

THE WEB OF DESTINY

By

MAX HEINDEL

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FOREWORD

The series of seventeen lessons printed in this volume are a part of the ninety-nine monthly lessons sent out by the author to his students during his last years in the body. The others have been printed in other volumes and under various titles.

These books contain the priceless treasures of the latest investigations of this great mystic, and carry a message of Christian love mingled with divine wisdom, which only the Initiate into the deeper mysteries can give.

We hope these lesson may be the means of leading many back to God and strengthening their reverence and love for the Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE WEB OF DESTINY

- [Foreword](#)
- [Part I: Spiritual Research--The Soul Body](#)
- [Part II: The Christ Within--The Memory of Nature](#)
- [Part III: "The Dweller on the Threshold"--Earthbound Spirits](#)
- [Part IV: The Sin Body--Possession of by Self-Made Demons--Elementals](#)
- [Part V: Obsession of Man and of Animals](#)
- [Part VI: The Creation of Environment--The Genesis of Mental and Physical Disabilities](#)
- [Part VII: The Cause of Disease--Efforts of the Ego to Escape from the Body--Effects of Lasciviousness](#)
- [Part VIII: The Christ Rays Constitute the "Inner Urge"--Ethereic Sight--Collective Destiny](#)

THE OCCULT EFFECT OF OUR EMOTIONS

- [Part I: The Function of Desire](#)

- [Part II: The Color Effects of Emotion in Assemblages of People--The Isolating Effect of Worry](#)
- [Part III: Effect of War Upon the Desire Body--The Vital Body as Affected by Detonations of Big Guns](#)
- [Part IV: The Nature of Ether Atoms--The Necessity for Poise](#)
- [Part V: The Effects of Remorse--The Dangers of Excessive Bathing](#)

PRAYER--A MAGIC INVOCATION

- [Part I: The Nature of and Preparation for Prayer](#)
- [Part II: The Wings and the Power--The Invocation--The Climax](#)

PRACTICAL METHODS OF ACHIEVING SUCCESS

- [Based Upon Conversation of Sex Force](#)

THE WEB OF DESTINY

PART I

SPIRITUAL RESEARCH--THE SOUL BODY

Although considerable new light and much information was given upon this subject in the "Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception" and our subsequent literature, letters have been coming to Headquarters from students at various times, requesting more light upon such subjects as obsession, mediumship, insanity, abnormal conditions of character, etc. These have given the writer cause to investigate the subject more deeply than theretofore. The maxim that "practice makes perfect" holds good in research of the spiritual realms as well as in physical things. Therefore it is hoped that the light upon this subject, which will be contained in the following pages, may help the student to see more clearly into the causes that are productive of effects in this life.

In order that we may thoroughly understand this subject, it will be necessary to begin at the beginning; to realize that the first fundamental facts of existence are the continuity of life and that action is the expression of life in manifestation. As soon as the spirit has taken its first action, it has thereby generated a cause which must have its effect. This is an absolute necessity in order that the

equilibrium of the universe may be maintained. If this action was physical, that is to say, performed by a spirit in a physical body, the reaction must of necessity be physical also. If this be granted, then it follows as a matter of course that we must take birth in this world from time to time, for it is a matter of observation patent to everyone that we all generate causes in this world from day to day which cannot and do not have their adequate reaction, and if we cannot reap what we have sown in this body, we must certainly come back to reap in a new body or else the law is invalidated. If the law of Cause and Effect is true, periodical rebirth is a matter of absolute logical necessity. Thus, whether we realize it or not and whether we relish it or not, we are in a circle of necessity, and because of our own past actions, bound to come back to act and to react until we develop a power which shall be greater than the one that is now swirling us about. What this power is, Goethe, the great German mystic, indicated in the few words:

"From ev'ry power that holds the world in chains,
Man frees himself when self-control he gains."

And as knowledge is power, it is evident that the more thorough our understanding of the operation of the twin laws of Consequence and Rebirth, the easier we shall find the way to liberation, and also better know how to help others.

Science is to be much commended for the ingenuity, the patience, and the persistency it displays in the invention of instruments wherewith to ferret out the secrets of nature. But while it can thus successfully deal with MATTER, the secrets of spirit and of life are to the savants a closed book, as Mephisto says with fine sarcasm to a scholar who knocks at the door of Faust, seeking admission to the college:

"Who'er would know and treat of aught alive
Seeks first the living spirit thence to drive.
Then are the lifeless fragments in his hand,
He lacks, alas! the vita spirit band."

There is only one instrument which is adequate to investigate the things of the spirit, and that is the Spirit itself. Just as it is necessary to train a man for scientific research in the physical world, so also is a long and slow process required to fit oneself for investigation of the spiritual world. As the man of science must pay the price of his knowledge in months and years of unflinching,

unremitting labor, so also the mystic investigator must give years of his life to understand and be capable of investigating by methods of the spirit.

As you know, that which is now THE PHYSICAL BODY was the first vehicle acquired by man as a thought form; it has undergone an immense period of evolution and organization until it is now the splendid instrument which serves him so well here; but it is hard, set, and difficult to act upon. The next vehicle acquired was THE VITAL BODY, which has also gone through a long period of development and has condensed to the consistency of ether. The third vehicle, THE DESIRE BODY, has been comparatively lately acquired and is in a state of comparative flux. Lastly, there is the mind, which is only as an unformed cloud, not worthy of the name of vehicle, being as yet but a link between the three vehicles of man and the spirit.

These three vehicles, the physical, vital, and desire bodies, together with the link of mind, are the tools of the spirit in its evolution, and, contrary to the common conception, the ability of the spirit to investigate the higher realms does not depend upon the finest of these bodies as much as upon the denser. The proof of this assertion is close at hand, and indeed, anyone who has ever seriously tried has had this proof himself. If not, he may have it forthwith simply by following the directions for changing the condition of his mind. Let us say that a person has formed certain habits of thought which he does not like. Perhaps after a religious experience he finds that in spite of all his desires these habits of thought will not leave him. But if he decides to cleanse his mind so that it shall contain nothing but pure and good thoughts, he may do this by simply refusing to admit impure thoughts. He will find that after a week or two his mind is noticeably cleaner than at the commencement of his effort; that it holds by preference the religious thoughts he is seeking to generate in it. Even a most abnormally degenerate mind can be thoroughly cleansed inside of a few months. This is actual knowledge to many who have tried it, and anyone who wishes and is sufficiently persistent may have the same experience and enjoy a clean mind in a very short time.

But while clean thoughts take us a long step on the path of attainment, the emotions and desires of the desire body are not so easily subdued, for that vehicle is already considerably more set than the mind. While the regenerate mind readily agrees to the idea that we should love our enemies, the desire body, the emotional and passionate nature, aims with every fibre of its being to get even, to get an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Sometimes, even years and years after we think that the sleeping serpent is subdued, that we have at last gained mastery over it, and that it cannot mar our peace, it may suddenly rise and overthrow all our hopes, take the bit between its teeth, go on a rampage, and vow vengeance for some real or fancied wrong. Then it takes the whole power of the higher nature to subdue this rebellious part of our being. This, the writer thinks, is the thorn in the flesh concerning which Paul besought the Lord thrice and was given the answer: "My grace is sufficient for thee." It certainly

does need all the grace one can command to overcome, and eternal vigilance is the price of safety, so let us "WATCH AND PRAY."

It is the desire body which is responsible for all our actions, good, bad, or indifferent, and the oriental philosophers have therefore given directions to their disciples to KILL OUT OF DESIRE and to abstain from action, good or bad, as much as possible, in order that they may thus save themselves from the wheel of birth and death. But that temper which is such a great menace when it takes control, may be made as effective for service under our proper guidance. We would not for one moment think of taking the temper out of a knife; we should then be unable to cut anything therewith. The temper of the desire body must be controlled but not by any means killed. For the dynamic power of motion and action in the invisible world is stored in this desire body, and unless it is intact, we cannot expect to control ourselves there any more than an ocean liner whose engines were disabled could buffet the ocean waves. There are certain societies which teach negative methods of development, and one of their first instructions to the pupil is to drop the jaw and make himself perfectly negative. Any one floated from the physical world toward the spiritual world by such methods would certainly find himself as driftwood upon the ocean, cast hither and thither by the waves, they prey and the sport of every current. And there are in the inner worlds, as well as here, beings who are anything but benevolent, who are ready to take advantage of anyone that ventures into their world not fully prepared to protect himself against them. Thus we see the supreme importance of subjecting our desires to the will of the spirit HERE IN THIS WORLD, of forcing this desire before we attempt to enter the inner world. Here it is, in a very large measure, held in check by the fact that it is interpolated within the dense body, and therefore cannot sway us hither and yon in the same degree as it can when it has been released from the physical prison house.

But even the subjection of the desire body, difficult as it is to accomplish, will not serve to make a man CONSCIOUS in the invisible worlds, for the desire body has not evolved to such a point that it can act as a real instrument of consciousness. It is unformed and cloud-like in the great majority of people, and only a number of vortices are present as sense centers or centers of consciousness; these are not yet sufficiently unfolded so that they can serve the purpose without some other help. Therefore it is necessary to work upon and educate the vital body in such a manner that it may be used in soul-flights. This vehicle, as we know, is composed of the four ethers. It is by means of this body that we manipulate the densest of all our vehicles, the physical body, which we usually think of as the whole man. The chemical and life ethers form a matrix for our physical bodies. Each molecule of the physical body is imbedded in a meshwork of ether which permeates and infuses it with life. Through these ethers the bodily functions, such as respiration, etc., are carried on, and the density and consistency of these matrices of ether determine the state of health. But the part of the vital body formed of the two higher ethers, the light ether and the reflecting ether, is what we may term the SOUL BODY; that is to say, it is more closely

linked with the desire body and the mind and also more amenable to the spirit's touch than are the two lower ethers. It is the vehicle of intellect, and responsible for all that makes man, man. Our observations, our aspirations, our character, etc., are due to the work of the spirit in these two higher ethers, which become more or less luminous according to the nature of our character and habits. Also, as the dense body assimilates particles of food and thus gains in flesh, so the two higher ethers assimilate our good deeds during the life and thus grow in volume as well. According to our doings in this present life we thus increase or decrease that which we brought with us at birth. If we are born with a good character, expressed in these two higher ethers, it will not be easy for us to change this because the vital body has become very, very set during the myriads of years through which we have evolved it. On the other hand, if we have been lax and negligent and indulgent in the habits which we call evil, if we have formed a bad character in past lives, then it is difficult to overcome because of this set nature of the vital body, and it will require years of constant effort to change its structure. This is the reason the Western Wisdom Teaching says that ALL MYSTIC DEVELOPMENT BEGINS WITH THE VITAL BODY.

PART II

THE CHRIST WITHIN--THE MEMORY OF NATURE

There are a great many people who associate spirituality with a great show of emotionalism but as we saw in the last chapter, this idea has absolutely no foundation in fact; on the contrary, the kind of spirituality which is developed by and associated with the emotional nature of the desire body is unreliable in the extreme; this is the variety that is generated in revival meetings where emotionalism is brought up to a high pitch, causing a person to make a great splurge of religious fervor which soon spends itself and leaves him exactly as he was before, much to the chagrin of the revivalists and other people who are engaged in evangelical work. But what else can they expect? They set out to save souls with drums and fifes, with rhythmic revival songs, with appeals made in a voice which is raised and lowered in harmonic waives, all of which are as powerfully effective on the desire body as storms which stir the sea to fury and then subside. The vital body is much more set, and it is only when conversion affects this vehicle that it sticks and stays with a man or woman for life. Those who have the true spirituality do not feel saved one day, in the seventh heaven of ecstasy, and the next feel themselves down in the dumps and miserable sinners that can never be forgiven; for their religion is not based upon the emotional nature which feels these things, but is rooted in the vital body which is the vehicle of reason, set and persistent in the path it has once chose. As new forms are propagated through the second ether of the vital body, so the HIGHER SELF, the

CHRIST WITHIN, is formed through this same vehicle of generation, the vital body, in its higher aspects embodied in the two upper ethers.

But as a child that is born into the world requires nourishment, so also the Christ that is born WITHIN is a babe and requires to be nourished to the full stature of manhood. And as the physical body grows by a continual assimilation of material from the chemical region, the solids, liquids, and gases, so also, as the Christ grows, will the two higher ethers grow in volume and form a luminous cloud around the man or woman sufficiently discerning to set his or her face heavenward; it will invest the pilgrim with light so brilliant that he "WALKS IN THE LIGHT," as a matter of actual fact. By the exercises given in the Western Mystery School of the Rosicrucians, it becomes possible in time to detach the two higher ethers, and the man may then step away from his physical body, leaving it for a time invested and vitalized only by the two lower ethers; he is then what we call an INVISIBLE HELPER.

There are various grades of spiritual sight. One grade enables a man to see the ordinarily invisible ether with the myriads of beings that invest that realm. Other and higher variants give him the faculty to see the desire world and even the world of thought while remaining in the physical body. But these faculties, though valuable when exercised under full control of the human will, are not sufficient to read the "MEMORY OF NATURE" with absolute accuracy. To do this and to make the necessary investigations in order that one may understand how the "Web of Destiny" is made and unmade, it is necessary to be able at will to step from the physical body and function outside in that soul body which we have spoken of as composed of the two higher ethers, this being also invested with the desire body and the mind. Thus the investigator is in full possession of all his faculties, he knows all that he knew in the physical world, and has the ability to bring back into the physical consciousness the things which he has learned without. When he has this ability he must also learn to balance himself, TO UNDERSTAND the things which he sees outside, for mark this: It is not enough to be able to step outside the body into another world and to see things there; we do not by that fact become omniscient any more than we understand what everything is used for and how everything works here in this physical world because we live here from day to day and year to year. It requires study and application to become thoroughly familiar with the facts of the invisible world as it does with the facts of the world in which we are now living in our physical bodies. Therefore the book, the "Memory of Nature," is not read easily at the first attempt or at the second either, for just as it takes a child time to learn how to read our ordinary books here, so, also, it requires time and effort to decipher this wonderful scroll.

It is a familiar fact to students of science that the history of the earth is written in unmistakable characters upon the rocks and by the glaciers. Upon every stone there is found some sign which guides the trained investigator in deciphering its message concerning the development of the earth during past ages, and it is

wonderful to read in the text books upon this subject how well the scientific investigators have been able to make a connected story out of these many clues. It is also well known that wherever we move individually, we leave behind us marks which may be traced though they are unseen even by ourselves. The wonderful ingenuity displayed by the Indians, as told by Fenimore Cooper and others, in tracing their friends or their foes through the virgin forest guided by broken twigs, etc., is far exceeded by scientists today, who trace the criminal by his finger prints. The seemingly fantastic exploits of Sherlock Holmes are duplicated by actual experience in criminal detection. The actions of men now living may be reproduced by the moving picture camera a hundred years hence when the real actors have long moldered in the grave; and so we can by the light of these later discoveries prepare our minds for the belief that there is an automatic record of every human life and of the lives of communities, kept in what we may call, for want of a better name, the Memory of Nature. This shows the stages in evolution attained by all living things, and gives the ministers of God, the Recording Angels, the needed perspective in order to aid us in our attainment of wisdom, knowledge, and power; the clue to what lessons are needed to carry us further on the Path. So far as the individual is concerned, this record starts at the moment when he draws the first breath and continues until the last respiration has emptied the arteries of blood. We know that the whole universe is vibrant with life, that each object constantly emits from itself vibratory waves which reveal its nature and presence. We also know that when a child takes its first complete breath, the physiological conditions in the heart are changed, the foramen ovale is closed, and the blood forced to circulate through the heart and lungs. There it meets the air charged with a picture of the surroundings. Thus the blood, which is the vehicle of the Ego, absorbs in the lungs a complete picture of the outside world. When it rushes through the left ventricle of the heart, it leaves an impress upon the little seed atom situated at the apex and which corresponds to the film of the camera, nor should it be an obstacle to belief in this idea that a large number of pictures must be imprinted upon a very small surface. When we consider that the picture of the Moon which we see in the retina is less than one two-hundredth part of one inch in diameter, we can see that a very small picture can be very distinct, for even within that small space we note upon the Moon a number of mountains and valleys with the naked eye. The picture of a man at a distance of a hundred feet or so is not one-twentieth of an inch in size, according to an authority upon this subject, yet we distinguish in that minute picture the expression of the face, the pattern of the clothing, etc. Similarly, there is upon this minute seed atom a picture of every action ever performed, of every scene in which we have ever found ourselves, during the whole time from birth to death. George du Maurier and Jack London describe in "Peter Ibbetson" and in "The Star Rover," how a prisoner in the flesh may live over again the scenes of his childhood, where he sees himself, his playmates, his parents, his whole environment, effectively reproduced from the etheric record of his child life or even of past lives. Any one who knows the secret of how to put himself in touch with these pictures may find and read the lives of the people with whom he comes in contact, as proved by mediums. But while

fresh or contemporary records may be read with comparative ease, it becomes increasingly difficult to read as we go backwards, for the records which are made in the ether are fruit compared with the ones in the next higher realms and fade gradually.

When a seer examines one who is about to become ill, he will find that the vital body is actually becoming more attenuated, and when it has reached a point of tenuity where it can no longer support the physical body, the latter commences to manifest signs of what we call disease. Again, some time before we see physical recovery, the vital body gradually becomes more dense in structure; then the period of convalescence commences. It is also patent to all who have to do with victims of accidents that they do not suffer as keenly just after the accident as later; this is because the vital body at the time of the accident is uninjured, and therefore the whole effect of the accident is not felt until this vehicle has become attenuated and unable to support the vital processes. Thus we see that there are changes in the ether of a human being; and according to the mystic axiom, "As above, so below," and vice-versa, there are also changes in the planetary ether which constitutes the vital body of the Earth Spirit. As the conscious memory of recent events which is strong in the human being gradually fades, so also the etheric record, which is the lowest aspect of the Memory of Nature, fades in time.

In the highest sub-division of the Region of Concrete Thought, just on the border line between pure spirit and matter, an impress is made of the things and events in this world which is relatively much clearer and more lasting than the etheric record, for while events inscribed upon the etheric record fade away in spots in a few hundred years, and even important events may last only one or two thousand years, the record found in the highest sub-division of the Region of Concrete Thought lasts for the Earth Period. While the records made on the reflecting ether may be read by the uninstructed who have just a little spiritual sight, several initiations are required before it is possible for any one to read the records kept in the higher region noted above. You will readily understand the relation of this record to the one made in the ether, and also to the absolutely permanent record which is inscribed in the World of Life Spirit, if you examine diagram No. 1 on page 52 of the Cosmo. Paracelsus calls the record made in the ether, Sidereal Light; and Eliphas Levi, the great Kabalist, speaks of these records as being kept in the Astral light. This is in a sense correct, for though they have nothing to do with the stars, as the name would seem to imply, they are found in the Etheric Region outside the earth's atmosphere. The medium or hypnotic victim who leaves the body by negative processes under outside control, levitates towards these realms as naturally as our physical body gravitates towards the earth.

As stated in the Cosmo in connection with the constitution of our planet, the path of initiation goes through the earth from circumference to center, one stratum at a time, and though our physical bodies are drawn that way by the force of gravitation, their density prevents trespass as effectually as the force of

levitation which repels the uninstructed class spoken of from sacred precincts. Only when by the power of our own spirit we have left our dense body, instructed by and because of right living, are we able to read the etheric record to best advantage. At a farther point of progress the "water stratum" in the earth is opened to the Initiate, and he is then in a position to read the record of past events permanently engraved in the living substance of the Region of Archetypal Forces, where duration and space are practically non-existent, and where all is an eternal Here and Now.

PART III

"THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD"

EARTH-BOUND SPIRITS

While we are studying "The Web of Destiny, How Made and Unmade," it is expedient that we devote some time to the mysterious "Dweller on the Threshold," a subject that is quite misunderstood. Our investigations of the previous lives of a number of people who have applied to the Fellowship headquarters for relief from so-called obsession, have proved that their trouble is due to one phase of what has been mistakenly called by previous investigators, "The Dweller on the Threshold." When cases are examined merely by the use of spiritual sight or by reading in the etheric record, such a mistake may very easily be made as to confuse that apparition with the true Dweller on the Threshold. But as soon as we look the cases up in the imperishable records contained in the Region of Archetypal Forces, the matter is at once cleared up and the facts developed in these investigations may be summed up as follows:

At the moment of death when the seed atom in the heart is ruptured which contains all the experience of the past life in a panoramic picture, the spirit leaves its physical body taking with it the finer bodies. It then hovers over the dense body which is now dead, as we call it, for a time varying from a number of hours to three and one half days. The determining factor as to the time is the strength of the vital body, the vehicle which constitutes the soul body spoken of in the Bible. There is then a pictorial reproduction of the life, a panorama in reverse order from death to birth, and the pictures are etched upon the desire body through the medium of the reflecting ether in this vital body. During this time the consciousness of the Spirit is concentrated in the vital body, or at least it should be, and it has therefore no feeling about this matter. The picture that is impressed upon the vehicle of feeling and emotion, the desire body, is the basis

of subsequent suffering in the life in Purgatory for evil deeds, and of enjoyment in the first Heaven on account of the good done in the past life.

These were the main facts which the writer was able to personally observe about death at the time when the teachings were first given to him and when he was introduced by the help of the Teacher to the panoramic reproductions of life when persons were going through the gate of death, but the investigations of later years have revealed the additional fact that there is another process going on during these important days following death. A cleavage takes place in the vital body similar to that made by the process of initiation. So much of this vehicle as can be terms "soul," coalesces with the higher vehicles and is the basis of consciousness in the invisible worlds after death. The lower part, which is discarded, returns to the physical body and hovers over the grave in the great majority of cases, as stated in the Cosmo. This cleavage of the vital body is not the same in all person but depends upon the nature of the life lived and the character of the person that is passing out. In extreme cases this division varies very much from normal. This important point was brought out in many cases of supposed spirit obsession which have been investigated from headquarters; in fact it was these cases which developed the far-reaching and astounding discoveries brought out by our most recent researches into the nature of the obsession from which the people who appealed to us were suffering. As might be expected, of course, the division in these cases showed a preponderance of evil, and efforts were then made to find out if there were not also another class of people where a different division with a preponderance of good takes place. It is a pleasure to record that this was found to be the case, and after weighing the facts discovered, balancing one with another, the following seems to be a correct description of the conditions and their reason:

The vital body aims to build the physical, whereas our desires and emotions tear down. It is the struggle between the vital body and the desire body which produces consciousness in the physical world, and which hardens the tissue so that the soft body of the child gradually becomes tough and shrunken in old age, followed by death. The morality or immorality of our desire and emotions acts in a similar manner on the vital body. Where devotion to high ideals is the mainspring of action, where the devotional nature has been allowed for years to express itself freely and frequently, and particularly where this has been accompanied by the scientific exercises given probationers in the Rosicrucian Fellowship, the quantity of the chemical and life ethers gradually diminishes as the animal appetites vanish, and an increased amount of the light and reflecting ether takes their place. As a consequence, physical health is not as robust among people who follow the higher path as among people whose indulgence of the lower nature attracts the chemical and life ethers, in proportion to the extent and nature of their vice, to the partial or total exclusion of the two higher ethers.

Several very important consequences connected with death follow this fact. As it is the chemical ether which cements the molecules of the body in their places

and keeps them there during life, when only a minimum of this material is present, disintegration of the physical vehicle after death must be very rapid. This the writer has not been able to verify because it is difficult to find me of high spiritual proclivities who have passed out recently, but it would seem that this is so from the fact recorded in the Bible that the body of Christ was not found in the tomb when the people came to look for it. As we have said before in relation to this matter, the Christ spiritualized the body of Jesus so highly, made it so vibrant, that it was almost impossible to keep the particles in place during his ministry. This was a fact known to the writer by the teachings of the Elder Brothers and by what investigation he has made of the subject in the memory of Nature, but the bearing of this fact upon the general subject of death and the after-existence was not known until lately.

The real "Dweller on the Threshold" is the composite elemental entity created on the invisible planes by all our untransmuted evil thoughts and acts during all the past period of our evolution. This "dweller" stands guard at the entrance to the invisible worlds and challenges our right to enter therein. This entity must be redeemed or transmuted eventually. We must generate poise and will power sufficient to face and command it before we can consciously enter the super-physical worlds.

As before stated, a worldly life increases the proportion of the lower ethers in the vital body to that of the higher. Where, in addition, a so-called "clean life" is lived and excesses avoided, the health during life is more robust than that of the aspirant to the higher life, because the latter's attitude to life builds a vital body composed principally of the higher ethers. He loves "the bread of life" more than physical sustenance, and therefore his instrument become increasingly high-strung, nervous, and delicate, a sensitive condition which greatly furthers the objects of the spirit, but which is a hardship from the physical viewpoint.

In the great majority of mankind there is such a preponderance of selfishness and a desire to get the most out of life as they view that matter, that either they are busy keeping the wolf from the door or accumulating possessions and taking care of them, and hence they have very little time or inclination to undertake the soul culture so necessary to true success in life. The writer has often heard them contend that if they pay the minister to study the Bible during the six days and give them on the seventh an epitome of what he has found, that should be all that is required to get a ticket to heaven. They subscribe to the church and to the things ordinarily called for in life as honorable and upright; for the rest, they have "a good time." Therefore there is so little that persists in each life of the majority and evolution is so frightfully slow that until one is able to vie the act of death from the higher regions of the World of Concrete Thought and, so to say, look downwards, it does not appear that anything is saved of the vital body. This body seems to return complete to the physical body and to hover over the grave, there it disintegrate simultaneously with the latter. As a matter of fact, an increasing part cleaves to the higher vehicles and goes with them into the desire world,

there to be a basis of consciousness in, and to live through, the purgatorial and heaven lives, generally persisting until man enters the second heaven and unites with the nature forces there in his efforts to create for himself a new environment. By that time, it has been absorbed by the spirit or almost so, and whatever may remain of a material nature will quickly fade away. Thus the personality of the past life has vanished and the spirit will not meet with it in the future lives upon this earth.

But there are some people who are of such an evil nature that they ENJOY a life spent in vice and degenerate practices, a brutal life, and who delight in giving pain. Sometimes they even cultivate the occult arts for evil purposes so that they may have a greater power over their victims. Then their fiendish, immoral practices result in hardening their vital body.

In such extreme cases where the animal nature has been paramount, where there has been no soul expression in the preceding earth life, the division in the vital body spoken of before cannot take place at death, for there is no dividing line. In such a case, if the vital body should gravitate back to the dense body and there gradually disintegrate, the effect of a very evil life would not be so far-reaching, but unfortunately there is in such cases an interlocking grip of the vital and desire bodies which prevents separation. We have seen that where a man lives mostly in the higher nature, his spiritual vehicles are nourished to the detriment of the lower. Conversely, where his consciousness is centered in the lower vehicles, he strengthens them immeasurably. It should be understood that the life of the desire body is not terminated by the departure of the spirit; it has a residual life and consciousness. The vital body is also able to sense things in a slight measure for a few days after death in ordinary cases (hence the suffering caused by embalming, postmortem examinations, etc., immediately after death), but where a low life has hardened and endued it with great strength, it has a tenacious hold on life and an ability to feed on odors of foods and liquors. Sometimes, as a parasite, it even vampirizes people with whom it comes in contact.

Thus an evil man may live for many, many years unseen in our very midst, yet so close that he is nearer than hands and feet. He is far more dangerous than the physical criminal for he is able to prompt others of a similar bent to criminal or degenerate practices without fear of detection or punishment by law.

Such beings are therefore one of the greatest menaces to society imaginable. They have sent countless victims to prison, broken up homes and caused an unbelievable amount of unhappiness. They always leave their victims when the latter have come into the clutches of the law. They gloat over their victims' sorrow and distress, this being a part of their fiendish scheme. There are other classes which delight in posing as "angels" in spiritualistic seances. They also find victims there and teach them immoral practices. The so-called "Poltergeist" which enjoys breaking dishes, upsetting tables, knocking hats over the heads of the delighted

audience, and similar horseplay, is also in this class. The strength and density of the vital body of such beings makes it easier for them to give physical manifestations than for those who have passed beyond into the desire world; in fact the vital bodies of this class of spirits are so dense that they are nearly physical, and it has been a mystery to the writer that some of the people who are taken in by such entities cannot see them. Were they once discovered, one look at their evil sneering faces would very soon dispel the delusion that they are angels.

There is another class of spirits belonging to this same category who appeal to person seeking spiritual development outside the spiritualistic line, by posing to them as INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS and giving them a lot of goody-goody nonsense. They also play upon the credulity of their victims in an almost unbelievable manner, and even though for years they may keep their intentions secret, sometime or other they will show themselves in their true colors. Therefore it cannot be reiterated too often that no one should accept from any one else, either visible or invisible, teachings in the slightest degree contrary to his own highest conception of ethics. It is dangerous to trust absolutely to people in this world and admit them to our full confidence; we know this by experience and act accordingly. We ought, naturally, to be much more careful when the question comes to matters of the soul, and not trust that most important of all matters, our spiritual welfare, in the hands of some one we cannot at least see and judge accordingly. There are many spirits, of course, who have not the wits to do anything very evil with their victims, and who just lead them around by the nose for years and years without any particularly harmful results. But SELF RELIANCE is the most essential virtue to be cultivated by us at this stage of our evolution; the mystic maxim, "If thou art Christ, help thyself," is always sounded in the ears of those who endeavor to tread the true path. Hence we ought to guide ourselves without fear or favor from any spirit.

It is amazing when one searches the Memory of Nature of the past to find how prevalent this interlocking condition of the desire and vital bodies was in former centuries and millenniums. We realize, of course, in a sort of an abstract way, that the further we go back into the history of men the more savage we find them, but that in our own historical times this savagery should have been so common and so brutal an that might was the measure of right absolutely and beyond dispute, was, to say the least, quite a shock to the writer. It has been taught that selfishness and desire were purposely fostered under the regime of Jehovah to give incentive to action. This in the course of time had so hardened the desire body that when the advent of Christ took place, there was almost no heaven life among the people then living; but the writer, personally, never realized what this fact implied until the recent investigations of "The Web of Destiny" were commenced.

Nor were these ancient people content to do all the evil they could in life and then get away, but they must even have their war horses killed, their weapons

laid down in their coffins, and everything else possible done to keep them here, for the ether in those things which had belonged to them during life had an attraction for them, and was a means to further keeping them within the earth's sphere. It enabled them to haunt, for they actually did haunt, their castles for years and years, and of course it was not only the rich or the warrior classes but also others. In cases of blood feuds where people were slain, the ghosts incited their relatives to avenge them by remaining about and helping them to carry out the bloody deeds. Thus they perpetuated evil and kept the world in a turmoil of blood and strife; nor is this condition entirely broken in what we call modern days. Wherever a person dies who has fostered malice and hatred in his heart, these interlock the desire and vital bodies and make him a more serious menace to the community than anyone can imagine who has not investigated this subject. Therefore, if for no other reason, capital punishment should be abolished so that we may not let loose upon the community such dangerous characters to incite the morally weak to follow in their footsteps.

PART IV

THE "SIN BODY"--POSSESSION BY SELF-MADE DEMONS-- ELEMENTALS

Earthbound spirits, such as previously mentioned, gravitate to the lower regions of the desire world which interpenetrate the ether, and are in constant and close touch with those people on earth most favorably situated for aiding them in their evil designs. They usually stay in this earthbound condition for fifty, sixty, or seventy-five years, but extreme cases have been found in which such people so remain for centuries. So far as the writer has been able to discover up to the present time, there seems to be no limit to what they may do or how soon they will let go. But all the while they are piling up for themselves an awful load of sin, nor can they escape suffering therefor; for the vital body reflects and etches deeply into the desire body a record of their misdeeds, and when at last they do let go and enter the purgatorial existence, they meet the retribution which they well deserve. This suffering is naturally lengthy in proportion to the time they have continued their nefarious practices after the death of the dense body--another proof that "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small."

When the spirit has left the SIN BODY, as we will call this vehicle, in contrast to the soul body, to ascend to the second heaven, it does not disintegrate as quickly as the ordinary shell left behind by normal people, for the consciousness in it is enhanced by its dual composition; that is to say, being composed of both a vital and desire body, it has an individual or a personal consciousness that is very

remarkable. It cannot reason, but there is a low cunning present which makes it seem as though it were actually endowed with a spiritual presence, an ego, and this enables it to live a separate life for many centuries. The departed spirit meanwhile enters the second heaven, but having done no work on earth to desire or merit a prolonged stay there or in the third heaven, it only stays there sufficiently long to create a new environment for itself and it is then reborn much earlier than usual--to satisfy the cravings for material things which draw it so strongly.

When the spirit returns to earth, this Sin Body is naturally attracted towards it, and usually stays with it all its life as a demon. Investigations have proved that this class of soulless creatures were very prevalent during Biblical times, and it was to them that our Savior referred as devils, they being the cause of various obsessions and bodily ills such as are recorded in the Bible. The Greek word "daimon" describes them accurately. Even today a large proportion of southern Europe and the Orient is thus harassed, the affliction being specially aggravated in Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia. Whole tribes in Africa, where the Voodoo magic prevails, have with them these gruesome spectres; the Indians of America and negroes in the South are also subject to them.

But unfortunately the evil is not confined to these so-called lower or backward races. Right here in what we call civilized countries, in northern Europe and in North and South America, we find that demoniac possession is far from infrequent, although, of course, its form is not so abject as in the first mentioned places where it is often accompanied by the most filthy and abominable practices.

The writer was at one time quite apprehensive of the effect which war might have in respect to locking the desire and vital bodies together and bringing to birth legions of monsters to afflict future generations. But it is with great thankfulness that he records his conviction that we need have no fear on that score. Only when people are premeditatively malicious and vindictive, and persistently harbor a desire and a purpose to get even with some one, only when such feelings are hugged, nursed, and entertained do they harden the vital body and cause the interlocking grip of these vehicles. We know from the records of the great war that the rank and file have no such sentiments against one another, but that enemies meet as friends whenever chance brings them into such relationship that they may converse with one another. So, though war is responsible for the awful mortality now and will cause deplorable infant mortality in a future age, it will be blameless with regard to the dreadful diseases engendered by obsession and the crimes suggested by these demoniacal sin bodies.

The discarded sin bodies mentioned in the preceding parts of this chapter, inhabit normally and by preference the lowest regions of the ether and condense themselves to the very line of sight. Sometimes they even make use of some of

the constituents of the air and seem usually to be perfectly visible to those people whom they harass, although their victims are usually very careful not to allow anyone to suspect that they have such a demon about them, that is at least in the western world; there seems to be no such delicacy in the southern part of Europe.

Following the above investigations, the writer attempted a number of experiments with spirits who were in the higher realms of the ether, having just passed out, and with people who had been in the desire world for a longer or shorter time, some of them being almost ready for the first heaven. A number of spirits who had departed this life kindly co-operated as subjects. The aim of the experiments was to determine how far it would be possible for them to clothe themselves in the materials of the lower etheric and even the gaseous regions. It was noticed that those who had just passed out could quite readily endure the lower ether vibrations, although being of good character they were not well satisfied to remain there longer than necessary, for they were uncomfortable. But as we tried people from successively higher regions of the desire world up to the first heaven, it became more and more difficult to wrap themselves in ether or descend into it. The consensus of opinion was that it was like going down into a deep well, there to smother. It was also found that it was absolutely impossible for any one in the physical to see them. We tried by every method of suggestion to arouse the people in rooms which we visited, to a sense of our presence, but we found no response, though in a number of cases the forms which we condensed were so opaque that it seemed to the writer as if they were nearly as dark as those physical people whom we desired to attract. We placed our experimental subjects between the physical people and the light; nevertheless we had no success in any case, either with those who were from the higher realms or with those who had passed out recently and were able to stay in the given position and density for a considerable time.

In addition to the entities already mentioned who dwell in a sin body made by themselves, and who thus suffer entirely from their own deeds in the period of expiation, two classes were found which were similar in certain respects although entirely different in others. In addition to the divine Hierarchies and the four life waves of spirits now evolving in the physical world through the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms, there are also other life waves which express themselves in the various invisible worlds. Among them there are certain classes of sub-human spirits which are called elementals. It sometimes happens that one of these elementals takes possession of the sin body of some one of a savage tribe, and thus adds extra intelligence to that being. At the rebirth of the spirit that generated this sin body, the usual attraction brings them together, but on account of the elemental ensouling the sin body, the spirit becomes different from the other members of the tribe, and we find them then acting as medicine men or in a similar capacity. These elemental spirits ensouling the sin bodies of Indians also act upon mediums as spirit controls, and having obtained power over the medium during life, when he dies, these elemental spirit controls oust him from the

vehicles which contain his life experience, and thus the medium may be retarded in evolution for ages, for there is no power that can compel these spirits to let go, once they have gained control of such a body. Therefore, though mediumship may produce no seeming evil effect in a lifetime, there is a very, very, grave danger after death to the person who allows his body to be taken possession of. Spiritualism has done a necessary work in the world. It was probably the chief means of checking the absolute materialism of science, and it has brought solace to thousands of suffering souls who grieved for the loss of departed ones; it has turned unbelievers to believe in a higher existence. We have no desire, whatever, to speak in a derogatory manner of its workers, but we cannot refrain from voicing a warning, as we feel it a duty to point out the enormous danger to those who allow themselves to be habitually controlled by spirits whom they cannot see, and about whom they cannot possibly know anything.

PART V

OBSESSION OF MAN AND OF ANIMALS

It is a curious fact that subhuman elementals sometimes attach themselves to certain persons, to a family, or even to a religious society; but in such cases it was always found that their vehicle did not consist of the hardened sin body composed of an interlocking desire and vital body, but that the vehicle had been obtained through mediumship practiced by a person of ordinarily good character, and that the ether of this vehicle was in a state of disintegration. To offset this and to prolong their hold on such a vehicle, they demand of those whom they serve, regular offerings of food and the burning of incense; though they cannot, of course, assimilate the physical food, they can and do live upon the ether fumes and odors which arise from it, also upon the fumes of incense.

This is only another illustration of the fact that purity of motive will not protect us when we go contrary to the laws of God, any more than we can escape a burn if we put our hand on a hot stove, no matter why we did it. But, nevertheless, it has been found in cases where a medium has been ensouled by pure motives and high religious devotion, it is very difficult for such evil entities to hold the vital body for a long time; they soon tire of the effort and seek another victim who is more in accordance with their nature. Thus in the south of Europe and in the far East there are elementals that take possession of the vital bodies of a family, generation after generation, leaving one for another and performing certain services for the family for a consideration of food, which is usually offered at regular times. Some of them are too vile to be satisfied with the offering of ordinary food and demand blood, even human blood, and these beings are responsible for such tribes as the head-hunters of the Philippines and the

stranglers of India, who commit murder as a religious rite. This is also the basis of Ancestor Worship in the East.

These as well as the sin bodies which are not ensouled by an outside intelligence have been called "THE DWELLERS ON THE THRESHOLD," merely owing to the fact that when the person by whom they were originally generated was reborn, this demon attached itself to him and became a tempter and a devil to him all through life. Not infrequently it was found that in the case of a person who had in one life generated such a demon, but who had taken the lessons of that life so much to heart that they were expiated in the purgatorial existence, and who when reborn endeavored in the most whole-souled way to live a clean, upright, and honest life, this sin body was still always on hand to hamper him. Many of the people who were thus afflicted were so sincere in their desire to reform that they entered monasteries and practiced dreadful austerities upon their bodies, each of them believing that the demon which haunted him and of whose presence he was conscious was the devil or an emissary from him.

It is said truly that the boy is the father of the man. In a similar sense our previous existences are the progenitors of our present and future lives, and it is very certain that in this sense at least, "the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children"; nor can we deny the justice thereof, for the cruelties practiced by these people which caused the formation of the sin body were generally of the most atrocious nature imaginable.

You have probably heard it said that when a bull dog has taken a grip on anything, he WILL NOT let go. This implies, however, that he has the power to do so if he wants to. But it is different with a snake; its teeth are pointed towards the back of the mouth so that when once it has sunk its fangs into the flesh of its victim, it CANNOT let go but must perforce swallow the victim. Curiously enough, something similar is the case in obsession.

You will remember that the writer has always contended that spirit controls stand outside their victim's body and behind him, manipulating the organ of speech or the whole body, as the case may be, from and through the cerebellum and medulla oblongata where the flame of life burns with a double, buzzing sound composed of two tones, indicative of the resistance of the body to the manipulations of the intruder. Our latest investigations have, however, disclosed the fact that the spirit controls who thus manipulate their victims from without, are the wise ones who are too wary to be caught in a trap. While they are without, they can let go at any time they wish and leave their victim to pursue his daily life as desired, while they do the same themselves. But there are other spirits who are not so wise, or who are perhaps more foolhardy or else so anxious to get into the physical world that they throw all caution aside. Entering the body of their victims, they find themselves in almost the same position as the prey of the snake; the body of their intended victim has a lock grip upon them and they

cannot let go under ordinary circumstances. Thus the obsession becomes permanent, and the whole personality of that victim changes.

If the obsessing spirit be an elemental or subhuman entity which is not able to use a mind or larynx, these being the latest human acquisitions, the person so obsessed becomes a hopeless lunatic, not infrequently of a malevolent nature, and the faculty of speech is also impaired. It is almost impossible to dislodge such an entity once it has entered. Investigation of former lives shows that this affliction is usually the outcome of a desire to run away from life's experience; for those who are obsessed are often found to have been suicides in a previous existence. Then they had a body which they did not appreciate, and as a consequence in a later life the mentality became weakened either through an organic disease, a great shock, or by obsession. In any one of these cases the spirit was ousted from its body, always hovering around it and eager to obtain possession but unable to do so because of the lack of mind wherewith to focus thought upon the brain or because of obsession by an extraneous entity.

Sorrow and disappointment are usually the causes of suicide, and often a great sorrow was found to derange the mind; but the spirit is then quite capable of understanding and handling the situation even though it may not be able to use its vehicles because of the lacking focus of mind. But where it has given way and attempted to escape by suicide, it learns in the manner described to realize the value of a body and of the links therewith, so that in the future no provocation will be sufficient to cause it to sever the silver cord. In fact, sometimes sorrows come to tempt a person who has given way in the past to do this very act; and when he resists, it shows he has become immune from the temptation. It seems to be the same principle upon which the drunkard of a former life is tempted to drink in order to test his stability of character by his conscious refusal to yield.

It is curious that the commission of suicide in one life and the consequent post-mortem suffering during the time when the archetype still exists often generate in such people a morbid fear of death in the next life, so that when the event actually occurs in the ordinary course of life, they seem frantic after they leave the body and so anxious to get back to the physical world again that they frequently commit this crime of obsession in the most foolish and unthinking manner. However, as there are not always negative human subjects available for obsession, (and even if there were, it is not certain that the person who has just passed out and who is seeking such a chance will find one in whom he may take refuge) a strange, a horrible thing often happens, namely, that such a spirit ousts the real owner of an animal body and then ensouls its vehicle. It is then under the dreadful necessity of living an animal existence, pure and simple. If the animal is subjected to cruelty by its master, the obsessing human spirit suffers as the animal spirit would have suffered; if the animal is to be killed for food, the man within sees and understands the preparation for slaughter and has to go through the horrible experiences connected therewith. Nor are cases of this nature infrequent at all; in fact they happen very often, as a visit to some of the great

American slaughter-houses has brought home to the writer in a most forcible manner; and the realization of this, to him, new fact has brought home in an almost painful manner the necessity of educating the people to the great truth that DEATH, LIKE BIRTH, IS ONLY AN EVENT OF FREQUENT OCCURRENCE IN THE NEVER-ENDING LIFE OF THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT.

Full faith in this doctrine would take away untold misery from mankind, and we ought to do all in our power to help spread this gospel of Life.

It also sometimes occurs that an evil man embodies himself in a beast of prey and takes a fiendish delight in terrorizing a community. When the Christ walked upon earth, such cases of animal obsession by human spirits were met with every day, and the instances recorded in the Bible are not at all myths or foolishness to one endowed with spiritual sight and able to read in the Memory of Nature, for it is found that these things actually did happen; in fact, the ancient seers who observed this habitual entrance of people of low and evil character into the bodies of beasts when they had passed out of their own bodies at death, thought that this was the regular course of nature instead of being an anomalous condition, and they therefore formulated the doctrine of Transmigration.

PART VI

THE CREATION OF ENVIRONMENT-- THE GENESIS OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

It is a fact evident from the merest superficial observation that while animals act alike under like circumstances, because they are guided by a group spirit, the human being does not. In humanity there are as many species as there are individuals, each one being a law unto himself; and we can never predict from the actions of one, how another will act under similar circumstances; even the same individual may act differently, and probably will, under similar circumstances at different times. On that account it is difficult to handle or properly elucidate a subject like "The Web of Destiny," when we are only equipped with minds of such small capacity as human beings have at present. To fully understand this subject would require the wisdom of such great beings as the Recording Angels, who have charge of this intricate department of life.

It must not, therefore, be thought that the writer is giving in this book more than a very superficial view of how destiny is made and unmade. Each act of each individual calls forth in the universe a certain vibration which spends itself, reacting upon him and others in his environment; and no mere human mind could either watch or tabulate the results of these actions and reactions in a few short

months, years, or lives. But we have sought from the general picture impressed upon our mind by the study of our subject, to classify the causes engendered in the past as they appear to us, and their effect in present lives. Several hundred persons have been investigated in the course of this study, and in some cases we have gone back for three, four, or even more lives in order to get at the root of the matter and to determine how the actions in the past react to make conditions in present lives. But although we have thus done our very best under the circumstances, students are particularly requested not to regard this as any authoritative conclusion in the matter, but rather as a fingerpost which, we hope, may help to solve certain problems.

As regards environment, it would seem that people who are of a particularly difficult nature to get along with and who have a hard life before them, are often born among strangers where they will not receive any sympathy and where their sufferings will not create upon their next of kin according to the flesh any appreciable sympathetic impression; or else they are orphaned, or deserted by their parents, or they run away from home at an early age. Where this is the case, the soul often hungers for a sympathy which it had neglected to give to others in previous lives. We have also found cases where certain people committed the most atrocious outrages in the past and brought shame and dishonor upon their nearest kin, who suffered deeply because they loved the miscreant. And in the life where this erring soul was to atone for past misdeeds, it would find itself in an altogether unsympathetic environment, hungering and thirsting for the love that it had despised in a previous life; thus its lot was made all the harder. If the man did not learn the lesson in one life, several lives of similar experience would teach him to be sympathetic to those who loved him, as well as to do honestly and rightly by others.

It was also found that often a soul had gone wrong in past lives because of a lack of kindly influence on the part of those who composed his immediate family, and who should have given to him their loyalty, support, and love. The lack of this sympathetic environment did not, of course, excuse his misdeeds in the eyes of the law, and he was forced in later lives to expiate the misdeeds of the past. But in such cases the tables were usually reversed; the family, which in past lives had been indifferent to him, would not dote upon him and thus would feel keenly whatever sorrow and suffering he must go through on account of his past. Thus they expiated their part in making him what he was because of their lack of sympathy and kindness.

These are extreme cases; but, naturally, one cannot draw a definite lesson from cases not clearly marked; the more bluntly events stand out, the easier it is to tabulate them. The law which holds good in extreme cases would also hold good in lesser cases, with modifications in proper degree to cover choice of environment.

The foregoing facts show us clearly that we are truly our brother's keeper, and that it behooves every one of us to show all the sympathy and kindness we possibly can to those who are in misfortune, either in or out of our families. For though upon the fact of things and looking at life from the viewpoint of our present embodiment alone, we may not seem to have any responsibility for the condition of a scapegrace relative; nevertheless if we could view the larger life, if we could see behind the veil, probably we should find that we ourselves had helped him to sink into degradation.

We frequently hear the expression that such and such a person is the "odd one" in a certain family; and we may nearly always take it that the poor soul so designated is a stranger among strange people, having to stay there for this life on account of some misdeeds in the past. "Blood is thicker than water," says an old proverb; but as a matter of fact, the tie of blood is of no consequence unless the spirits in a family are bound to one another by love or hate from the past, which determines their real relationship in the present life. A soul may be clothed in the flesh of a certain family, it may sit at their board and have a legal right to a part of their estate, while still it is as much a stranger to them as a passing tramp who begs a meal at their kitchen door. Do you remember that the Christ said, "For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in." And then, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." When we find such a soul, one that is "odd," lonely, and strange in its environment, it should be our endeavor as Christians to emulate the example set forth by our Lord; we should endeavor to make such a strange soul at home and cultivate its acquaintance for Christ's sake, regardless of its supposed oddities.

The disabilities which affect humanity may be divided into large classes; MENTAL and PHYSICAL. The mental troubles are particularly traceable to the abuse of the creative function, when they are congenital, with one exception which we shall note later. The same holds true in case of impairment of the faculty of speech. This is reasonable and easy to understand. The brain and the larynx were built with half of the creative force by the Angels, so that man who, prior to the acquisition of these organs, was bi-sexual and able to create from himself alone, lost that faculty when these organs were created and is now dependent upon the co-operation of another of opposite polarity or sex in order to generate a new vehicle for an incoming spirit.

When we use the spiritual sight to look at man in the Memory of Nature during the time when he was yet in the making, we find that wherever there is now a nerve, there was first a desire current; that the brain itself was made of desire substance in the first place and also the larynx. It was desire that first sent a motive impulse through the brain and created these nerve currents, that the body might be moved and obtain for the spirit whatever gratification was indicated by desire. Speech, also, is used for the purpose of obtaining a desired object or end. Through these faculties man has obtained a certain mastery over the world, and

if he could just flit from one body to another, there would be no end to his abuse of his power for gratifying every whim and desire. But under the law of consequence he takes with him into a new body, faculties and organs similar to those which he left behind in the one preceding.

When passion has wrecked the body in one life, it is stamped upon the seed atom. In the next descent to rebirth it is therefore impossible for him to gather sound material with which to build a brain of stable construction. He is then usually born under one of the common signs, and usually, also, the four common signs are on the angles; for through these signs passionate desire finds it difficult to express itself. Thus the powerful impulse which formerly ruled in his brain and which might be used for the purpose of rejuvenescence is absent; he lacks incentive in life and therefore he becomes helpless--a log upon the ocean of life--often insane.

But the spirit is not insane; it sees, knows, and has a keen desire to use the body, though that be an impossibility, for often it cannot even send a correct impulse along the nerves. The muscles of face and body are therefore not under the control of its will. This accounts for the lack of co-ordination which makes the maniac such a pitiable sight. And thus the spirit learns one of the hardest lessons in life, namely, that it is worse than death to be tied to a living body and unable to find expression through it because THE DESIRE FORCE necessary to accomplish thought, speech, and motion HAS BEEN SPENT IN UNRIGHTEOUS LIVING in a previous life and left the spirit without the necessary energy to operate its present fleshly instrument.

PART VII

THE CAUSE OF DISEASE

EFFORTS OF THE EGO TO ESCAPE FROM THE BODY

EFFECTS OF LASCIVIOUSNESS

Though mental disabilities, when congenital, are generally traceable to abuse of the creative function in a past life, there is at least one notable exception to this rule, namely, cases such as mentioned in the Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception and elsewhere in our literature, and described as follows: Where a spirit, who has a particularly hard life before it, comes down to rebirth and feels upon entering the womb that the panorama of the coming life then shown it marks an existence too hard for it to undergo, it sometimes tries to run away from

the school of life. At that time the Recording Angels or their agents have already made the connection between the vital body and the sense centers of the brain in the forming foetus; therefore the effort of the spirit to escape from the mother's womb is frustrated, but the wrench that is given by the Ego deranges the connection between the etheric and physical sense centers, so that the vital body is not concentric with the physical, causing the etheric head to extend above the physical cranium. Thus it is impossible for the spirit to use the dense vehicle; it is tied to a mindless body which it cannot use, and the embodiment is practically wasted.

We also find cases where a great shock later in life causes the spirit to endeavor to run away with the invisible vehicles. As a result a similar wrench is given to the etheric sense centers in the brain, and the shock deranges the mental expression. Everybody has probably felt a similar sensation on receiving a fright; a surging as of something endeavoring to get out of the dense body; that is the desire and vital bodies, which are so swift in their motion that an express train is as a snail by comparison. They see and feel the danger and are frightened before the scare is transmitted to the inert and slow physical body in which they are anchored, and which prevents their escape under ordinary strain.

But at times, as said, the fright and shock are sufficiently severe to give them such an impulse that the etheric sense centers are deranged. This most frequently happens to persons born under common signs, which are the weakest in the zodiac. However, as a ligament that has been stretched and torn may gradually regain comparative elasticity, so also, in these cases, it is easier to restore the mental faculties than in those cases where congenital insanity, brought over from past lives, has caused inadequate connection.

Hysteria, epilepsy, tuberculosis, and cancer were all found to result from the erratic propensities of a past life. It was noticed that though many of the subjects had been, in the past lives investigated, almost maniacal in the gratification of their lasciviousness, they were at the same time of a highly devotional and religious nature; and in such cases, it seems that the physical body generated in the present life was normally healthy and their disability altogether mental; while in other cases where the indulgence of the passionate nature was coupled with a vile character and a cruel disregard of others, epilepsy together with rachitis, hysteria, and a deformed body were the present result; also, frequently, cancer, especially cancer of the liver or breast.

In this connection, however, we wish to again warn students not to draw hasty conclusions that these are hard and fast conditions. The number of investigations made, though very large and an arduous task for one researcher to handle, are too few to be really conclusive in matters involving millions of human beings. They are, however, in line with the teachings of the Cosmo given by the Elder Brothers regarding the effect of materialism in bringing about rachitis a softening of a part of the body that should be hard, and tuberculosis, which hardens tissues

that should remain soft and pliable. Cancer is essentially similar in effect; and when we consider that the sign Cancer is ruled by the moon, the planet of generation, and that the lunar sphere is under the sway of Jehovah, the God of generation, whose angels announce and preside over birth as instanced in the case of Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Jesus, we readily see that abuse of the generative functions can cause both cancer and lunacy in the most differentiated forms.

Therefore with regard to physical abnormalities and deformities, the rule seems to be that as the physical indulgence of passion reacts on the mental state, so the abuse of the mental powers in one life leads to physical disability in later existences. An occult maxim says that "A lie is both murder and suicide in the Desire World." The teachings of the Elder Brothers given in the Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception explain that whenever an occurrence takes place, a certain thought form generated in the invisible world makes a record of the incident. Every time the event is talked about or commented upon, a new thought form is created which coalesces with the original and strengthens it, provided they are both true to the same vibration. But if an untruth is told concerning what happens, then the vibrations of the original and those of the reproduction are not identical; they jar and jangle, tearing each other to pieces. If the good and true thought form is sufficiently strong, it will overcome and break down the thought forms based upon a lie, and the good will overcome the evil; but where the lies and malicious thoughts are the stronger, they may overcome the true thought form of the occurrence and thus demolish it. Afterwards they will jar among themselves, and all in turn will be annihilated.

Thus a person who lives a clean life, endeavoring to obey the laws of God and striving earnestly for truth and righteousness, will create thought forms about him of a corresponding nature; his mind will run in grooves that harmonize with truth; and when the time comes in the second heaven to create the archetype for his coming life, he will readily, intuitively, by force of habit from the past life, align himself with the forces of right and truth. These lines, being built into his body, will create harmony in the coming vehicles, and health will therefore be his normal portion in the coming life. Those who, on the other hand, have in the past life taken a distorted view of things, displayed a disregard for truth, and exercised cunning, extreme selfishness, and disregard for the welfare of others, are bound in the second heaven to see things in an oblique manner also, because that is their habitual line of thought. Therefore, the archetype built by them will embody lines of error and falsity; and consequently, when the body is brought to birth, it will exhibit a weakness in various organs, if not in the whole bodily organization.

Again we warn students not to draw quick conclusions from these tentative rules. It is not our intention to imply that every one that has a seemingly healthy body has been a paragon of virtue in his past life, and he who suffers from one disability or another has been a scapegrace or good-for-nothing. None of us are able to tell at the present time, "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." We are

deceived because our senses are illusive. A long street seems to narrow in the distance, when, as a matter of fact, it is just as wide a mile away as where we are standing. The sun and moon seem much larger when near the horizon than when at the zenith; but, as a matter of fact, we know that they do not gain in size by descending toward the horizon, nor lose by ascending into the mid-heaven. Thus we are constantly making allowances for and correcting sense illusions; similarly, with everything else in the world. What seems to be true is not always so, and what is true today regarding conditions of life may change tomorrow. Therefore it is impossible for us to know truth in the ultimate under the evanescent and illusory conditions of physical existence.

It is only when we enter into the higher realms, and particularly into the Region of Concrete Thought, that the eternal verities are to be perceived; hence we must necessarily make mistakes again and again, even despite our most earnest efforts to always know and tell the truth. On that account it is impossible for us to build a thoroughly harmonious vehicle. Were that possible, such a body would really be immortal, and we know that immortality in the flesh is not the design of God; for Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

But we know that even today only a very small percentage are ready to live as near the truth as they see it, to confess it and profess it before men by service and by righteous and harmless living. We can also understand that such must have been few and far between in the by-gone ages, when man had not evolved the altruism that came to this planet with the advent of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. The standards of morality were much lower then, and the love of truth almost negligible in the greater part of humanity, who were engrossed in their endeavors to accumulate as much wealth or gain as much power or prestige for themselves as possible. They were therefore naturally inclined to disregard the interests of others, and to tell a lie seemed in no way reprehensible and sometimes even appeared meritorious. The archetypes were consequently full of weaknesses, and the organic functions of the body today are interfered with to a serious degree as a result, particularly as the western bodies are becoming more high strung and more sensitive to pain on account of the spirit's growing consciousness.

PART VIII

THE CHRIST RAYS CONSTITUTE THE "INNER URGE"--

ETHERIC SIGHT--COLLECTIVE DESTINY

Assimilation of the fruits of each past life takes place before the spirit descends to rebirth, and consequently the character generated is fully formed and readily expressed in the subtle, mobile mind-stuff of the Region of Concrete Thought, where the archetype of the coming dense body is built. If the spirit seeking rebirth loved music, it will seek to build a perfect ear with the semi-circular canals accurately placed and the ampullae very thin and sensitive to vibration; it will seek to form long and slender fingers wherewith to execute the heavenly chords caught by the ear. But if it detested music, if in the past life it endeavored to close its ears to sounds of gladness or the sob of sorrow the desire to shut itself away from others thus formed would cause it to neglect the ear when building the archetype, and as a consequence this organ would be defective in a degree commensurate with the neglect caused by the character of the previous existence.

Similarly with the other senses; who drinks from a fount of knowledge and endeavors to share his knowledge with his neighbor, lays the foundation for powers of oratory in a future life, because the desire to communicate knowledge would cause him to pay particular attention to the formation and strength of the vocal organ when he is building the archetype of his coming body. Those who, on the other hand, endeavor to gain access to the mysteries of life for the sake of curiosity or to gratify their own pride of intellect, neglect to build an adequate organ of expression and are therefore found to have weak voices or impediments in speech. In this way it is brought home to them that expression is a valuable asset. Although the brain of one thus afflicted may not sense the lesson, the spirit learns that we are strictly accountable for the use we make of our talents, and we must pay the penalty sometime, somewhere, if we neglect to speak the word of Life to light our brothers or sisters upon the path, when well qualified by knowledge to do so.

Regarding lack of vision or disabilities of the organ of sight it has long been known among researchers that it is the effect of extreme cruelty in a past life. Recent investigations have developed the further information that much of the eye trouble now prevalent among people is due to the fact that OUR EYES ARE CHANGING; they are, in fact, becoming responsive to a higher octave of vision than before, because the ether surrounding the earth is becoming more dense and the air is growing more rare. This is particularly true in certain parts of the world, southern California among others. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Aurora Borealis is becoming more frequent and more powerful in its effects upon the earth. In the early years of the Christian Era this phenomenon was almost unknown, but in the course of time as the Christ wave which descends into the earth during part of the year, infuses more and more of its own life into the dead, earthly lump, the ETHERIC VITAL RAYS become visible at intervals. Later they became more and more numerous and are now commencing to interfere with our electrical activities, particularly with telegraphy, which service is sometimes completely demoralized by these radiating streamers.

It is also noteworthy that the disturbances are confined to wires going east and west. If you will refer to pages eighty-five and eighty-six in THE ROSICRUCIAN COSMO-CONCEPTION, you will see it stated there that rays or lines of force from the plant group spirits radiate in all directions from the center of the earth towards the periphery and then outwards, passing through the roots of plants or trees, then upward toward the top of same.

The currents of the animal group spirits, on the other hand, encircle the earth. The comparatively weak and invisible currents generated by the group spirits of the plants, and the very strong powerful rays of force generated by the Christ Spirit now becoming visible as the Aurora Borealis, have hitherto been of about the same nature as static electricity, while the currents generated by the animal group spirits and which encircle the earth may be likened to dynamic electricity which gave the earth its power of motion in by-gone ages. Now, however, the Christ currents are becoming more and more forceful and their static electricity is being liberated. The etheric impulse which they give will inaugurate a new era, and the sense organs now possessed by mankind must accommodate themselves to this change. Instead of the etheric rays which emanate from an object bringing a reflected image to the retina of our eye, the so-called "blind spot" will be sensitized and we shall look out through the eye and see directly the thing itself instead of the image upon our retina. Then we shall not only see the surface of the thing we observe, but we shall be able to see through and through it as those who have cultivated the etheric vision do now.

As time goes on and the Christ by His beneficent ministrations attracts more and more of the interplanetary ether to the earth, thus making its vital body more luminous, we shall be walking in a sea of light, and when we learn to forsake our ways of selfishness and egotism through the constant contact with these beneficent Christ vibrations, we also shall become luminous. Then the eye as it is now constituted would not be of service to us, therefore it is now beginning to change and we are experiencing the discomfort incident to all reconstruction. It may be said further with reference to the Aurora and its effects upon us, that these rays are radiated through every part of the earth, which is the body of Christ, from the center to the periphery, but in the inhabited parts of the world these rays are absorbed by humanity as the rays of the plant group spirits are absorbed by the flower. These rays constitute the "inner urge" which is slowly but surely impelling mankind to adopt an attitude of altruism. They are the impregnating rays which fructify the soul, so that eventually the immaculate conception will take place and the Christ will be born within each of us. When we have all thus become perfectly impregnated, the Christ light will begin to radiate from us. Then we shall walk in the Light as He is in the Light, and we shall all have Fellowship, one with another.

Just a few words concerning collective destiny will end these lessons:

Besides the individual destiny generated by ourselves in each life, there is also a collective destiny which we incur by the fact that we are members of a community or a nation. It is well known that communities sometimes act as a whole, either for good or for evil, and it is only reasonable that these collective actions should also have a collective effect in future lives upon the members of that community or nation which takes part in them. And it is found that when these acts are evil the debt thus contracted is generally liquidated in the course of accidents, so called, on a large scale. It has been taught as a matter of fact that there are no accidents save where man, who has the divine prerogative of initiating new causes, breaks into other lives and thereby causes a change in their affairs, or when by carelessness he takes the life of a fellow-being. The latter is an accident in many cases. But such great cataclysms as that which we witnessed in Sicily, and such as the San Francisco earthquake, the great European War, etc., are not accidents, but are causative acts of the community involved or the result of such acts in past lives. Knowing what we do of the working of the laws of infant mortality, we can readily realize, for instance, that as so many hundreds of thousands of victims of the Great War have passed out upon the battle field where it is absolutely impossible for them to etch in the panorama of their past life, it will be necessary for them to pass out in the next existence during childhood, and how can this wholesale death come to the infants of a future age save through some epidemic or some cataclysm which will sweep the earth? On that hypothesis we may see in the Sicilian earthquake, San Francisco's destruction, the famines in Ireland and India, and similar national catastrophes, the workings of destiny from the past, bringing to each nation the fruits of its past lives and actions as a community.

What has been said in the foregoing pages is a very slight hint of how we make and unmake destiny. Please remember that the few hundred cases investigated do not give an adequate basis for a general idea of the scope of the Law, and the student is bound to find incongruities in individual cases regarding what has been said. Questions will undoubtedly present themselves regarding this, that, or the other specific case, and while it is easy enough to investigate single cases and state what causes in one life produced certain effects in another life of one person, it is very different when we come to tabulate them and endeavor to form a general law, as we have tried to do in the present work. To perform this task in a perfect manner would require superhuman knowledge and wisdom, and the present attempt may perhaps be characterized as a case of a fool rushing in where angels might well fear to tread. Personally, the writer has gained much more knowledge than he has been able to communicate, but he hopes nevertheless that what has been said may be of some little use to the student as hints concerning the great mystery of life.

May these studies in the Web of Destiny generate in each student a keener desire to live day by day in such a manner that there shall be more peace on earth and good will among men.

