sun was shining, and there were clouds moving across it, he would see the sun but not the clouds; and he would note that mysterious shadows fell on the ground from the direction of the sun, and that objects round him were sometimes more illuminated than at other times. We of course would know the reason, that the shadows were cast by clouds, and that the sun's light was being diminished by clouds as they passed in front of it; but till he could see as we see, it would all be a great puzzle.

Now it is in such a way that the moment an individual begins to see more than others of this mysterious world of which they see normally only one-eighth, that the great problem of life beyond the grave becomes solved by him; for the simple reason that he sees that there are other worlds of finer matter everywhere round him, interpenetrating all things, and that in these other worlds the so-called dead live. You may well ask the question: How is it possible to have, here in this room, other worlds? The answer is a very simple scientific reason. Matter such as we know—solid matter, liquid matter, gaseous matter—is not so closely packed as we

imagine. The hardest piece of steel, we know from our scientific experiments, is a very porous thing indeed; between the particles of steel there are enormous vacancies. You can take a piece of lead half an inch thick, and put it in the way of a discharge of ions and electrons, and those tiny particles of matter will go through the piece of lead as if it were nothing more than a wire screen. Such is the constitution of matter as we know it; matter does not fill space absolutely compactly; there are enormous empty spaces between our atoms, and, says science, in those empty spaces matter of a finer composition can exist.

If you were to have this hall packed full of cannon balls, then, because cannon balls are spheres, as are atoms of matter, you could not pack this hall absolutely without empty spaces; in the vacant spaces between the packed cannon balls you could have thousands of tiny shot, and each shot could move about in the empty spaces without being hindered by the fact that there were those monstrous cannon balls about; and you could have a few millions of bacteria also moving about in the same room, quite unconscious of the huge worlds of little shot and cannon balls.

It is because there are finer types of matter than our senses recognise that there is the possibility in one space of many worlds. It was over thirty years ago that science came upon the verge of some of these many worlds. When Crookes put a gas into a tube and exhausted the gas so that there was only one-millionth part of it left, he found that the gas had changed; it became radiant matter, matter of a new kind, matter that glowed with a charge of electricity, matter that behaved in all kinds of queer ways. And since that time of Crooke's radiant mat-

ter, finer types of matter—ions, electrons, and so on—are the commonplace of science. It was at that time that Crookes, puzzled over the nature of his radiant matter, made a suggestion which is very striking. He suggested that the matter of a comet's tail might be this mysterious radiant matter, for the matter of a comet's tail behaves so very differently from matter such as we know. The tail of a comet is millions of miles long, and broad and thick, and as a comet goes through space its tail is whirled at incredible speeds. Now that tail has a certain definite shape; but no bar of steel of that length and size would retain for a moment its shape at that speed; it would all evaporate into gas; but the tail of the comet does not. Crookes therefore suggested that perhaps in a comet's tail we were dealing with this new type of matter, radiant matter; and then he said that if only we could get the matter of a comet's tail and reduce it to such matter as we know, it would not perhaps fill more than a tea-spoon. Radiant matter in a tube is invisible, but in a comet's tail it is visible because of the volume there—another most suggestive idea.

It is because there are invisible worlds of matter all round us that we have here in this room finer worlds of matter than the eye can see. If my personal testimony is worth anything, I can give you this much of my own consciousness, that here, in this room, interpenetrating your bodies, my body, the walls, everywhere, there are finer types of matter; I have seen these finer types of matter for many years, not in trance, not dreaming, but awake, in full consciousness; and I see them now, as I am looking at you; what I see is not an imagination, not a delusion; it is matter, intensely real, intensely alive, moving with new movements that I suppose are

fourth-dimensional; there is a far greater reality to me in this invisible world that I see, than in you, you the audience I am talking to. Now this knowledge that I have is only a tiny part of a greater knowledge that I am going to describe to you; what I see is an infinitesimal fraction of the many worlds to be seen. Though I shall have to tell you many things I cannot yet see for myself, yet I do see something; I know the invisible world is a fact, and that this which we call the world is only a part of a larger world. Others more gifted than I have gathered this knowledge bit by bit, investigating as the scientist investigates, which is by the exercise of the trained reason; the knowledge has not been gained by going into trances, nor by table-turning, nor by any kind of inspiration, but by direct personal observation. Just as the scientist, looking through a microscope at a drop of blood, sees the corpuscles there and draws deductions from them, just as he looks through a spectroscope and notes the lines there and then draws his deductions as to the composition of the object he is investigating, so has this work been done, according to the methods of induction and deduction, after observing the facts.

And now I come to the knowledge itself, and I must sum up that knowledge very briefly for you. I cannot expect you to believe it, because the knowledge will seem so strange at first, but I am delivering a scientific lecture, propounding certain things worthy of your investigation; belief must be a matter of your own personal judgment. Now supposing there exists a person endowed with these added sensibilities, what does he see? He sees in this world, through it, here in this world as elsewhere, several worlds; each of its own type of matter, with its own vibrations, with its own sounds,

with its own colours, and with its own inhabitants. He sees that we ourselves, you and I, have our lives in two of these invisible worlds; the two that fade off, shall I say, and are nearest to this our earthly world; and these two worlds are called in Theosophical studies the astral world and the heaven world. The first is called the astral or the starry, for a very simple reason; every particle of matter there is so luminous, because of its rapidity of movement, that the impression you get is like millions of little stars everywhere, exactly like the effect you get when snow is lying about at night, and a gas lamp shines above it, and each snow crystal has become a tiny star. The other finer world is called the heaven world, because of the conditions of bliss there for all those who live in it.

In these two invisible worlds we have our part, as we have our part in the invisible. My body is made up of matter that is in the earth; the carbon, the phosphorus, the calcium, the oxygen and the hydrogen in it are what are in the earth, but that crude matter of the earth has been transformed by the life processes into living cells and organs, into a living body. Similarly, each one of us has a part in the astral world and in the heaven world, for we have aggregated from each of them an astral body and a heavenly body; and we have these bodies here and now. As I am speaking to you, your eyes see only my physical body making movements; but could you see with the higher sensitiveness, you would see, as I talked, that my astral body, which is here interpenetrating my physical body, and also extending with an aura outside of my body, was all being thrown into waves of colour; and similarly you would see, had you a higher faculty still, that my heavenly body was being thrown into waves of

colour by my attempt to make certain ideas clear to you. Now this is our normal life. As I make a movement, I use my physical body; as I have a desire or an emotion, I use my astral body; and as I have a thought or inspiration, of unselfishness, a dream of some human service, I use the powers of my heavenly body.

Every day, then, we are using these three bodies, though only one of them is seen. Now after the hours of active waking life—which we call “life”—each evening we put the body on the bed, and, as the phrase is, we “go to sleep.” But we do nothing of the kind, for *we* do not sleep. What sleeps is the body; we live in our astral and heavenly bodies, and there we continue our thoughts, our worries, our happiness, while our physical outer garment is on the bed. Now that thing on the bed is not dead. It has a life of its own, a curious, limited childish consciousness, sufficient to protect itself, to cover itself if the blankets are slipping off, to turn over if it is tired on one side, and so on; it does all these intelligent things with what is called the sub-conscious mind. But during this time we are in the astral world, sometimes hovering near the physical body and seeing it lying on the bed. Haven’t some of you had those dreams when you seem to be outside your body and yet you see yourself lying on the bed, and you are rather shocked and wake up with a start? Sometimes it happens that you travel about the world in your astral body, and see an event at the other side of the world, and you wake up with a full, detailed remembrance of what you saw; there are hundreds of such cases of “veridical” or truth-telling dreams, which have been proved true afterwards by confirmation. It is in the astral world, and in the astral body, that each one of us lives dur-

ing the hours of sleep every day of our lives. So, as a matter of fact, we play a dual rôle during life, one in the visible and one in the invisible.

Then comes, sooner or later, that change which is called death, and when death happens, nothing new happens to us that has not been happening every day of our lives. Each day we left our earthly body at night, when we went to sleep; when death comes we do it for the last time, for we do not return to the body again. So that, so far as the real you, the soul, is concerned, death is not the mysterious, awful something that you are told to expect; you have "died" every night, and to do it once more is not such a shock, and when you do so, death makes no change whatsoever in you.

Now let me try to give you an idea, with brief examples, of the possible conditions of life after you put aside your body. There is one great law that holds good in the invisible worlds as in the visible, and it is that according to your nature, your faculty, and your aptitude, is the happiness or the misery that you will have wheresoever you are. Suppose, then, you have a man dying who has developed in himself certain desires which could only be satisfied with his earthly body. Take the case of a drunkard; the craving for drink, for its stimulus, is in his desire nature, in his astral body; but he has wanted the gratification of it by means of his physical body, and when death comes his body is cut down. Now the man has not changed, he is still the drunkard, he still has the craving for the stimulus; but he cannot gratify the desire. Now we know the maddening thirst and pain that a drunkard has when you remove from him the source of his gratification; and it is that same maddening pain that the drunkard or the victim of the drug habit has after

the body is dead. But it is not a punishment, it is the automatic way that nature's laws work. Suppose by some kind of a miracle a friend of mine from Madras in India, where it is warm and where people wear cotton clothes, were now to be brought into this room; he would not have a happy time, he would be shivering all the time, but his shivering would be due to the fact that he did not know that Scotland was cold. He would not be punished by anybody, except by himself, for coming to a place without adjusting himself to the laws of life of that place. And so it is when a person dies who has a bodily vice of any kind; there is intense pain for him afterwards because he cannot gratify it.

Similarly, where the vice is more mental, as in the case of a miser, when he dies he does not change, he is exactly the same; and, probably relying on the ordinary opinion about after-death conditions, thinks he is not dead. You know you are taught to believe that when death comes, your faculties will somehow be locked up in that body which is going to decay, will be put to sleep till the trumpet sounds at the day of resurrection; the conception that most people have is that immediately after death a kind of negativity takes place; your memories will end, and your affections, your hopes, your dreams—all that is really you—will be put to sleep. When, then, the miser who has heard that sort of thing finds that after death he still has a body, that he is exactly the same in appearance, and still remembers his gold, has all his memories—well, of course, he does not think he is dead, and so he hovers over his gold or his safe or his cheque book or whatever the thing is that meant to him his gold. And then, when he sees that those whom he has left behind use his money, open his safe, dispose of his property and so on, can you

not imagine the hell such a miser has when all that meant to him life is taken away from him? But it is not a pain inflicted on him by anyone except himself.

Or think of another type of man, say a business man who is all business, to whom wife and children count little, who lives in the office, who thinks office, who dreams office; when he dies, where is he? At the office. And there he is, watching. He has, if anything, a clearer imagination for business; he can also read the thoughts of his competitors in business; and so he sees vaster possibilities of business achievement. But he cannot put a single one into action; he cannot sign a cheque; he cannot telephone, he cannot set moving the markets of the world, because his astral body will not move physical matter. Imagine a man with power in his hand like that, but not the ability to use that power. That is another kind of hell.

So too is it with another man who has been a drone in life, who has done nothing of any rational purpose, who has spent his time and money in racing, automobilizing, gambling, who has generally frittered away his time; or the woman to whom life meant dresses, bridge parties, gossip, and all those kind of things. After they die they are exactly the same; they still hover about their ancient haunts; only there is no longer amusement there, for the astral body cannot handle cards, or money for betting; nor are the other dead round you interested in your dresses, nor in you because you had money or title. Then ensues a life of intense boredom, with nothing to do, with nothing interesting, truly a grey world.

Now all these conditions follow automatically upon the life that is begun by people as they die; if they

are "earth-bound," as the phrase is, if they had not purified themselves nor developed such interests as give satisfaction in the astral world, then life after death can indeed be a "hell." There are indeed conditions of torment for souls, but it is self-inflicted torment. But hell is not a special place; for look where you will in the invisible world, there is no burning pit of fire, and there are no devils to torture. In our Oriental religions, arising in Oriental countries, where we not only dislike extreme heat but also extreme cold, we go one better than western theologies, for we have not only hot hells but also cold hells. But look where you will, you will find no hells, as places; they are the creations of monkish minds. There is no fire to burn a man but that of his own fierce lusts, there is no cold to freeze him but the isolation of his own utter selfishness, and there are no devils to torment him but the thoughts of his own cruelties.

Nevertheless there is pain, which is symbolised graphically by these descriptions of hell. But hell does not last for ever; it lasts only so long as a man gives it strength for its lasting. You cannot have an eternal hell from a set of causes that were set a-going in a few brief years of time; and so the period of pain for a man lasts according to the strength of his unsatisfiable desire. That very pain itself purifies the man, so that slowly his particular lust is as it were burnt out of him.

Now take another case, that of a soldier on the battle-field. He is perhaps charging, and is shot, and his body falls. But he does not know he is dead; he is still dressed in khaki, for his astral body takes the semblance of the physical; and so he still goes charging on with his comrades. But he may note soon after a few things that make him think;

he may see a shell bursting near him, and a piece of it hits him, and by rights it ought to blow him to bits; but he notes it does not, he sees it go through him. And he looks at a few things like that, and then he knows that he is what the world calls dead. But he is still living, he sees his comrades, though they do not see him; but some, he finds, can sense his presence, and if he is the kindly soldier, caring for his comrades and ready always to help, he will get to work and help and inspire and encourage and strengthen his living comrades. Sometimes he may see a comrade wounded, far away and unobserved; he will then suggest to the mind of a stretcher-bearer: "go in that direction," and the stretcher-bearer, if he is sensitive, will go and will discover the wounded man.

One soldier, then, who dies while he is thinking of being with his comrades, is indeed with them the moment his body falls. But suppose it is another soldier, and he dies thinking of his sweetheart, or of his mother or of his wife and children; the moment after death he is not on the battle-field, but only where he desired to be, by the side of those that he loves. And so there is the mysterious law that after death we are where we desire to be. Take the case—such a common case, indeed—of the man who dies in the home. He "dies" surrounded by his wife and children and relations. The moment after death he is exactly the same—nay, if he had died after a lingering illness, then fresher, without pain, younger in feeling; and he is still in the room, by the side of his bed. But he sees that his wife and children are all crying, and that they are all absorbed in a great thought that he is dead, that he is gone, that he has vanished; yet he is there by their side. But they have erected a barrier harder than the hardest steel

between him and themselves. He loves them still and desires to comfort them, desires to make himself known; but they will not allow him, for they think, they feel, they all the time build into every cell of their brain the affirmation: "He is dead, he is gone, he has vanished." Now can you imagine the pain of such a man, when those that he cares for are full of grief? Yet that pain is given to him by those who, not understanding, grieve, thinking that grief is a mark of love. We think it is natural to grieve—yes, it is true; but it is also unnatural to inflict pain on those that we love, and that is what we do, when we grieve for the dead. Ah, if only we could understand, if only we had some knowledge of what are the conditions beyond the grave, then, when one of our beloved died, we would keep in a quiet calm and meditation, for we would know that the soul that loved us once, still loved, that the same memories were still there in the soul, that our beloved was there in the room with us still; and we could try to commune with him, and give him our strongest thoughts of love and gratitude; and if he died with some failing which was bound to give him suffering, then we would give him thoughts of strength and protection all the time. These are the possibilities for those who know.

After death each one of us, then, has his first period in the astral world, and to those of us who have such desires as can only be satisfied in the physical body there comes pain. But happily for so many of us there is after death no pain, akin to the pain of a hell, for we have had our hell before we died. Through intense grief and agony and loss, through the utter crushing of all our hopes, we get purified; and when the day of death comes we have exhausted all that part of ourselves that might call

us to any kind of life in that first part of the other world, the astral world; and when the impure part has been eliminated, as in the case of the drunkard after many years of pain, or in the case of the normal man who has lived a good life during the years before death, there begins then to blossom once again the nobility that was within ourselves. If you take a man who dies a villain and a murderer, who has had long years of cruelty to his record, yet if you could see all his life from childhood to manhood, you would find in his boyhood, in his youth, some part of himself that was noble—a love that he bore to his mother, an affection that he had for a while to a sweetheart, a phase of himself that in after years was covered over and seemed dead. But that phase of the man was never gone; it was always there; and what happened of evil was only as a crust laid on the true nature of the man. After death that crust is worn away by suffering, and then comes to fruition the nobler side of the man.

When after death these nobler sides within ourselves—the loves, the hopes, the dreams, the ambitions of service and usefulness—awaken, then begins the second great stage, the life in the heaven world. And this heaven world is here in this room, as much as the astral world. Why is it called the heaven world? For the reason that the nature of God, who is bliss and joy indescribable, is more manifest to the human consciousness there in that world than in this world of ours. His nature as bliss we do know now and then. When we look at a flower and feel its beauty we sense something of that joy; when we look at the face of a smiling child and smile in return and feel glad, it is something of the nature of God we begin to know; when we look at the sunset and see the beauty there and are glad, it

is something of Him again that we greet; when we listen to music and it has a message for us and we dream dreams, it is something of God that we see in each dream. For He, in His infinitude of beauty and wisdom, power and love, is trying to pour it on all His children all the time. But in this world of ours it is only as we open the little windows of our aspirations, our loves, our dreams, our service, that He can look into our natures, and give us of Himself. Wherever a man, woman, or little child dreams of an unselfish service, or happiness of any kind, then it is God who looks in; and where God looked in once on earth, it was only as the earnest of the hundreds of times that He would look in with His joy in the heaven world.

While we live on earth we see only now and then something of His true life; and for the most part our eyes are turned earthwards again, for so many are the duties that we must perform, and dreams and duty so often conflict. But there comes the time, when this body is put aside, that the first part of the after-death life in the astral world is over; and then we see Life for the first time, as it is; we see the whole world of God, not as "in a glass, darkly," but in the full splendour of His light. It is this truest life which has been described in every religion under some symbol as a heaven full of intense happiness. Yet heaven is not a special place; look into the heaven world, and you do not see a golden city with gates of pearl, nor those wonderful gardens of the Oriental imagination, with trees bearing jewelled fruit that make music with each breeze; the descriptions of heaven of the theologies are all symbols of a reality too great for the mind of man to grasp except in symbols.

For the reality is this, that through every particle

of matter the life of God, His beauty, His grandeur, His wisdom, is flashing every moment of time, here and now; but we do not see it. When these earthly veils are put aside, when we begin our life in the heaven world, and enter there with a certain nobility of nature, then it is that He shows us what life is. In that heaven world you will not see God in a form, but you will know there is indeed God because of the intense bliss of your life. Are you the Christian whose dream of heaven was to be with Christ and the angels? As you come to live in the heaven there is Christ for you and there are the angels, and they give to you, they flash to you, all the joy and the beauty and the grandeur that you dreamed of. Are you the Roman Catholic, and was your dream of heaven to be with the Virgin Mary and to adore the Christ Child? They are there; it is Christ, but as the Child, who is before you there; and it is the Virgin Mary; and both give you the bliss that you dreamed of. Are you the Hindu in far-off India, and was your dream to be with Krishna, the founder of your religion? You are with Him in your heaven. Are you the Buddhist, and was your longing to listen to the great wisdom expounded by Buddha? You are there with the Lord Buddha and you listen to His discourses, and practise with joy His commandments. Or are you the Muhammadan who dreams of heaven with Muhammad? Then Muhammad waits for you in your heaven world. For all these mighty founders of the religions form one great Brotherhood, and each is as a great mirror that flashes the life of God to the millions that follow him.

But are you one who has not cared for religion, but in a business office toiled night and day for love of wife and child, who dreamed of their happiness,

sacrificed yourself for their welfare? That dream of happiness was God looking into your mind, into your heart, and where He looked once He looks long in the heaven world, and you are there with your wife and child, and you give them that fulness of love and achievement that you dreamed of. But it is God who gives you your wealth of love that you are giving to your beloved. You will not see Him, but you may know Him because a mighty love flows through you now. Are you the artist who lived a life only for your art, who renounced everything in life rather than be a traitor to your great ideal? That ideal was God looking into your life, and after death He looks into your life again, and according to your dream of achievement He teaches you to achieve. Are you the painter, the sculptor? Then you paint mightier pictures than you ever could when on earth, and you carve mightier statues, more full of beauty, than had ever entered into your imagination. Are you the musician? You shall compose grander symphonies than earth's ears have ever heard, and the music, the beauty, and the wonder of it all is but the nature of God flowing through you to men. Are you perhaps a lover of science, to whom religion means nothing but superstition and the difficulties that humanity has had to transcend? Are you like our great scientists, who seek knowledge for the welfare of man? Then God shall come to you as Knowledge, and in the heaven world you shall discover grander truths of nature than you are able to on earth. Or are you a man like Bradlaugh to whom God meant nothing at all, but who struggled to achieve reforms for his fellow men, who was a Secularist, who was an Atheist—what matters the label—but who had an ideal of service? It is God who looks into your life as your

ideal of service, and after death it is God who will look into your life again and for long, giving you bliss beyond dreams. For God is not the God of Christians alone; He is the God of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Muhammadans, of scientists, atheists, artists, of every man, woman and child who turns away from his little self and greets gladly the great Self of God, or Humanity, or the world.

Wherever a man has found an ideal for which he sacrifices himself, that is the vision of God in the man's brain; it is because of this mighty truth that there is a heaven of all humanity, and there is not a single child of man who will not have his heaven. Take even the murderer; there was a time when he was a boy and loved his sister perhaps, when he was a young man and had love perhaps for a sweetheart, and during that time there was a nobility manifested in him. After death he has his heaven world too, with his sister, or with his sweetheart, as the case may be. To each of us there is just that type of heaven of which we dream, for each day-dream of ours is only God's face looking into our lives, into each according to his temperament, helping each to grow into a fuller beauty and grandeur, into a true happiness.

Now this wonderful heaven, this place of the fulfilment of hopes and dreams and inspirations, is only heaven because there for the first time we know something of our life as souls; if only we could realise that life here in our brain, then would we know the life of God, the wonder of heaven, here in this room. It is something of this wonderful grandeur, this mystery of what life really is, that a poet senses now and then; such a poet was Browning, and he has the true vision of things when he gives us his message:

There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;

Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it bye and bye.

So the little melodies we make on earth with our loves and day-dreams we hear again in the heaven world. But our life there in heaven is not for ever and ever. For, as before with the period in a "hell," so too is it with the time in heaven; you cannot have an eternity of effect from causes in a few brief years of time. True, the period we live in heaven can be a long one, of many centuries; the stronger, purer, and nobler our unselfish dreams are, the longer is our life in our heaven world. Is it the saint who lived a long saintly life? Then he may live in the heaven world fifteen to twenty centuries. Or is it the little child who died at ten or twelve years of age? That child will live in his heaven world some thirty to forty years. But both will return to earth again.

Why, if heaven is so wonderful, and so full of happiness, why should we come back again to this vale of tears? Because of a law of nature; there is this mysterious law about happiness, that it must grow from moment to moment, that unless it so grows the capacity for happiness ceases; and happiness can only grow from moment to moment by being transformed into acts of human service. Now

God is infinite happiness, and you in your heaven world know only one little part of what He has to give you, and you cannot know more of His happiness until you grow into a larger capacity for happiness. And to grow into a larger capacity for happiness you must return to earthly conditions, and there put your happiness into acts of human service. And so we return.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

So we return and are little children again, but each with a character, each with an aptitude, each slowly feeling life again and becoming himself master of life, each using an inborn aptitude for science, for art, for government, for the human affections. And we remember something of our life in the heaven world, as we take up with enthusiasm any work of life. For what is the enthusiasm with which we respond to a noble ideal but the memory of our life in the heaven world, when we lived that ideal? And so we come back to life to accomplish more, to master the old temptations and to be stronger thereby, and to feel more and more that we are masters of achievement. Life after life we live, at each death entering the heaven world for a longer period, with a fuller capacity for happiness. If you are in one life chiefly the man of family affections, you have your heaven of love and joy, and then you return to birth again; but you come back, not only to increase your capacity of love for wife and children, but also to create within you an admiration for

beauty, to know something of science and philosophy, to know God in new ways.

Life after life we so live, and die, and return; till slowly, through purification, through achievement in the heaven world and on this dull earth, we come to be as pillars in the Temple of God, and "go no more out"; for then have we become the great geniuses of the world, souls who give a message, not to one people or to one time, but to all the world. Then it is that the life and nature of God works through us in mighty acts of creation, and His peace is in our heart wheresoever we are, and we give that heaven to the thousands that listen to our message; and His plan is in our brain, and we leave behind us mighty arts and sciences. This is life, death, and after.

Now there is one striking fact taking place just now, during the days of this war, that I must briefly mention. There is the curious fact that it is the flower of the land that is called by God to the sacrifice. Why? Because He is at work in this mighty war. We have always believed vaguely that He is "everywhere" and that He governs all earthly conditions; but it has been a vague, pious, belief, not a real understanding. Now we can understand. We began to understand faintly with our intuitions when the war broke out, and we knew that we of the Empire were standing for the cause of humanity. There is truly a mighty ideal behind this war, because it is indeed part of God's plan that there shall begin a reconstruction for all humanity, that certain base ideals shall utterly vanish from the face of the earth; that is why thousands in Britain, Australia, India and elsewhere, unknowing with their minds, but sensing with their intuitions, all sprang to the call of a great ideal. And these, our best, the

noblest of the land, who could have built up a mighty nation, have all been slain. But they have not really died, only their bodies; nor are their lives wasted, for the simple reason that it is they whom God is sending back to earth to be reborn swiftly; to them is given the opportunity to renounce that bliss of heaven which is theirs, to come back again at once to the homes of Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and India, and France and Italy and Russia, to be reborn as boys and girls, so that within a few swift years, as they grow to boyhood, manhood and womanhood, they shall take part in the mighty reconstruction which has been planned by God. For who have a better right to reconstruct this world than those who died for the world? That is the mystery which is being enacted now, and that is why on our battlefields the flower of the land are being slain. For God works in mysterious ways His plan to achieve.

This, then, briefly, is the great message of Theosophy about life and death. Now suppose you could believe the message, what would it mean for you? It would mean that for you there is no death, that for you death has no sting, and the grave no victory. For what are you? An immortal child of God, who has begun a great series of wonderful experiences, whose whole life, in this visible world or in the invisible, is a series of adventures among masterpieces, each of beauty, of wonder, and of grandeur.

Can you believe this message? You can, but you must bring first the aptitude for belief. That aptitude is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of having done something in life through which you have sensed your immortality. You will never prove to yourself the immortality of the soul by any amount

of hard thinking; you must first live the life, and find that immortal moment when you know you are a soul and not a body. In the great drama of life you know that moment when you are willing to sacrifice yourself for love, you know it in the act of heroism when life is nothing, so long as a great work is done, in the art of creation which has been your joy and your suffering. Find even one such moment in life, and you will inevitably know that you are indeed immortal. And then to retain that moment, so that the moment becomes eternity, understand this mighty Wisdom. You will then find that your immortality pours into you through all life—through the happiness of all your fellow men, from these flowers you gaze at now, from the sunset you see, and from the music you hear; for there is only one Immortal, God Himself, and it is His nature that is ready to pour Itself into your heart and mine, if only we will open the doors of our hearts. Ah, it is not difficult to open those doors when you have the key to the opening, and that key is the mighty Wisdom of Theosophy.

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