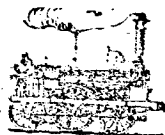


Susy Smith:

"GHOST WRITERS IN THE SKY"

(1,990, 167 PÁGINAS).



CHAPTER THREE

GLIMPSSES OF ETERNITY

I still say my prayers to "God" or "Lord" or "Dear Heavenly Father," continuing to use familiar words even though my concept of Him is greatly expanded since James widened my viewpoint by writing: "God is a Force encompassing all the highest and best in the entire universe. Every person originates from this Source, contains it within his soul, and returns to it ultimately in a sublime state. (God is a Conglomerate of perfected human consciousnesses from earth and all other inhabited planets.)"

Hold onto your hats! There's more like this. I can only suggest that readers keep their minds open. When transcendental ideas are written by a practical, matter-of-fact individual like me, and I know they are not originating within me, it has to be faced that something supernatural is occurring. The main proof that this material is not in reality coming out of my own head is the content. How could my limited inventive abilities ever come up with an intelligent definition of God, and especially one so at variance with tradition?

As my personal contribution to this chapter, here's how I would express myself about the Deity: The only thing I know for sure about God is that He is not an ancient patriarch with a long white beard hovering in the sky to pass judgment on inhabitants of earth. And He is not a Zeus-like king with a glittering crown sitting on a throne on Mt. Olympus flinging thunderbolts at us. That is my limit. James changes these negatives into positives by stating firmly:

"When you are willing to conceive of God as a great and ever-increasing embodiment of humanity at its highest achievable state, you will understand what I am trying to say. Any definition of God that man can provide restricts Him. It may therefore be difficult for you to accept that there is an expanding God in an expanding universe, and that God expands by the addition of constantly perfected human consciousnesses. The vastness of eternity will someday be com-

prehensible to you, but not for a long time. Just try to accept the fact that you are part of this magnificent concept and don't worry about details that are beyond you at this point."

I was getting chills up and down my spine every time I contemplated this. James must have sensed my reaction. "Don't be appalled by your splendid journey ahead," he wrote. "Look forward to it with excitement and joy. Give God your constant love, feel your oneness with Him always, reach out to Him in prayer, but do not worry if it seems impossible to understand Him with your limited knowledge."

Now that we can talk together, I interrupted the writing with a question, because I'm as women's-lib oriented as the next modern female. "What about this 'Him' business?" I asked. "I know plenty of ladies who would like to think of God as 'Her'. I can't go writing Him/Her every time, can I? After all, the way you describe God He seems to be an amalgamation of all the hims and hers who ever lived."

"Him' will have to do because it is the accepted way to handle such situations," James replied. "But do not get your dander up about it. I am not being chauvinistic." Then he added, "I am trying to get away from the word 'God', anyway. Because of the many incorrect anthropomorphic and mythological implications surrounding it, I am going to use it seldom from now on when I speak of the Source of All Power and Intelligence in the universe. I will instead use such terms as Ultimate Perfection, Supreme Intelligence, or Divine Consciousness."

He had used those words previously when referring to God, and I had occasionally tried since then to pray to Ultimate Perfection, Supreme Intelligence, and Divine Consciousness. It hadn't been easy. In fact, it's been almost impossible, for I am too indoctrinated in traditional praying terminology. Now, as we work on this current book I tell him this and ask him if he thinks others might not also have found those names difficult. He apparently hadn't considered that.

"Do you pray to Ultimate Perfection, Supreme Intelligence, and Divine Consciousness?" I asked him.

"Not in those words," he replied. "I know and revere Him now in those great concepts, but I still speak to Him in my prayers just as I always did all my life. I say, 'dear Lord' or 'dear God'."

"There now, see!" I crowed.

"But to refer to Him always as God all through this book is not what I want. The reader must be allowed to keep in mind the picture of God as I now know Him to be — the Great Source of All, the Ultimate Perfection!" He paused. "If you wish we will settle on that one name to use primarily in this book."

"Thanks," I said, knowing I'd have to go back through the entire manuscript and make many changes. "But just for my personal enlightenment, what do you guys on the other side call Ultimate Perfection when you refer to Him?"

"We speak of 'going to the Top' when we talk of our highest progression. It is the colloquial expression used in all of spirit land."

"I love it! But is it just flippant Americans who do this or do those of other countries also speak of going to the Top?"

"They say something like it. The Source or the Highest or the Top. Whatever it is in their languages. And we don't consider it flippant. It is merely an actuality." Then James

* continued writing: "No single individual on earth or progressing in spirit knows enough about Ultimate Perfection to describe Him adequately, yet there are certain attributes I may attempt to impart. He is a state, first of all, of such omnipotence, such magnificence, such magnitude, that it is impossible for us to conceive of His immensity and His greatness. Do not at any time confuse the Supreme Intelligence of the universe with man, for man is only one of His many manifestations. He is all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing — all of everything. In trying for descriptive phrases that might be used, we could say that Ultimate Perfection is the State of Highest Awareness, Power Most Superlative, Illimitable Love, Infinite Consciousness. Above all He is Intelligence — inconceivable, incredible, incomprehensible intelligence. Nothing that we can in any way imagine can limit His perfection. Everything in the universe has its origin in Him and of Him. Man, himself, is an integral part of Ultimate Perfection, always has been, is now, and always will be."

James hastened to note that he is using "man" as a generic identification for both sexes, and he repeated that when he refers to God as "Him" or even Humankind as "him" it is with absolutely no sexist motives.

Emanuel Swedenborg, one of the greatest and most accomplished scientists who ever lived (he is called the most

brilliant man of history) spent the last twenty-eight years of his life traveling every day to the spirit world — and no, he hadn't gone insane or become a kook. I am told that what he wrote in his many publications about his experiences was very similar to what James has given me; but I purposely have not read his works in order to protect my reception. I wouldn't want the criticism that I am crediting to James information I have acquired from other sources. So just one brief quote from him.

Swedenborg says, "Every man is an original creation." James adds to this: "Each person is a separate entity with conscious existence apart from every other, and he will always remain so." He continues that every man "will eventually progress to such heights of greatness that he achieves unity with all other men in the state of Ultimate Perfection; but this is unity in the way that members of an orchestra perform in concert or a choir sings in harmony. Souls never merge their identity into one another or into the whole. Each spirit is always an integer that knows itself to be one and individual, yet at the same time it is a functioning, self-operating, cooperating working unit in the overall Divinity.

The pattern for man's existence, then, is this: A Soul or Conscious Awareness of Self becomes manifest at the birth of every baby born on every inhabited planet. It goes through its life cycle learning what it can from the experiences it encounters, dies to the physical body and emerges as a spirit in whatever stage of personal character development it has attained up to that time. No matter how poor a start this entity has, it will someday learn how to uplift itself and begin its joyful advancement. Eventually by its own efforts at self-improvement, and with the help of progressed spirits, it will achieve a state of wisdom and love so superlative that it enriches and increases the universe with its peace and perfection.

But what is this James keeps saying about other inhabited planets? I wanted to know and he told me.

"All the planets, stars and galaxies of the universe exist only in the cause of humanity; either for providing places of human habitation, such as earth, or as modifiers of the conditions that will make it possible for them to be habitable, such as the sun and moon. For the residents of all inhabited planets, I also use the term Man. These men may differ in

are stuck where they are. The time will eventually come when they will start to improve themselves, but the waste of potentially useful manpower is tremendous until then, as they remain in hellish conditions they are unable to bring themselves to leave."

"You will discuss hellfire and brimstone with me," I said, "and now you say spirits may be in hellish conditions; but you've never come right out and mentioned hell as a place. Have you anything to say about it?"

"Hell is a state of mind, not a place. Some, as you know, may experience it on earth as they continue mentally going over some terrible crimes they have committed, or sins they can't forgive. After they come here, a great many may live in hell for a long, long time, completely miserable because they are not able to raise their consciousnesses to a higher level and unwilling to attempt to undo all the harm they have done to themselves and others."

"But even they will someday progress to the heights," I stuck in, knowing for sure that he was going to say that next and wanting to show him how enlightened I had become.

James agreed, then went on with the information that the length of time it takes a spirit to advance to the heavenly state after he has once put his feet on the upward path differs with each individual. One may be so eager that he works constantly to improve himself so that he will arrive as quickly as possible to the highest areas of the Astral. "But even the happiness of heaven will not hold him for long as, ardently pursuing perfection, he leaves the Etheric and proceeds as rapidly as he can through the higher planes toward achievement of Ultimate Perfection and Eternal Bliss."

Yet we are told that even those just beginning their progression live in a beautiful world in the company of fascinating people who are doing work that is challenging and stimulating. Now James started to talk about something of which I approve heartily — good times up there. I've always said that God had to have a great sense of humor or he couldn't have devised it for us. And now we learn that heaven is indeed a happy place.

"A sense of humor is very important, and having fun is a necessary part of our development," James maintains. "We do have much gaiety, for even our work at improving ourselves is frequently arranged in the form of entertainment."

"We also have time for all the creative and constructive enterprises we were not able to work into our busy schedules on earth. Fortunately, we also have much greater clarity of mind and capacity for remembering and so our educational procedures are easier and more successful. Therefore, we can go ahead with all the academic and cultural improvements many of us always wished for but never had the time or opportunity to indulge in."

"When advancing spirits are not working helping others, being guardian angels, or in various ways trying to amount to something, they spend a good bit of their time improving their talents, and after that they may visit with friends, play games, or attend cultural affairs. Many will choose to go back to school for a time and possibly even sit at the feet of some great instructors of the past."

I said, "It would be great to sit at the feet of Plato or Abelard or any of those graybeards, but I'd be more comfortable on a bench, if you don't mind. What is best about that is the fact that after being over there a good while these teachers probably really know what they are talking about."

"Another advantage of heaven. We know whereof we speak. Much that is taught on earth, as you are aware, is conjecture. Or the limited knowledge of all those in the teaching discipline who are confident they have the answers, no matter how far from the truth they may really be."

"Over here a student may join any group he wishes. Those who are on their way upward are always welcome wherever they go. Snobbery does not exist among enlightened spirits. No one is rich while another is poor. There is no such thing as social position. All status is earned. No charge is made for anything and so each individual can afford the same as everyone else. If he does not have certain possessions, it is either because he does not want them or has not yet learned how to achieve them with his mind power."

To some new arrivals, James says, language is initially a barrier. Advanced spirits have learned to communicate entirely by telepathy, and they can talk with citizens from any country on earth or any other planets in the universe. "But when you first enter the Etheric you are untrained to use your thoughts in this manner. You are told how to employ telepathy, but it usually takes some time to assimilate this information and put it to use. So if you wish to take advantage of an interchange

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

want to lose any part of Himself, so each must return to Him eventually as a perfected spirit.

A

"It is also true that some of such criminals are actually insane. Their minds have been unable to function properly during the times they were in positions of power and they were not capable of thinking intelligently about what they were doing or ordering others to do. Those who because of their greed and avarice have allowed insane persons to hold positions of power are also at fault and will have even more remorse when they realize what they have done. The insane are cared for here in hospitals or nursing homes until they finally return to normal. Some take longer than others; but all will eventually regain their proper manner of thinking and begin to advance.

"Imagine the great love of humanity demanded of the workers who staff these hospitals, when they realize that they are having to assist in the regeneration of a Hitler or a Nero and must always provide them with compassionate care."

QUESTION: "If God is All-Encompassing Perfection, how can He allow such imperfection to exist?"

ANSWER: "There is an explanation for this: If all were perfect, there would be no way for improvement, and God — Ultimate Perfection — is always improving and expanding. Negatives exist so that positives can be recognized. It would not be possible thoroughly to understand Good if we did not have Evil as a contrast."

"When Ultimate Perfection decided to personify certain aspects of Himself, He chose to use the form of Man for this purpose. As man lives he has emotions of all kinds so that he can comprehend all varieties of experience, although he does not have to undergo them all personally. He must come to understand goodness and love; but he must also know the contrast of evil and unwholesomeness, for how can he truly know perfection unless he is aware of imperfection? If one were born perfect and had no life on earth where evil exists, would he be able fully to appreciate the Heights when he attains them?"

Or as Pope John XXIII said, "If God created shadows it was in order to better emphasize the light."

CHAPTER SIX

NATURAL LAWS

"The entire universe follows systems and laws," James tells us. "Nothing occurs by chance. Nothing happens by accident or in a haphazard manner, even though it may seem to. It occurs instead because of the operation of Natural Laws, which man can use even if he does not know what they are or how they operate. A good example of this is the force called electricity."

Cause and Effect is the fundamental law of the universe. And then there are the laws of Gravity, Thought Power, Love, Prayer, etc. James points out that some of these are not now accepted as natural laws; but we should not let that bother us because there is a great deal not yet known or acknowledged by science.

"These laws are always in operation and do not change," he writes. "System always prevails. Even those things that seem to be chance happenings are definitely the result of some cause, although on many occasions you are unaware of it. When you learn more about the law of cause and effect, you will understand that each event that occurs has a definite reason. Each action, a specific reaction. The great instigating power of Ultimate Perfection conceived the laws and set everything in the universe in operation in accordance with them. Order is constantly maintained. Patterns are invariably conformed to."

James concentrates on telling us about thought, love and prayer power because they are the basics, he maintains. "If you accept their reality and put them to use, very little more needs to be done to make your life successful. I know this sounds simplistic to some. There are many mystical, metaphysical and cosmic concepts that others might expect me to delve into; but let us here stay on practical paths and not go wandering into occult byways. Many aspects of existence are much too involved and complicated for us to explore in a book like this that is introductory in nature."

Mind is more forceful than any other power on earth, we are told. "Man can move, alter or construct objects with his thoughts when he learns to use them properly. The relationship between matter and thought is so obscure to you that it is difficult to explain how thought can affect matter, but it can be done if you will bear with me. I must first remind you that matter, while giving the illusion of solidity, is not actually solid. The nucleus of energy and the particles that move around it provide what might be called a force field of sorts, which gives the manifestation of density. But if these particles were moving at a faster rate of speed, they would not seem dense.

"As an example of what I mean: If you throw a baseball slowly, it can be seen passing through the air. If it were projected at an incredible speed, it would be invisible. Or take the blades of a fan or an airplane propeller: When moving slowly, they are visible. But when they are revved up to a high speed, you can see right through them.

"Although it is not easy for your doctors to believe this because they have found no evidence of it, the spiritual body within the physical is composed of the same force or energy as all other matter, but it is moving faster than the elements you have so far been able to identify within the atoms.

"Now thought, the strongest force in the world, is another form of energy, and it is strong enough to control the energy in matter. It can be done only by those who know how to concentrate powerfully, but it *can* be done."

I reminded James that Uri Geller, the Israeli who bends spoons, is probably the best known person doing this publicly these days; but when he performs on television, many people watching find that they too can influence objects with their minds. "As time goes on," he answered, "more and more in your sphere will probably be learning to practice mind over matter. This is an applying of one force against another, and the stronger causes the manifestation. After death use of mind power becomes more essential, but it is possible to accomplish a great deal with it on earth as well, and not just by bending or moving objects. By positive thinking every individual can change his life for the better." James gives techniques for doing this: If you will attempt to make it a practice always and constantly to deny a negative thought the moment it appears and immediately substitute a positive one, half your

battle will be won. Never for any period of time let your thoughts wander aimlessly on negative aspects of life. Alert yourself immediately to the fact that you are not only wasting time but maintaining bad conditions. Start deliberately to concentrate on something pleasant instead. Never allow yourself to dwell on a hurt or a worry. If your mind won't leave it, get very busy at any job you may have to do or go for a walk, play the piano, read a book, watch television — do anything that will take your mind off it. Nothing you do to uplift yourself makes any difference unless you think right about it. You may get up every morning and go to church, but if you sit in your pew and grieve excessively or envy someone or go over and over in your mind some insult or rebuff, you might as well have stayed at home. Mind training is not easy. But it is so well worth the trouble that it should be the first rule of operation you learn in life."

I think of James' advice so often when I catch up on the events of the day in newspapers and on television. I have learned from him never to dwell on reports about wars or terrorists or famines or other terrible things, for I tend to get upset over them. Being a news enthusiast, I continue to know what is going on, but do not let myself concentrate on the depressing information any more than I can help. Some people I know are actually miserable because the price of pork bellies has gone up, or down — whatever pork bellies do — or the political situation is not to their liking or there is more fighting in Ireland or Palestine. I used to be one of them. Now, if there is nothing I personally can do about a situation, I know it is not being callous to put it out of my mind.

It is also highly important, according to my mentor, that the power of mass opinion be recognized. Anything strongly believed by a large number of people has a definite impetus and it is necessary that its effect be understood. "Whenever one of you goes against public opinion," James says, "he is fighting an actual force as great as if he were charging into a battalion of soldiers. It is important that strongly held mass opinions that are wrong be changed, but it requires the efforts of many for long periods of time."

In *Self-Realization* magazine, summer 1973, was this little gem: "If you want to drive darkness out of a room, you don't use a fly-swatter and keep hitting at the darkness, do you?"

tains, for wherever we see a successfully functioning organization — the army, governments, big business, large churches, universities — we see a hierarchical system in operation: people in graded ranks with authority delegated to them from higher levels in the scale. It is logical, then, to infer that a similar hierarchy could exist for the running of the vast organization which we call the universe.

Gina says, "Modern educated persons usually regard angels and gods as a superstitious relic of ignorant ages, but perhaps the whole idea deserves to be re-examined."

Another who backs up this theory is Israel Regardie, who in The Tree of Life speaks of: "... a certain hierarchy of gods, each having a specific task in the evolution and governance of the universe."

As to where these advanced souls come from, we have no less an authority than Jesus Christ, who is recorded in Matthew, Chapter 18: "Jesus called a little child to him and set him in the midst of them and said (18:10) 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.'" As this is translated, how can it mean anything other than that the child becomes an angel and eventually sees God?

Again we come to modern science. An article titled "Cosmic Interaction" by British Telecommunications Engineer Edgar A. Tooke says: "It is by no means uncommon now for physicists to postulate a universal consciousness.... A theory is gaining ground, however, among biologists which strongly infers the activity of conscious entities controlling the evolutionary processes." Which is exactly what James' gods are up to.

"Life would never be endurable for long periods unless one had constructive work to do," James tells us. "At the highest level gods' occupations consist of such activity as forming new galaxies or inventing an original type of insect or animal for an already existing but newly developing planet. Think of the joy it must be to dream up some novel creature that is going to be reproduced in matter and live in a physical body in some new world!"

"You mean," I interrupted, "we have *them* to thank for mosquitos and flies?"

"Afraid so, in an indirect way."

"Now what does that mean?"

"It means that the evolutionary process sometimes takes species in different directions from the original blueprint. Variations are allowed for by the system, but some are not as successful as others."

Then he went on: "This explanation of origins should not seem too preposterous to those whose thinking has advanced beyond the idea that everything happens by chance or by natural selection starting from some unknown source. And certainly no one who is reading these words still believes that an anthropomorphic god with a long white beard accomplished it all with a wave of his hand. So how do you suppose everything gets done? By the conscious thoughts and inventions of those expert aspects of Ultimate Perfection known as gods."

"All the animals, trees, flowers, insects ... all life of every kind that exists on our planet was originally consciously devised by highly developed spirits who came here from other planets. In many instances the evolutionary process has then taken effect to modify the originals into the species you now see. It is a great challenge to put new organisms into existence on a spinning ball of dirt when it has attained the proper conditions so that life can be sustained."

As I was copying the DeWitt Miller paragraph quoted in chapter three, I questioned Miller's concept of man's evolution. "If man was designed by gods, he certainly didn't come all the way up through time from amoebas, did he?" I asked my mentor.

"No," he replied. "When the planet was judged ready for intelligent human life, various attempts were made by gods to develop, from available organisms, bodies with opposable thumbs that could walk erect and thrive under earth conditions. Several different prototypes were designed, but they did not prove satisfactory. It was not until the earliest prehistoric man was produced, and found to be capable of living successfully on earth, that a soul (or conscious awareness of self) was placed within his body. From then on he evolved in a gradual pattern of growth to his present state."

"As man progressed physically from his earliest beginnings, so he is also progressing spiritually, but at what sometimes seems to be a snail's pace rather than a human's."

James points out that sexual delineations continue into the angel and god states. "Male and female retain their

identities as such, but not for amatory reasons. Sexuality applies to mortality only for the uses of reproduction on earth. But the distinction between the sexes is important throughout time, for there must be the (two opposites) which will complement each other.

* As they progress it is necessary for those who have been sexually confused on earth to reassess their natures and to decide which sex they wish to remain forever. When they make up their minds, then think of themselves definitely and firmly as their chosen sex, that is what they become permanently. They have to be one or the other; there are no homosexuals in advanced stages of spiritual development. Although some perfectly normal males have female characteristics and vice versa, there is nonetheless a distinction. It is important to keep the two sexes separated so that there will ultimately be male gods and female gods, with their diverse essential qualities delineated. And the two are never blended into one that is asexual or bisexual. Anything you may have heard or read to the contrary is wrong.

EXES The very fact that everything follows a system reveals, James says, that "the universe is not a chaotic mess of unorganized exploding stars and matter going hither and thither without direction. It is managed and coordinated in its every action by gods. Everything revolves around the inhabited planets, because the production of humans and their advancement to the god state and return in a perfected condition to Ultimate Perfection is the purpose of it all.

"While gods are doing all this enterprising creating in outer space, among their many other inspirational duties," says James, "angels spend most of their time assisting mortals and earthbound spirits. When what seems to you to be a miracle occurs, expect an angel to be back of it.

"When we on our plane see angels, it is as great glowing lights; but they have progressed so far and they pulsate at such a high frequency that we are unable to see them most of the time. It takes effort for them to reduce their vibrations to the point that their presence can be observed by us. It is even more difficult for them to make themselves visible to you on earth, and that is one of the reasons angels are so seldom on view. On the rare occasions when this occurs, the angel's

frequency has to be lowered to earth's density in order to be seen by a mortal.

"Angels want to be regarded as loving brothers and sisters who ask you to appeal to them in time of trouble or need. Although it is an essential to human development that there be trials and tribulations as growth processes, when it is something you can't handle alone, they want to help you. So petition the angels whenever you are in bad trouble of any kind, and then make yourself receptive to their assistance. They will come, although you probably will not be able to see them."

"If angels and gods do all the God work, what role does Ultimate Perfection play in all this?" I asked.

"The entire role."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"He performs through the action of His units of operation — the gods. Each god is so much a part of the whole that every universal thought includes him. Gods are aware at every moment of their unity with Ultimate Perfection. That is why they can knowingly do His will."

"If we are of such personal concern to God," I said, "the logical question now is why does he allow tragedies and terrible calamities to occur?"

"It is understandable to wonder about this," was the answer. "But nothing that occurs is deliberately planned or foreordained, and everyone has free will. The law of cause and effect is in operation at all times and when certain steps are taken or negatives are thought, specific results are created. It is inevitable that mischances occur and sometimes they are devastating. But what happens, even when it is sadly disheartening, is not consequential in the long run, as I am sure you have already grasped by now. What is of consequence is what is gained from it by the people involved.

"All the gods and angels are aware that whatever you can learn now you will not have to learn in the spirit world. Their view of your ultimate destiny is as comprehensive as your view would be of the human growth potential of your baby. Thus gods and angels do not become anguished over any tragic circumstance that occurs in your life any more than you would cry if your baby stubs his toe. They understand its relationship to your overall long-term life experience just as you are aware of the insignificance of a tiny tripping.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HERE'S TO HEALTH

"Consciousness controls everything," James says. "All matter, which is composed of energy in a constant state of activity, is directed by mind, the overall regulating principle of the system through which it functions. If you constantly think positive, constructive thoughts, your life will reflect it. And you will also feel well, for your entire anatomy tends to operate normally. Negative thoughts cause the opposite reaction. So keep yourself in top condition by thinking happy thoughts and not causing your cells conflict." James is very firm about this.

"You can often cure illness by the proper positive thinking because when you sincerely believe that you are well, your body is motivated to begin to act that way. Watch yourself over a period of time and see if this is not true. There is nothing more effective for good than the constructive thoughts held strongly in your mind."

I told James, "One thing I have especially learned from your lessons is that we have got to take responsibility for ourselves. The words of that song 'Someone to Watch Over Me' are probably favorites with most people; but not all of us find that 'someone.' If we knew guardian angels were hovering about it would help, but so few of us really believe that. Even with them, we have to take hold of our own lives and handle things. And now you seem to say that we have to control our own physical well-being, too, because bad health isn't allowed."

"Well of course bad health happens." James admitted. "It is one of the biggest challenges one has in a lifetime. Those who have sound genes, a strong body and the good fortune not to come afoul of accidents or a debilitating illness are among the luckiest of all humans. Their character-building obstacles will have to come from different directions. It is intensely to be hoped that the ones who must endure life while using an inadequate physical apparatus will have compensations in other areas. But positive thinking will carry

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them through with considerably less grief, no matter what happens. It may not cure the condition, but it will make it easier to bear."

"There is a good bit of talk today about techniques of visualization," I mentioned. "Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't."

"That is true. But the effort has nonetheless been of value. An individual makes himself into what he is by the way he endures and learns from his tribulations. A weak-willed, whining do-nothing comes out of a lifetime on earth without much progress. One who faces up to his problems and at least tries to solve them is much farther ahead. It is not that you sit down one day and say, 'Today I will learn the lesson of bearing my pain without carrying on about it.' No, but as you accept trauma with the least possible crying and moaning, you are developing character. You learn each of life's lessons, or fail to learn them, by living up to your potential or by neglecting to live up to your potential. If you become aware of this you will not complain about life's problems and griefs. You will understand that they are learning processes. After death you become more conscious of the goals toward which your thinking and actions are aimed. You know, because of your better comprehension of the system, what particular subjects you must concentrate on to develop and grow more fully. I would like to recommend that you also attempt this same procedure now. If you wish to live so that you have more success on earth and a head start in future planes of existence you have only to decide to operate that way. When you make up your mind that you will expend the effort to keep your life on a constructive path and maintain your thoughts under control, you can learn to do so. While it is hard work, it is not a great deal more difficult than to give up a bad habit or to acquire a new talent or capability.

"The way you think can affect your body as quickly as germs can, making it ill if you have become angry too easily and too often, or if you have hated too much, or if you have despaired or feared too much. Natural laws are in operation here as everywhere else."

In today's world sometimes even medical men can bring themselves to think along these lines. In the *Arizona Daily Star*, Sunday, February 14, 1989, Bill DeLong, a chaplain at the University Medical Center and a member of the hospital's