

materialistic. That arid gospel is also losing its appeal, this time for a different reason. It is the man of science who has revealed the wonders of the universe which make the doctrine of materialism barren, sterile and impossible of acceptance.

"So it is, in times like these, when so many find their outlook is being altered and all is in the melting pot that there comes the great opportunity to present spiritual truths.

"It has been said before that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and once again when the need is great the power of the spirit pours itself out. Love calls to love across the chasm of death, love seeks to guide its beloved, to bring the balm of comfort to hearts tortured with sorrow, to bring the healing power to those tortured with affliction, to bring guidance to those who have lost their way, to bring all the demonstrations of the reality of spirit power.

"The truths which accompany these demonstrations are eternal; they are changeless, they are unaffected by any happening in your world or in mine, they are not subject to repeal or alteration, they are eternal realities. Once you have grasped them, once you have acquired them, once you understand and appreciate them, your life has a lustre, a beauty, a richness, a radiance, a confidence, a sureness and no more can you walk desolate in heart, dispirited or despairing.

"These are the great tasks, the great opportunities, the avenues of service, that are brought to many. The millions who cry out in anguish provide the soil where we labour, and each soul who finds the light, each soul who is able to abandon ignorance for knowledge, who can replace tears of sorrow with the smile of joy, each such soul is a victory, a victory won in the eternal battle that is being waged.

"So let us all, wherever we may be, whoever we are, gird up our strength, put on our armour, continue in this fray in which the issues are of such tremendous import to all humanity, knowing that the mighty power of the Great

Spirit is ranged with us to aid us in the succouring of all who need our service."

Then the guide answered questions. The first one came from a reader, who quoted Shaw Desmond's statement that "ninety-nine out of every hundred guides talk tosh," and asked for Silver Birch's opinion. He replied:

"No one who is really a guide, competent to perform the services of a guide, would qualify for that description. The guides are carefully chosen for the tasks assigned to them, and their fitness to perform these tasks has been demonstrated before they begin their mission in co-operation with a medium.

"This is not a charge which could be levelled against any who are truly guides. It is, however, unfortunately true that there are undeveloped instruments through whom the power of the spirit could not be registered with that fulness or clarity which can be achieved when there is greater development.

"Among such instruments, in the stages of unfoldment, many things are said and done attributed to guides. In reality their origin does not belong to guides but rather to members of the band, controls, and in some cases where the development of the medium is of a very elementary nature it may well be that only the subconscious ideas of the instrument are being expressed.

"So that, I would say it is not true to assert that the guides talk rubbish. We must not be blamed for that as it would be unfair to say that so many of those who expound these truths too often talk rubbish. But that is a very general statement. He does not say which guide."

"I think Desmond makes sweeping statements," commented a member of the circle, and another stated: "We sometimes don't agree with some of the guides. I find some whose teaching is difficult to follow. Whether he means that we don't know." Another comment was: "A guide

perhaps has a very different line of development to Desmond's, and therefore he thinks it is all wrong."

"Still," said Silver Birch, "I do not see why we should be dismissed with such sweeping statements. Then, of course, it must be remembered that rubbish is always spoken by somebody else, and our own utterances have the hall-mark of divine inspiration."

The next question was of a very different order. The writer asked for a guide's help, and said: "Will you please give some advice on the mental attitude one should try to attain to benefit those we love, in respect of mental and physical health and in material circumstances? Should one direct thoughts of well-being to them, or should one direct thoughts to God in the form of prayers for them?"

"A very good question," commented Silver Birch. "It is a sincere soul who desires to help. All prayer, all aspiration should centre itself on the Great Spirit. By that I do not mean that there should be a constant flow of petitions.

"I have often said that prayer is a process of attunement, of harmonising our will to the divine will, of establishing a closer unity with the Great Spirit, knowing that as we do so our own lives are better as a result. As you heighten your own consciousness, so you set yourselves better standards and thus automatically your own lives show the results.

"By all means strive by prayer to get nearer to the heart of the universe, to its centre, to its architect. Also, if you desire that those you love should attain a richer life, surround them mentally with an aura of good will and the desire to be of service.

"But do not confine yourself to those you love, for often with the highest motives that tinges your desire with an aspect of selfishness. Rather let your mind seek to express itself in such a way that you become inspired to serve all mankind, and that means to render any help you can to any soul who comes your way in daily life."

Then he turned to the general problem of spreading spiritual truths and said: "I would like you to know that there have been many difficulties—difficulties which are not yet out of the way. These call for stout hearts, determined minds, staunchness, unswerving fidelity, loyalty to principle, to that which has been revealed.

"You read just now a question about the utterances of guides and you know the test which I have always asked you to apply—the test of your own reason and test of your own judgment and common sense. I have never sought to lead you into any avenues of blind faith or asked you to follow any course of action where your intelligence would be insulted.

"I am not given to vaunting. The more I see of the universe the more I am filled with true humility. Yet, nevertheless, I must say that I know of the power to guide you. It is given to souls like myself, not because we are what we are, but because of what we seek to do. That guidance has been freely given throughout the years of our association, that guidance will still continue as long as you desire it.

"I do not wish that you should continue these sittings when nature provides you with opportunities to refresh your spirits and your bodies. To equip the spirit and neglect the body is a practice that we do not encourage. It is as foolish as equipping the body and neglecting the spirit.

"Make full use of the vigour and strength that nature, which is the expression of the Great Spirit, offers in the approaching heyday of its activities. Seize all that which is freely offered to you and appreciate to the full the lavish beauty that the divine artist offers you as His eternal pageant moves to the summit of its attainment.

"And always," he concluded, "let us centre our thoughts on that sublime power which seeks to use us as the instruments of its beneficent purpose. Let us open our beings to receive the full benediction of that divine grace. And let us strive by our