

Man's Life in This and in Other Worlds

Man's Life in the Astral World and After Death

by Annie Besant

This pamphlet (the second of a course of four lectures delivered on "Man's Life in This and Other Worlds") was first published in 1912 as No 23 of the "Adyar Popular Lectures" Series.
Pamphlets from this series will be incorporated into the "Adyar Pamphlets" Series.

(A lecture delivered in the Victoria Town Hall, Madras, on November 17. 1912)

Published in 1931
Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai [Madras] India
The Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras. India

TODAY, friends, we have to deal with the second part of our subject. Those of you who are at all familiar with the writings of the Middle Ages will know a word, which is very often heard in modern days, the word 'aura'. You come across it amongst the alchemists, you meet it occasionally in the treatises on medicine; Paracelsus, for instance, uses this word when he is explaining the constitution, the nature, of man. It was taken up by modern Theosophy because it expresses better than any other word that invisible part of the body of man which has to do with his emotions. In the Middle Ages, naturally, it was used often to cover ideas which openly the writers did not dare to propound ; and if, when your taste leads you to read these ancient books, you are inclined to grumble sometimes at what you may call their obscurity, **[Page 2]** I will ask you to remember that they worked under the limitations of the dungeon and the stake, and that they were obliged to veil under the language of symbolism truths that it was too dangerous to speak aloud.

Now only a year or eighteen months ago this word 'aura' was introduced into respectable scientific society by a London physician named Dr. Kilner. For the first time, as far as I know, in the history of the study of the human constitution, a scientist was able to show to the physical eye of man some part of that normally invisible matter which goes to the making up of the aura. By an arrangement of screens carefully put in the directions where light should be cut off or let in according as it was wanted; by using two plates of glass set near together with liquid between the plates, thus making a glass screen with a clear liquid within it; and by looking at an ordinary human being through the glass screen under special conditions of light and darkness, Dr. Kilner succeeded in showing to the untrained and unaccustomed physical eye the coarsest part of that portion of the body that is called the aura.

Normally speaking it is invisible, this coloured atmosphere which surrounds what we can see of the dense body of man. Everyone of you has round you a sphere, that you might call a cloud, of this finer matter, varying in colour according to your emotions and your thoughts, and changing **[Page 3]** under the eye of the observer — the observer who has developed a keener vision than the normal, and so is able to see without Dr. Kilner's mechanical arrangement this cloud which surrounds the human being, the animal, the plant, and the stone. Now it is made up, part of it, of what is called astral matter; or, if you like a name which signifies a function, emotional matter; for this matter is set vibrating by the changes in consciousness that we call emotions. Wherever an emotion sweeps through your consciousness, the astral matter within your physical body, and outside it is thrown into waves exactly in the same manner

as if you take a gong and strike it with a mallet; a scientist will tell you there goes out from the gong a great sphere of vibrations of the air; these reach your ears as sound; they are invisible between you and the gong, but none the less are they there, and shown to be there by the effect which they produce when they strike upon the mechanism of the body adapted to receive them and to reproduce them. Just in a similar way, when some exciting cause moves you to emotion, there is as it were an impact on this astral matter; it is thrown into waves and it goes out from you as a great sphere of vibrating matter, subject to all the ordinary laws of such travelling spheres of waves of vibrations, diminishing with distance so far as strength is concerned, and gradually exhausting themselves, as they travel far away from their source.
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Use then your imagination for the moment, and think of this fine invisible matter vibrating under emotion, as the air vibrates when a sound is generated by a gong, by a violin string, by a piano, by what you will. Here you have a kind of matter which answers not to sound, not to light, not to any stream, if I may use the phrase, of electricity or galvanism, but to a stream of emotion. That is its characteristic, impressed upon it by the Divine Architect, thus bringing emotion into relation with a particular kind of matter, as another form of matter answers to sound, a third form to light, other forms to electricity, the matter being always the medium by which the energy or force is transmitted through space.

Now it cannot be strange to you that there should be a special kind of matter which answers to emotion and to nothing else; you are accustomed to such limitations in your study of physics. A ray of light does not throw the air into vibrations which reach your ear as sound, nor are the waves that in your ear are sound produced by the waves of ether that you call light. You may remember that Sir William Crookes once made a table, a table of groups of vibrations — in which he marked off, in a series of grades, groups of vibrations, showing as electricity, as sound, as light, as other forms again of electrical action, and finally he remarked that probably those vibrations which as yet we have not discovered, those waves of which we are yet [Page 5] unconscious, may be found later to answer to other manifestations of force, or of vitality showing itself, perhaps, in one set, as thought. With thought I shall deal next week; I am only concerned now with that particular form of consciousness that we call emotion.

I only ask you to remember one other thing about the relation between the mode of consciousness we call emotion and the matter which vibrates under its influence. These things are in pairs: an emotion is correlated with a vibration, and a vibration is also correlated with an emotion. If astral matter vibrates, then in you an emotion will arise in consciousness correlated to the particular vibration which has struck you, which has made its impact on the astral matter in your body. That has been shown in a very interesting way. I can only just indicate where you can study it, in some French books on experiments in hypnotism, on the hypnotic trance. It was there shown that while you might arouse an emotion and so cause a corresponding gesture — this was physical, mind — so by causing a hypnotised patient to make the gesture, the corresponding emotion was aroused in the patient's mind. Thus, if you took the patient's hand, clenched it and shook it as if angry, then the patient became angry; or if you started the anger, the patient would show the outward signs.

You may like to verify Some of the statements I am making, if the points be new to you, so I shall [Page 6] try to indicate the books in which you may find much of scientific investigation connected with our subject of today. Take it then, if you will for the moment as a matter of hypothesis, that where there is an emotion there is a vibration of astral matter; where there is a vibration of astral matter, the corresponding emotion is generated, if the vibration comes up against a human being.

The next point in our argument is that some of this astral matter interpenetrates the denser matter of our physical body, and so comes to form part of our physical body itself. You remember I defined the word body as meaning a vehicle of consciousness merely — a material vehicle; we have, to begin with, solids, liquids, gases and ethers; then, in every one of our bodies, interpenetrating the whole of those four, is this astral matter. As you might put a sponge into water, and the water would penetrate the sponge, leaving much water outside, so does this astral matter penetrate the whole of the body while the great mass of astral matter remains outside. Now, this interpenetrating matter is very often called the 'astral body'; I am calling it for the moment — in order to be a little less complicated — the astral *part* of our body; for you remember I divided man only into three: Spirit, soul, and body. Now that emotional matter in the body, interpenetrating every part, stretches a little way beyond the dense visible body, and forms therefore part of the aura, the invisible cloud surrounding [Page 7] the dense human body. If separated from the physical body, it then takes its shape; separated from the dense heavy body, the astral part takes on the form of that with which it is normally associated. But, except when it is so separated, it is a mere cloud, interpenetrating the physical body everywhere, and flowing into the form that that body already has fixed. Think then of this particular part of your body, this emotional matter penetrating every portion of it and stretching a little outside, surrounded by a great ocean of astral matter, which at any moment may be thrown into vibration; if that within our body vibrate. Now there is one great difference between this part of your body and the part with which you are more familiar. The physical part of the body is the most evolved of all, — the first to evolve and the one which has the longest evolution behind it. The astral part is less evolved; but the more educated you are, the more you have cultivated art, the more your aesthetic emotions are developed, the more refined you are in your ordinary thought and life, so much the more developed will this astral part of you become. It is in course of evolution, evolving rapidly with the rapid growth of mind, of thought, in the human race. At the present day among the most advanced of our race this part is very highly developed, giving rise to the marvellous development of emotional genius that you find in the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the artist of [Page 8] every kind. Think then of that as largely evolved in all of you, you being thoughtful and educated people.

The next thing you need to realise is that people differ very much, partly according to climate, partly according to race; that this astral part of you has senses, like the physical part of you, and that under certain conditions of race and climate these senses become developed in many more people than is the case in other nations that are under different climatic and racial conditions. Go to California, to the West of America, or to one of those more central States where the electrical tension in the atmosphere is normally so high that children make a game of running along the carpet and rubbing their feet against it, thus charging themselves with electricity, so that if one of them puts his finger near the cheek of another child an electric spark will pass. Under these conditions these astral senses develop far more rapidly, and you find along the Western coast of America a large minority (not yet quite a majority) who have developed the astral part of themselves to a considerable extent, and have become what are called 'sensitive'. Now anyone may become that at the present stage of evolution if you mesmerise him and thus dull the denser body; he may then become clairvoyant, clairaudient — showing that these senses are very near the surface, very ready to break through. In the ordinary man and woman, while they are so [Page 9] near the surface, they do not, as a rule, show real development to any great extent unless artificially stimulated; but under certain conditions they do show themselves. If you are under a very great nervous strain, if you have overworked yourself so that you are nervously weak, if your temperature goes up beyond 102° or 103°, then you will tend to become clairvoyant or clairaudient. When you have fever and what you call delirium, it is only the weakness of the physical body allowing the astral to dominate it for the time, and to impress on the weakened brain what it sees in its own world; you may constantly find people who are clairvoyant when not well — a dangerous form of the faculty. because, except upon a healthy body, it is likely to cause so great a strain as rapidly to pass into hysteria.

Another manifestation of the beginnings of this faculty is the fact that you will find there are a certain number of people who, whenever music is played, see colours. Carmen Sylva, the Queen of Romania, wrote an article not very long ago in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, in which she described her own clairvoyance; whenever she heard music she saw colour. According to the type of the music is the shade of colour. A trumpet blast gives the colour of scarlet; devotional music fills the atmosphere with blue. You may find plenty of detail as to this in Theosophical literature, if you care to look more fully into the [Page 10] subject [*Thought-forms*, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater]. Take again a feeling that many of you perhaps have, a certain feeling of nervousness at night, if you are quite alone in a house. Carlyle once said of the devil: "I do not believe in him, but I am afraid of him if I wake up in the middle of the night". Now something very like this is true of other people besides Carlyle.

There are many of us — very brave, I am prepared to admit, in broad daylight — who yet can quite understand what he means. I know in my own case that when I was a sceptic and I lived quite alone in London, when I sat up writing to two or three o'clock in the morning, it meant a mental effort to turn out the gas, go out into the dark hall, and walk upstairs in the lonely silent house. I did feel nervous, though then too proud to confess it. Now that I know the astral world. I have no fear; then I had no belief in it, yet I feared. Why? I now know the reason, though I did not know it then. At these times vitality is low. Any doctor will tell you that towards midnight your vitality touches the lowest ebb; from about twelve to two or three is the great danger-time when illness is approaching possible death; and it is when the vitality is thus low that the astral matter asserts itself, receives impressions from the astral world and passes them on to the brain, and we shrink back from the unknown, and therefore the feared. [Page 11]

Again, some of you have 'premonitions'. If a friend is ill at a distance, even when you do not know it, you will find that you have been anxious about that friend. If without your knowledge a friend dies, you will often find that at the moment of his death a sense of depression comes over you. If you want to test this, make a rule of noting at the time any sudden depression, any sudden elation, for which there is no palpable cause, and keep these notes in your diary, comparing them, when you hear of it later, with what has happened among relatives, friends, or people to whom in any way your mind is turned. You will learn more by examining yourself than by attending lectures. A lecture is only a sign-post; knowledge comes from study and self-observation.

Turn from that to another way in which astral matter shows itself palpably and obviously. Take the case in which a single feeling sweeps over the whole of a crowd. One case of that would be oratory addressed to the emotions. Most of you will know the name of my friend Charles Bradlaugh, one of the most remarkable orators of his day, if not the most remarkable. I have heard him lecture on a Radical subject with a number of members of the Carlton Club — respectable old Tories — sitting in a row in front of him, and they all applauded him furiously, carried away simply by emotion, roused in them by their astral bodies vibrating under the force of his. But I have grave doubts [Page 12] whether, over their coffee the next morning, remembering the lecture, they did not reprobate strongly the Radical sentiments which they had so vigorously applauded during their delivery.

And that is constantly the case. Take another illustration — panic. A sudden cry is raised; a few are frightened; but fear sets the astral part of the body vibrating, and waves and billows of emotion swing backwards and forwards, and so on, and on, and on, all through the crowd, setting their astral bodies vibrating, causing the emotion of fear, until a mad panic sweeps over them, and they fly they know not from what.

Take a fit of hysterics. A doctor will tell you that if one patient in a hospital ward is seized with a fit of hysterics, she must be removed as rapidly as possible, otherwise the other patients will become hysterical. Why ? Because the emotion sets the astral body of that patient vibrating, and other astral bodies answer to it, setting up the same rate of vibration, and thus is reproduced the emotion.

Look into your own experience. You meet a person who is cheerful, bright, happy, and you say: "He is like a ray of sunshine when he comes into a room"; or another comes in, with a great cloud of depression round him, and you say: "He is a regular wet blanket"; we all feel it, and grow miserable; but why ? There is some cause for all these things. Happiness, and depression are infectious; they spread just like a disease or a [Page 13] vigorous condition of health. Anything that causes vibration in matter is infectious, for those material vibrations reproduce themselves, and so bring about similar emotions, or conditions, in other people.

Take one other case as a last illustration of this. You meet a man in a bad temper; have you ever noticed that you are very much inclined to become irritable yourself, even though you may previously have been in a thoroughly good temper ? If you meet a man coming along who is cross and ill-tempered, you begin to feel irritable; but why ? Only because he is there; because his astral body is setting yours going; and your astral body by vibrating in answer to his awakens within you the feeling of irritability. That is why great religious Teachers command us to return good for evil and love for hate. If a man who is full of hate comes to you in hatred, and you answer him back by a similar emotion of hatred, then these synchronous vibrations strengthen each other. Wider and wider grows the swing of the wave, stronger and stronger the violent vibrations, and so anger breeds anger, hatred breeds hatred, and the two men quarrel, and perhaps become enemies for the future. But, says every great Teacher: "Do not return a wrong emotion with the same wrong emotion; return it with the right emotion opposed to it". The Lord Buddha said: Hatred ceaseth not by hatred, at any time; hatred ceaseth by love". The Lord Christ told you to [Page 14] answer those that hate you with blessing. Here is the scientific reason why, in Their great wisdom; the religious Leaders of mankind have taught this ethical doctrine. Not so very long ago a sceptic said to me: "Why should I return good for evil ? It is an absurd thing to do". I did not argue with him as to the moral point; I only showed him the material result, pointed out to him the vibrations that we cause by anger, pointed out to him the opposite vibrations caused by love, showed him that the love-vibration would extinguish the hate vibration, and so peace would arise where otherwise quarrel would supervene. And what was his answer? "Oh! now you are talking sense, and I quite see why I should return good for evil".

Another point arises from that — that you can cultivate right emotions in yourself, as you will, and so you can help also to get rid of wrong emotions in others. You can be a walking benediction, soothing the anger of others, smoothing a way their irritability, spreading cheerfulness, happiness, joy, around you by a law of nature sure and inviolable.

But there is one other point that before leaving this I should mention — your responsibility for what you feel. If every right emotion not only generates in you a vibration of matter, but that vibration goes out into the world around and affects the emotional bodies of others; if a wrong emotion acts in a similar way, then it is not enough to control [Page 15] the outside physical body; it is not enough to stop the frown, or angry word, or gesture; you must eradicate the feeling which lies below them, invisible. You are affecting your whole community by your feeling and you are responsible for the influence you spread. This applies especially wherever there are criminals of violent type, men of the type we get more in the West than in

the East, where an emotion of anger is expressed at once by a blow. Think of the self-controlled men and women around them who would never dream of striking a blow in anger; they are too well-bred, too dignified, too proud; but the angry feeling is within them; their astral body is pulsing with the angry vibration that goes throbbing out into the astral world, together with many similar vibrations. All the angry thoughts in that community join together to make a wave of vibrations carrying angry emotions, and when these dash against the undeveloped type of man at a moment when he is provoked; he is stimulated by them to strike with far more anger than he would otherwise feel. He may strike a blow which is murder, for which the law of man cannot punish the generators of much of his passion. They go down to their graves honoured and respected, while he expiates his crime on the gallows. But what of the Divine Law, which judges the whole of man, emotions as well as actions, the Law of absolute Justice, which gives to every man the result of that which he has sown, [Page 16] and awards to each his share of the murderer's crime, who has added to it his own angry thought sent out carelessly to the injury of the world.

And so with the great acts of heroism, where a man springs into a burning house or plunges into a rushing river, not thinking of himself or of his danger, but only of a child to be rescued there. He may be a commonplace man, no hero, as you would have thought before; but into that sudden action there have flowed the impulses of all the brave thoughts of the society in which he is living: the courage of the doctor who attends the patient in infection, the courage of the nurse who cares for the child dying of diphtheria, the courage of the mother attending her diseased babe, the courage of each and all, of simple, humble people, doing what to them is simple duty or action of love, who know not their own nobleness, who know not what they do; but their good thoughts go out into the atmosphere around them, live and move in that atmosphere, and when the opportunity comes, when the man with courage in him, though not heroic, plunges into the fire or the stream, all those noble thoughts of courage have there found their incarnation, and the reward of virtue, under the Divine Law, belongs to all who shared in the noble emotion. Thus we learn how we are bound together, how we influence each other constantly through this ocean of astral matter in which we are all plunged. [Page 17]

Now come to sleep. What happens to you when you go to sleep? The astral part of you, with all the rest of the still finer matter, leaves the denser part on the bed. "But", you say, "that is what savages talk about, those whom we call animists". Do not always be too proud in disposing of the ideas of savages. Savages for the most part are the degenerate descendants of great nations of the past, and preserve some of their thought in their own traditions. More and more are modern investigations showing that the savage is not the child-man he was thought to be, but rather the very, very old man, going, as it were, into his second childhood, into the dotage, the old age, of savagery. Among the savages there are traditions surviving showing, as Frederick Myers said, a knowledge of the sub-conscious that our modern psychology is only rediscovering today. It is no valid argument for rejection of an idea if you say that it is a savage's idea, for a savage may be right, however often wrong, and your knowledge may be lacking in something that the man living nearer to Nature knows, that you know not. I only ask you then to take as hypothesis that, when you go to sleep at night, you are in the finer part of your body leaving the denser on the bed. We often have what are called dreams, and you may study them very thoroughly. What are dreams? There are three main sorts of them, and you may study them in Du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism* which remains [Page 18] a classic on this particular subject. [See also *Dreams*, by C. W. Leadbeater] We have there a study of dreams, full of suggestion and illumination. Now there are some dreams that do not count, broken disjointed dreams; fragments of the day's memory, of yesterday, of last week, last month, broken fragments that are put together into a kind of mosaic. Incongruous and irrational, these are mostly due to pressure on some vessel in the brain, or a little increase in the flow of blood, a possible check in some small vein, caused, as it may be, by indigestion. You may put those aside — they are not

significant.

Then you come to dreams that are still physical but belong more to the etheric part of the body. A number of experiments have been made as to these, in which sleeping people have been touched, and waked by the touch. You will find a very, very large number in the book I have mentioned. Let me only take one, to show you the kind of dream — it is dramatic. A man was touched at the back of the neck and he was waked by the touch; on waking he said: "I have had a horrible dream; I dreamt that I had shot a man, committed a murder, was brought before the Court, tried for my life, condemned, sentenced, taken away to the condemned cell, carried to the guillotine, and at the moment the knife touched me, I awoke!" There you have one of those dramatic dreams. It was generated by the touch on the neck: the whole of it passed [Page 19] rapidly, so rapidly that you could only measure part of a minute between the touch and the waking; but in that little space of time, this long, long dream had occurred. That is only one of very many in the course of long investigations into the nature of dreams; it led to the psychological conclusion that the matter in which thought functions out of the body is finer than that in which it functions in the body, because the succession of states of consciousness is so much more rapid than it could have been in the brain in a similar space of time. This kind of dream is not very significant; such dreams have their cause in some outside impact — not necessarily physical; it may be some thought in the mind which starts the dream.

There remains another class of dreams, which are the real experiences of the man outside the brain. These are the experiences of the man clothed in the finer astral matter, living in the astral world. These are valuable, and they often merely seem, on waking, to be very vivid dreams. Sometimes you gain by them knowledge that you do not have in your waking brain. Of those you may find some on record in Frederick Myers' book, *Human Personality*. He has collected a number of these dreams where knowledge was gained in sleep, that, in the waking brain, was not obtainable. Try the experiment yourself. If you happen to care for working out mathematical problems, or there is any question to which you want an [Page 20] answer, put it in your mind when you are going to sleep: do not *think* of it, because thinking of it will keep you awake, but treat your mind as if it were a box. Put your question into the box and leave it there. In the morning you will generally find the answer where you had left the question. At one time I was fond of playing with mathematics and working difficult problems. I used to think at night of one which I had failed to work out, and left it in the mind, in the way described; in the morning I had the solution in the mind, and I wrote it down before I was quite awake. It is difficult on returning to the physical body to impress the brain; and if you want to do these experiments, keep a pencil and paper at your bed-side, and write down, before you are quite awake, the solution you have found. Robert Louis Stevenson tells us that his book, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, was given to him by his 'Brownies' in a dream. Mozart, the great musician, said that in that way he heard his great music, and coming out of that state he wrote down, note by note, that which in the other condition he had heard simultaneously. So the great poet Tennyson had a similar experience, in which, by repeating his own name over and over again, he practically hypnotised his brain, and then he passed into a state he could not describe, in which everything was clear, in which "death was a laughable impossibility, and in which the loss of individuality seemed to be the only true life". But then [Page 21] Tennyson was a genius, and these things happen more readily to the genius than to the ordinary man of the world.

Another experiment you might try with regard to dreams. You know some one who is in trouble, or someone who is in the grip of a vice. You are away, and you cannot reach your troubled friend. Think of him as you go to sleep; think that you want to go to him and to comfort him; and your thought will carry

you to him when you fall asleep, and you will give him the comfort that you desire. Many a vice has been broken in that way drunkenness has been cured by it; for in the hour of sleep, when the man is more susceptible than at other times, you may go to him astrally and put to him the arguments which, in his waking consciousness, would anger him. In the astral that thought can be printed on the mind, and it will come to him as his own thinking when he wakes; and thus you may help a friend. This is within the reach of any of you. No special training is wanted for it.

And so with those you love who have passed away from you in death. Sometimes you dream of them. You do not realise that it is no dream or fancy; it is a real meeting in the world into which you go when your body is asleep. Think of your dead whom you love, think, fix your mind upon them; and in the hours of sleep you, waking, shall be with them, and only when you pass back into the waking life — that which men call waking, but [Page 22] which is really, to the higher worlds, a sleep — then to them you are falling asleep, because you are going out of their immediate reach and touch. And you may give them much help in this way. As you develop, you become what we call 'awake' on the astral plane. That means that your astral senses are turned outwards. You see, and feel, and hear, and know, and can talk as freely as here — no, more freely than here. And when there is some great calamity, some great earthquake, or some frightful shipwreck, or a terrible outbreak of war such as that which now is strewn Eastern Europe with the dead, if you will you can be a helper, you can be there to help these unhappy ones, flung out of their bodies in the passion of conflict, angry, startled, knowing not where they are, nor what has happened; and you may go to them as angels of mercy, calming, soothing and consoling — when you have learned to be conscious in a higher world than this.

And when you have that consciousness, death ceases to alarm, for this world into which we go every night is the same world into which we pass after death. Some Christians call it the 'intermediate world', intermediate between this world and heaven. The Hindus call it *kāmaloka*, the land of desire, the land of feeling — truly it is the emotional land. When you die, you only put aside the body altogether, as you have put it aside temporarily every night in sleep, and you pass into [Page 23] the well known astral country with which you have been familiar while still living in the physical body. What will you find when you wake there after the sleep that men call death? You will find yourself the man, the woman, that you were, your emotions the same, your thoughts the same, your knowledge the same. You are not changed; but the condition into which you pass depends upon the life that here you have led; and there is the value of the knowledge of what lies on the other side of death.

For those who are Christians and who have been brought up in the old belief that hell is everlasting, for them what lies on the other side of death — even to the good among them — is often a matter of alarm; and the more rational of them, feeling themselves neither good enough for an everlasting heaven, nor bad enough for an everlasting hell, throw the whole thing aside and say: "Let us wait till we get there". They will find themselves all right enough, it is true; still, it is not the best way to go into an unknown world. The Roma Catholic calls this world purgatory; provided you have not died in mortal sin, the Church can arrange matters, and even when the Church cannot help, there remain those great 'uncovenanted mercies', of the Most High, that surely would save the helpless soul from everlasting misery. Purgatory, however, does not apply, as the Church supposes, to all people who are not 'Saints'. It applies to [Page 24] those only who have lived in flagrant and coarse sin, especially the sins of the body, gluttony, drunkenness, profligacy; these three great sins of the body imply horrible misery on the other side of death. It is not because of the anger of God, for God is love; not because of His wrath, for He is the Father of every soul that He has made; but because — having nourished the cravings, the passions and

the appetites which have their home in the astral body, of which the physical body is only the instrument of gratification — you find all those cravings on the other side of death, while the instrument whereby they used to be gratified has been struck away by the icy hand of death. That is the real 'hell' — the drunkard craving for drink, the glutton for savoury food, the sensualist for sense-delights; and these cravings are a thousandfold stronger than on earth, and they cannot gratify them; they have nothing whereby they can contact the object of desire, and the craving, unsatisfied, gnaws them like a fire that tortures them until it is starved out by lack of satisfaction. If you die having made your passions strong, misery is indeed your state on the other side of death; according to the Law, that which you have sown you reap, that which you have made you receive. You are your own self-tormentor, and your own folly alone can make you miserable on the other side of death.

But there are numbers of people who are not in suffering, but yet are not happy, who are, to use a [Page 25] colloquial expression, very much 'bored' ; and those are the people all of whose interests here have been trivial. If you only care about frivolous amusements, if you only find your pleasure in that which requires no intellect, if you care neither for art nor literature nor for anything which awakens the higher emotions, if you gamble and bet, if you find your pleasure in passing events, if you go to church only to see the latest fashions from Europe, I am bound to tell you that you will not have a very happy time after death for a somewhat long period; nothing will interest you; you cannot carry on the frivolities of life; you cannot carry on your household interests, and all the little things which fill your day down here. You may say: "I am obliged to do household drudgery, I am forced to work at my profession; do you tell me that on the other side of death I shall therefore have a time of weariness, not of anguish indeed, but of unspeakable *ennui*?" There is one way by which you may avoid it. If in doing your trivial daily work you look on it as part of the Divine activity; if you do it as part of God's work in the world, by which Society is held together; if you see as such work that of the merchant who brings us sustenance, of the lawyer who helps divine justice to assert itself, of the judge who administers the divine law for the good of the people, of the doctor who embodies the divine power of healing, of the mother who, full of maternal [Page 26] cares, embodies the divine Motherhood that nourishes the world and makes possible life and health, of the law-giver who thinks of the divine law; if thus you knit your daily avocations to the great world-activities that are divine — oh, then you are working in a spirit that carries you beyond the trivial duty and limitations, beyond the petty details of earthly life into the glory of divine activity, of God working in His world.

But that is no new doctrine. You remember how George Herbert taught it, speaking of a servant sweeping a room :

A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine:
 Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
 Makes that and th' action fine.

You may here take an extreme case: one class most depressed, outcaste, filthy, unreceivable, untouchable; it is the class of scavengers. But, by their uncleanliness we are kept clean; by their misery our health is preserved; by their degradation our refinement has its flowering; as the lotus grows out of the mire, so does our refinement grow out of their defilement. They are doing necessary work; without them society could not endure. If you can tell them that they are co-workers with Nature; if you can, by educating them, open their intelligence, and then begin to teach them to realise that the work that they

are doing is Nature's noble work; that the health of the whole community depends upon its due [Page 27] execution; if you can tell them that Nature takes all filth and turns it into flowers, all foulness and turns it into fragrance; if you can make them understand that they are co-workers with Nature, and therefore yourselves feel that they are to be honoured and not to be despised; if you can look at it in that way, you will have learned the great secret of the spiritual life, that God is the one Worker, and that therefore all good work is honourable and is to be respected.

You see the ideas so far. When once you grasp them, they mean so much in life. To all those who are neither physically vicious nor mentally nor emotionally trivial, to all of those, on the other side of death, the intermediate world is a life of happiness, of keen enjoyment, of usefulness to man beyond anything that we can do in the physical world.

I have run hastily over a great subject, and I have tried to fill up gaps and deficiencies by the names of the few books that I have given you, in which you can find further particulars. I only say to you in closing this second stage of our study: If you gain knowledge; if you realise that the world is a realm of law as much in your emotions as in mechanical movements; if you gain the knowledge how to control, to guide, to shape your emotions, to bring them under control, to make them what you would have them, to impose upon them your rule and sovereignty, and not allow them to carry you [Page 28] away on the crest of their surging billows — ah ! that knowledge, that understanding of the law, will make your life calm and strong, and you will realise that our study, necessarily superficial as it must be in one brief hour, is worthy to be followed in your own leisure, using your own intelligence; then the sign-post that I have put up today may guide you to a knowledge and a virtue, which may glorify your life and make peaceful your death.

Students may read *The Astral Plane* and ;*Clairvoyance* and the chapters on the astral sphere in *Ancient Wisdom*, Popular Lectures on Theosophy, *A Textbook of Theosophy* (People's Books Series). *Experiments in hypnotism* may be studied in Binet and Ferés book on the subject, and in Charcot's *La Grande Hystérie*.