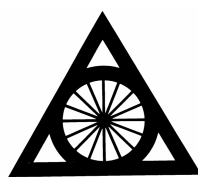


THE MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

by

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

edited by Paul Guéléva



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CONTENTS

THE NEW REVELATION

Preface	11
CHAPTER I	
THE SEARCH	12
CHAPTER II	
THE REVELATION	25
CHAPTER III	
THE COMING LIFE	31
CHAPTER IV	
PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS	39
SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS	
I. THE NEXT PHASE OF LIFE	48
II. AN AUTOMATIC WRITING	49
III. THE CHERITON DUG-OUT	50

THE VITAL MESSAGE

Preface	57
CHAPTER I	
THE TWO NEEDFUL READJUSTMENTS	58
CHAPTER II	
THE DAWNING OF THE LIGHT	65
CHAPTER III	
THE GREAT ARGUMENT	74
CHAPTER IV	
THE COMING WORLD	88
CHAPTER V	
IS IT THE SECOND DAWN?	99
APPENDICES:	
A. DR. GELEY'S EXPERIMENTS	110
B. A PARTICULAR INSTANCE	114
C. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY	115
D. THE CLAIRVOYANCE OF MRS.B.	117
THE WRITINGS ABOUT THE SPIRITUALISM	

A TEST MESSAGE	121
MR. SHUTTE'S CRITIC	123
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE	124
ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (1) Sir A. Conan Doyle's Views	124
ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (2) A Reply from Sir A. Conan Doyle ..	126
ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (3) Summing Up	127
DR. CONAN DOYLE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	129
WHERE IS THE SOUL DURING UNCONSCIOUSNESS? (1)	131
WHERE IS THE SOUL DURING UNCONSCIOUSNESS? (2)	132
"SPOOKERY"	134
FATHER VAUGHAN AND SPIRITUALISM	134
THE NAKED TRUTH	135
THE MAINTENANCE OF <i>LIGHT</i>	135
THE CHERITON DUT-OUT	136
A PROPHECY	136
THE NEW SPIRITUALISM	138
MODERN MIRACLES – REPLY TO JEROME K. JEROME	139
MR. JEROME AND SPIRITS	141
SPIRITUALISM'S PERIL	142
WOMAN "SPIRIT" PAINTER. Sir A. Conan Doyle and Mrs. Spencer	142
"A DISCLAIMER"	145
SPIRITUALISM AND THE CHURCH	145
SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY (1)	146
SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY (2)	147
MRS. PIPER'S CREDIBILITY	147
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S TOUR	147
THE CHARACTER OF D.D. HOME	148
WAKE UP, AUSTRALIA!	150
FAIRY PHOTOGRAPHS	150
SIR CONAN DOYLE'S BOOK	151
DARKEY OF CHRISTCHURCH	151
PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPH	152
STREATHAM TRAGEDY	154
THE BIRTHPLACE OF SPIRITUALISM	154
TAKING OF SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS	155
SPIRITUALISM AND THE GENERAL ELECTION	156
THE HYDESVILLE MEMORIAL (1)	157
THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL (1)	157
THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL (2)	158
OSCAR WILDE'S COMMUNICATION ACCEPTED AS GENUINE	158
"OUTWARD BOUND"	160
LETTER TO "PSYCHONO"	161
OSCAR WILDE	161
MR. MASKELYNE AND THE SLADE CASE	162
THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE	163
THE PSYCHIC BOOKSHOP AND LIBRARY	164
SIR A. CONAN DOYLE AND THE "FAIRY PHOTOGRAPHS"	164
A PROPOSED PSYCHIC MUSEUM	165
THE SPIRITUALISM AND THE PROGRESS OF OUR RACE	165
MEDIUMSHIP, EVIL FORCES AND RESCUE CIRCLES	170
ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN HEAVENS	174

“PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHS”	175
SOLDIERS WHO HAVE COME BACK. THE RETURN OF “DEAD” SONS	176
THE PSYCHIC MUSEUM	176
THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MR. F.T.MUNNINGS	178
THE “PHOTOGRAPH” OF LORD COMBERMERE	179
THE COMBERMERE PHOTO	180
THE COMBERMERE PHOTOGRAPH	180
THE BIBLE	181
CONJURES AND SPIRITUALISM	182
“ALARMIST PROPHECIES”	182
THE HISTORY OF SPIRITUALISM	183
HOUDINI AND THE SPIRITS	184
PSYCHOMETRY AND DETECTIVE WORK. SIR A.CONAN DOYLE AND	
AGATHA CHRISTIE CASE	185
“PHENEAS SPEAKS”	186
“THE MYSTERY OF <i>EDWIN DROOD</i> ”	187
POLICE EVIDENCE AND MEDIUMS	187
THE HYDESVILLE MEMORIAL (2)	187
THE HOUDINI CASE	188
A HAPPY CRRED	188
SUCCESS AND FAILURE	189
THE NAIROBI GHOST PHOTOGRAPH	189
THE NAIROBI PHOTOGRAPH	190
THE “WITCH” OF ENDOR	190
“THE ‘WITCH’ OF ENDOR”	191
CONVENT SCANDALS	191
RESIGNATION FROM THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH	192
A STRANGE EXPERIENCE	195
LORD BALFOUR	196
THE USE OF GREAT NAMES	197
MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES	197
THE PSYCHIC QUEST	205

THE *POSTHUMOUS* MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Part One

THE RETURN OF SIR ARTHUR.

THE PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST MEETINGS	220
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER II

“I AM A HAPPY MAN”	226
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNION	232
-----------------------------------	-----

Part Two
THE MESSAGE

CHAPTER I	
MAN'S REALISATION OF HIMSELF, AND OF A LIFE EVER MORE	
ABUNDANT	241
CHAPTER II	
THE HARMONY, PERFECTION AND GLORY OF THE HEAVEN LIFE	248
CHAPTER III	
THE SPHERE OF REUNION	257
CHAPTER IV	
CONCERNING NATURE SPIRITS AND ANGELS	261
CHAPTER V	
FREEWILL AND DESTINY: BOTH EXIST	264
CHAPTER VI	
THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL	267
CHAPTER VII	
"AT TIMES THE WHOLE PANORAMA OF HUMAN LIFE OPENS BEFORE	
ME"	273
CHAPTER VIII	
THE ENNOBLEMENT OF LIFE BOTH INCARNATE AND DISCARNATE	280
CHAPTER IX	
THE HEALING OF ALL DISEASE	287
CHAPTER X	
THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS	302
Комментарии и пояснения (<i>Павел Гелева</i>)	305

**THE NEW REVELATION,
OR WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM**

*To all the brave men and women, humble
or learned, who have had the moral
courage during seventy years to
face ridicule or worldly disad-
vantage in order to testify to
an all-important truth*

March, 1918

PREFACE

Many more philosophic minds than mine have thought over the religious side of this subject and many more scientific brains have turned their attention to its phenomenal aspect. So far as I know, however, there has been no former attempt to show the exact relation of the one to the other. I feel that if I should succeed in making this a little more clear I shall have helped in what I regard as far the most important question with which the human race is concerned.

A celebrated Psychic, Mrs. Piper, uttered in the year 1899 words which were recorded by Dr. Hodgson at the time. She was speaking in trance upon the future of spiritual religion, and she said: "In the next century this will be astonishingly perceptible to the minds of men. I will also make a statement which you will surely see verified. Before the clear revelation of spirit communication there will be a terrible war in different parts of the world. The entire world must be purified and cleansed before mortal can see, through his spiritual vision, his friends on this side and it will take just this line of action to bring about a state of perfection. Friend, kindly think of this." We have had "the terrible war in different parts of the world." The second half remains to be fulfilled.

A.C.D.

1918.

Chapter I

THE SEARCH

The subject of psychical research is one upon which I have thought more and about which I have been slower to form my opinion, than upon any other subject whatever. Every now and then as one jogs along through life some small incident happens which very forcibly brings home the fact that time passes and that first youth and then middle age are slipping away. Such a one occurred the other day. There is a column in that excellent little paper, *Light*,¹ which is devoted to what was recorded on the corresponding date a generation – that is thirty years ago. As I read over this column recently I had quite a start as I saw my own name, and read the reprint of a letter which I had written in 1887, detailing some interesting spiritual experience which had occurred in a séance.² Thus it is manifest that my interest in the subject is of some standing, and also, since it is only within the last year or two that I have finally declared myself to be satisfied with the evidence, that I have not been hasty in forming my opinion. If I set down some of my experiences and difficulties my readers will not, I hope, think it egotistical upon my part, but will realise that it is the most graphic way in which to sketch out the points which are likely to occur to any other inquirer. When I have passed over this ground, it will be possible to get on to something more general and impersonal in its nature.

When I had finished my medical education in 1882, I found myself, like many young medical men, a convinced materialist as regards our personal destiny. I had never ceased to be an earnest theist, because it seemed to me that Napoleon's question to the atheistic professors on the starry night as he voyaged to Egypt: "Who was it, gentlemen, who made these stars?" has never been answered. To say that the Universe was made by immutable laws only put the question one degree further back as to who made the laws. I did not, of course, believe in an anthropomorphic God, but I believed then, as I believe now, in an intelligent Force behind all the operations of Nature – a force so infinitely complex and great that my finite brain could get no further than its existence. Right and wrong I saw also as great obvious facts which needed no divine revelation. But when it came to a question of our little personalities surviving death, it seemed to me that the whole analogy of Nature was against it. When the candle burns out the light disappears. When the electric cell is shattered the current stops. When the body dissolves there is an end of the matter. Each man in his egotism may feel that he ought to survive, but let him

look, we will say, at the average loafer – of high or low degree – would anyone contend that there was any obvious reason why *that* personality should carry on? It seemed to be a delusion, and I was convinced that death did indeed end all, though I saw no reason why that should affect our duty towards humanity during our transitory existence.

This was my frame of mind when Spiritual phenomena first came before my notice. I had always regarded the subject as the greatest nonsense upon earth, and I had read of the conviction of fraudulent mediums and wondered how any sane man could believe such things. I met some friends, however, who were interested in the matter, and I sat with them at some table-moving séances. We got connected messages. I am afraid the only result that they had on my mind was that I regarded these friends with some suspicion. They were long messages very often, spelled out by tilts, and it was quite impossible that they came by chance. Someone then, was moving the table. I thought it was they. They probably thought that I did it. I was puzzled and worried over it, for they were not people whom I could imagine as cheating – and yet I could not see how the messages could come except by conscious pressure.

About this time – it would be in 1886 – I came across a book called *The Reminiscences of Judge Edmunds*. He was a judge of the U.S. High Courts and a man of high standing. The book gave an account of how his wife had died, and how he had been able for many years to keep in touch with her. All sorts of details were given. I read the book with interest, and absolute scepticism. It seemed to me an example of how a hard practical man might have a weak side to his brain, a sort of reaction, as it were, against those plain facts of life with which he had to deal. Where was this spirit of which he talked? Suppose a man had an accident and cracked his skull; his whole character would change, and a high nature might become a low one. With alcohol or opium or many other drugs one could apparently quite change a man's spirit. The spirit then depended upon matter. These were the arguments which I used in those days. I did not realise that it was not the spirit that was changed in such cases, but the body through which the spirit worked, just as it would be no argument against the existence of a musician if you tampered with his violin so that only discordant notes could come through.

I was sufficiently interested to continue to read such literature as came in my way. I was amazed to find what a number of great men – men whose names were to the fore in science – thoroughly believed that spirit was independent of matter and could survive it. When I regarded Spiritualism as a vulgar delusion of the uneducated, I could afford to look down upon it; but when it was endorsed by men like Crookes, whom I knew to be the most rising British chemist, by Wallace, who was the rival

of Darwin, and by Flammarion, the best known of astronomers, I could not afford to dismiss it. It was all very well to throw down the books of these men which contained their mature conclusions and careful investigations, and to say "Well, he has one weak spot in his brain," but a man has to be very self-satisfied if the day does not come when he wonders if the weak spot is not in his own brain. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, decided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on *a priori* grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. So far I had got in my reasoning, so my sceptical position was not so solid as before.

It was somewhat reinforced, however, by my own experiences. It is to be remembered that I was working without a medium, which is like an astronomer working without a telescope. I have no psychical powers myself, and those who worked with me had little more. Among us we could just muster enough of the magnetic force, or whatever you will call it, to get the table movements with their suspicious and often stupid messages. I still have notes of those sittings and copies of some, at least, of the messages. They were not always absolutely stupid. For example, I find that on one occasion, on my asking some test question, such as how many coins I had in my pocket, the table spelt out: "We are here to educate and to elevate, not to guess riddles." And then: "The religious frame of mind, not the critical, is what we wish to inculcate." Now, no one could say that that was a puerile message. On the other hand, I was always haunted by the fear of involuntary pressure from the hands of the sitters. Then there came an incident which puzzled and disgusted me very much. We had very good conditions one evening, and an amount of movement which seemed quite independent of our pressure. Long and detailed messages came through, which purported to be from a spirit who gave his name and said he was a commercial traveller who had lost his life in a recent fire at a theatre at Exeter. All the details were exact, and he implored us to write to his family, who lived, he said, at a place called Slattenmere, in Cumberland. I did so, but my letter came back, appropriately enough, through the dead letter office. To this day I do not know whether we were deceived, or whether there was some mistake in the name of the place; but

there are the facts, and I was so disgusted that for some time my interest in the whole subject waned. It was one thing to study a subject, but when the subject began to play elaborate practical jokes it seemed time to call a halt. If there is such a place as Slattenmere in the world I should even now be glad to know it.

I was in practice in Southsea at this time, and dwelling there was General Drayson, a man of very remarkable character, and one of the pioneers of Spiritualism in this country. To him I went with my difficulties, and he listened to them very patiently. He made light of my criticism of the foolish nature of many of these messages, and of the absolute falseness of some. "You have not got the fundamental truth into your head," said he. "That truth is, that every spirit in the flesh passes over to the next world exactly as it is, with no change whatever. This world is full of weak or foolish people. So is the next. You need not mix with them, any more than you do in this world. One chooses one's companions. But suppose a man in this world, who had lived in his house alone and never mixed with his fellows, was at last to put his head out of the window to see what sort of place it was, what would happen? Some naughty boy would probably say something rude. Anyhow, he would see nothing of the wisdom or greatness of the world. He would draw his head in thinking it was a very poor place. That is just what you have done. In a mixed séance, with no definite aim, you have thrust your head into the next world and you have met some naughty boys. Go forward and try to reach something better." That was General Drayson's explanation, and though it did not satisfy me at the time, I think now that it was a rough approximation to the truth. These were my first steps in Spiritualism. I was still a sceptic, but at least I was an inquirer, and when I heard some old-fashioned critic saying that there was nothing to explain, and that it was all fraud, or that a conjuror was needed to show it up, I knew at least that that was all nonsense. It is true that my own evidence up to then was not enough to convince me, but my reading, which was continuous, showed me how deeply other men had gone into it, and I recognised that the testimony was so strong that no other religious movement in the world could put forward anything to compare with it. That did not prove it to be true, but at least it proved that it must be treated with respect and could not be brushed aside. Take a single incident of what Wallace has truly called a modern miracle. I choose it because it is the most incredible. I allude to the assertion that D.D. Home – who, by the way, was not, as is usually supposed, a paid adventurer, but was the nephew of the Earl of Home – the assertion, I say, that he floated out of one window and into another at the height of seventy feet above the ground. I could not believe it. And yet, when I knew that the fact was attested by three eye-witnesses, who were Lord Dunraven,

Lord Lindsay, and Captain Wynne, all men of honour and repute, who were willing afterwards to take their oath upon it, I could not but admit that the evidence for this was more direct than for any of those far-off events which the whole world has agreed to accept as true.³

I still continued during these years to hold table séances, which sometimes gave no results, sometimes trivial ones, and sometimes rather surprising ones. I have still the notes of these sittings, and I extract here the results of one which were definite, and which were so unlike any conceptions which I held of life beyond the grave that they amused rather than edified me at the time. I find now, however, that they agree very closely with the revelations in *Raymond*⁴ and in other later accounts, so that I view them with different eyes. I am aware that all these accounts of life beyond the grave differ in detail – I suppose any of our accounts of the present life would differ in detail – but in the main there is a very great resemblance, which in this instance was very far from the conception either of myself or of either of the two ladies who made up the circle. Two communicators sent messages, the first of whom spelt out as a name “Dorothy Pothlethwaite,” a name unknown to any of us. She said she died at Melbourne five years before, at the age of sixteen, that she was now happy, that she had work to do, and that she had been at the same school as one of the ladies. On my asking that lady to raise her hands and give a succession of names, the table tilted at the correct name of the head mistress of the school. This seemed in the nature of a test. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. It was a place of light and of laughter. She added that they had no rich or poor, and that the general conditions were far happier than on earth.

This lady bade us good-night, and immediately the table was seized by a much more robust influence, which dashed it about very violently. In answer to my questions it claimed to be the spirit of one whom I will call Dodd, who was a famous cricketer, and with whom I had some serious conversation in Cairo before he went up the Nile, where he met his death in the Dongolese Expedition. We have now, I may remark, come to the year 1896 in my experiences. Dodd was not known to either lady. I began

to ask him questions exactly as if he were seated before me, and he sent his answers back with great speed and decision. The answers were often quite opposed to what I expected, so that I could not believe that I was influencing them. He said that he was happy, that he did not wish to return to earth. He had been a free-thinker, but had not suffered in the next life for that reason. Prayer, however, was a good thing, as keeping us in touch with the spiritual world. If he had prayed more he would have been higher in the spirit world.

This, I may remark, seemed rather in conflict with his assertion that he had not suffered through being a free-thinker, and yet, of course, many men neglect prayer who are not free-thinkers.

His death was painless. He remembered the death of Polwhele, a young officer who died before him. When he (Dodd) died he had found people to welcome him, but Polwhele had not been among them.

He had work to do. He was aware of the Fall of Dongola, but had not been present in spirit at the banquet at Cairo afterwards. He knew more than he did in life. He remembered our conversation in Cairo. Duration of life in the next sphere was shorter than on earth. He had not seen General Gordon, nor any other famous spirit. Spirits lived in families and in communities. Married people did not necessarily meet again, but those who loved each other did meet again.

I have given this synopsis of a communication to show the kind of thing we got – though this was a very favourable specimen, both for length and for coherence. It shows that it is not just to say, as many critics say, that nothing but folly comes through. There was no folly here unless we call everything folly which does not agree with preconceived ideas. On the other hand, what proof was there that these statements were true? I could see no such proof, and they simply left me bewildered. Now, with a larger experience, in which I find that the same sort of information has come to very many people independently in many lands, I think that the agreement of the witnesses does, as in all cases of evidence, constitute some argument for their truth. At the time I could not fit such a conception of the future world into my own scheme of philosophy, and I merely noted it and passed on.

I continued to read many books upon the subject and to appreciate more and more what a cloud of witnesses existed, and how careful their observations had been. This impressed my mind very much more than the limited phenomena which came within the reach of our circle. Then or afterwards I read a book by Monsieur Jacolliot upon occult phenomena in India. Jacolliot was Chief Judge of the French Colony of Crandenagur, with a very judicial mind, but rather biassed against Spiritualism. He conducted a series of experiments with native fakirs, who gave him their

confidence because he was a sympathetic man and spoke their language. He describes the pains he took to eliminate fraud. To cut a long story short he found among them every phenomenon of advanced European mediumship, everything which Home, for example, had ever done. He got levitation of the body, the handling of fire, movement of articles at a distance, rapid growth of plants, raising of tables. Their explanation of these phenomena was that they were done by the Pitris or spirits, and their only difference in procedure from ours seemed to be that they made more use of direct evocation. They claimed that these powers were handed down from time immemorial and traced back to the Chaldees.⁵ All this impressed me very much, as here, independently, we had exactly the same results, without any question of American frauds, or modern vulgarity, which were so often raised against similar phenomena in Europe.

My mind was also influenced about this time by the report of the Dialectical Society, although this Report had been presented as far back as 1869. It is a very cogent paper, and though it was received with a chorus of ridicule by the ignorant and materialistic papers of those days, it was a document of great value. The Society was formed by a number of people of good standing and open mind to enquire into the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. A full account of their experiences and of their elaborate precautions against fraud are given. After reading the evidence, one fails to see how they could have come to any other conclusion than the one attained, namely, that the phenomena were undoubtedly genuine, and that they pointed to laws and forces which had not been explored by Science. It is a most singular fact that if the verdict had been against Spiritualism, it would certainly have been hailed as the death blow of the movement, whereas being an endorsement of the phenomena it met with nothing by ridicule. This has been the fate of a number of inquiries since those conducted locally at Hydesville in 1848, or that which followed when Professor Hare of Philadelphia, like Saint Paul, started forth to oppose but was forced to yield to the truth.

About 1891, I had joined the Psychical Research Society and had the advantage of reading all their reports. The world owes a great deal to the unwearied diligence of the Society, and to its sobriety of statement, though I will admit that the latter makes one impatient at times, and one feels that in their desire to avoid sensationalism they discourage the world from knowing and using the splendid work which they are doing. Their semi-scientific terminology also chokes off the ordinary reader, and one might say sometimes after reading their articles what an American trapper in the Rocky Mountains said to me about some University man whom he had been escorting for the season. "He was that clever," he said, "that you could not understand what he said." But in spite of these little peculiarities

all of us who have wanted light in the darkness have found it by the methodical, never-tiring work of the Society. Its influence was one of the powers which now helped me to shape my thoughts. There was another, however, which made a deep impression upon me. Up to now I had read all the wonderful experiences of great experimenters, but I had never come across any effort upon their part to build up some system which would cover and contain them all. Now I read that monumental book, Myers' *Human Personality*,⁶ a great root book from which a whole tree of knowledge will grow. In this book Myers was unable to get any formula which covered all the phenomena called "spiritual," but in discussing that action of mind upon mind which he has himself called telepathy he completely proved his point, and he worked it out so thoroughly with so many examples, that, save for those who were wilfully blind to the evidence, it took its place henceforth as a scientific fact.⁷ But this was an enormous advance. If mind could act upon mind at a distance, then there were some human powers which were quite different to matter as we had always understood it. The ground was cut from under the feet of the materialist, and my old position had been destroyed. I had said that the flame could not exist when the candle was gone. But here was the flame a long way off the candle, acting upon its own. The analogy was clearly a false analogy. If the mind, the spirit, the intelligence of man could operate at a distance from the body, then it was a thing to that extent separate from the body. Why then should it not exist on its own when the body was destroyed? Not only did impressions come from a distance in the case of those who were just dead, but the same evidence proved that actual appearances of the dead person came with them, showing that the impressions were carried by something which was exactly like the body, and yet acted independently and survived the death of the body. The chain of evidence between the simplest cases of thought-reading at one end, and the actual manifestation of the spirit independently of the body at the other, was one unbroken chain, each phase leading to the other, and this fact seemed to me to bring the first signs of systematic science and order into what had been a mere collection of bewildering and more or less unrelated facts.

About this time I had an interesting experience, for I was one of three delegates sent by the Psychical Society to sit up in a haunted house. It was one of these poltergeist cases, where noises and foolish tricks had gone on for some years, very much like the classical case of John Wesley's family at Epworth in 1726, or the case of the Fox family at Hydesville near Rochester in 1848, which was the starting-point of modern spiritualism. Nothing sensational came of our journey, and yet it was not entirely barren. On the first night nothing occurred. On the

second, there were tremendous noises, sounds like someone beating a table with a stick. We had, of course, taken severe precaution, and we could not explain the noises; but at the same time we could not swear that some ingenious practical joke had not been played upon us. There the matter ended for the time. Some years afterwards, however, I met a member of the family who occupied the house, and he told me that after our visit the bones of a child, evidently long buried, had been dug up in the garden. You must admit that this was very remarkable. Haunted houses are rare, and houses with buried human beings in their gardens are also, we will hope, rare. That they should have both united in one house is surely some argument for the truth of the phenomena. It is interesting to remember that in the case of the Fox family there was also some word of human bones and evidence of murder being found in the cellar, though an actual crime was never established. I have little doubt that if the Wesley family could have got upon speaking terms with their persecutor, they would also have come upon some motive for the persecution. It almost seems as if a life cut suddenly and violently short had some store of unspent vitality which could still manifest itself in a strange, mischievous fashion. Later I had another singular personal experience of this sort which I may describe at the end of this argument.*

From this period until the time of the War I continued in the leisure hours of a very busy life to devote attention to this subject. I had experience of one series of séances with very amazing results, including several materialisations seen in dim light. As the medium was detected in trickery shortly afterwards I wiped these off entirely as evidence. At the same time I think that the presumption is very clear, that in the case of some mediums like Eusapia Palladino they may be guilty of trickery when their powers fail them, and yet at other times have very genuine gifts. Mediumship in its lowest forms is a purely physical gift with no relation to morality and in many cases it is intermittent and cannot be controlled at will. Eusapia was at least twice convicted of very clumsy and foolish fraud, whereas she several times sustained long examinations under every possible test condition at the hands of scientific committees which contained some of the best names of France, Italy, and England. However, I personally prefer to cut my experience with a discredited medium out of my record, and I think that all physical phenomena produced in the dark must necessarily lose much of their value, unless they are accompanied by evidential messages as well. It is the custom of our critics to assume if you cut out the medium who got into trouble you would have to cut out nearly all your evidence. That is not so at all. Up to the time of this incident I had never sat with a professional medium at all, and yet I had certainly accumulated some evidence. The greatest medium of all, Mr.D.D.Home,

showed his phenomena in broad daylight, and was ready to submit to every test and no charge of trickery was ever substantiated against him. So it was with many others. It is only fair to state in addition that when a public medium is a fair mark for notoriety hunters, for amateur detectives and for sensational reporters, and when he is dealing with obscure elusive phenomena and has to defend himself before juries and judges who, as a rule, know nothing about the conditions which influence the phenomena, it would be wonderful if a man could get through without an occasional scandal. At the same time the whole system of paying by results, which is practically the present system, since if a medium never gets results he would soon get no payments, is a vicious one. It is only when the professional medium can be guaranteed an annuity which will be independent of results, that we can eliminate the strong temptation to substitute pretended phenomena when the real ones are wanting.

I have now traced my own evolution of thought up to the time of the War. I can claim, I hope, that it was deliberate and, showed no traces of that credulity with which our opponents charge us. It was too deliberate, for I was culpably slow in throwing any small influence I may possess into the scale of truth. I might have drifted on for my whole life as a psychical Researcher, showing a sympathetic, but more or less dilettante attitude towards the whole subject, as if we were arguing about some impersonal thing such as the existence of Atlantis or the Baconian controversy. But the War came, and when the War came it brought earnestness into all our souls and made us look more closely at our own beliefs and reassess their values. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. The objective side of it ceased to interest for having made up one's mind that it was true there was an end of the matter. The religious side of it was clearly of infinitely greater importance. The telephone bell is in itself a very childish affair, but it may be the signal for a very vital message. It seemed that all these phenomena, large and small, had been the telephone bells which, senseless in themselves, had signalled to the human race: "Rouse yourselves! Stand by! Be at attention! Here are signs for you. They will lead up to the message which God wishes to send." It was the message not the signs which really counted. A New Revelation seemed to be in the course of

delivery to the human race, though how far it was still in what may be called the John-the-Baptist stage, and how far some greater fulness and clearness might be expected hereafter, was more than any man can say. My point is, that the physical phenomena which have been proved up to the hilt for all who care to examine the evidence, are really of no account, and that their real value consists in the fact that they support and give objective reality to an immense body of knowledge which must deeply modify our previous religious views, and must, when properly understood and digested, make religion a very real thing, no longer a matter of faith, but a matter of actual experience and fact. It is to this side of the question that I will now turn, but I must add to my previous remarks about person experience that, since the War, I have had some very exceptional opportunities of confirming all the views which I had already formed as to the truth of the general facts upon which my views are founded.

These opportunities came through the fact that a lady who lived with us, a Miss L.S., developed the power of automatic writing. Of all forms of mediumship, this seems to me to be the one which should be tested most rigidly, as it lends itself very easily not so much to deception as to self-deception, which is a more subtle and dangerous thing. Is the lady herself writing, or is there, as she avers, a power that controls her, even as the chronicler of the Jews in the Bible averred that he was controlled? In the case of L.S. there is no denying that some messages proved to be not true⁹ – especially in the matter of time they were quite unreliable. But on the other hand, the numbers which did come true were far beyond what any guessing or coincidence could account for. Thus, when the *Lusitania* was sunk and the morning papers here announced that so far as known there was no loss of life, the medium at once wrote: “It is terrible, terrible and will have a great influence on the war.” Since it was the first strong impulse which turned America towards the war, the message was true in both respects. Again, she foretold the arrival of an important telegram upon a certain day, and even gave the name of the deliverer of it – a most unlikely person. Altogether, no one could doubt the reality of her inspiration, though the lapses were notable. It was like getting a good message through a very imperfect telephone.

One other incident of the early war days stands out in my memory. A lady in whom I was interested had died in a provincial town. She was a chronic invalid and morphia was found by her bedside. There was an inquest with an open verdict. Eight days later I went to have a sitting with Mr. Vout Peters. After giving me a good deal which, was vague and irrelevant, he suddenly said: “There is a lady here. She is leaning upon an older woman. She keeps saying ‘Morphia.’ Three times she has said it. Her mind was clouded. She did not mean it. Morphia!” Those were almost

his exact words. Telepathy was out of the question, for I had entirely other thoughts in my mind at the time and was expecting no such message.

Apart from personal experience, this movement must gain great additional solidity from the wonderful literature which has sprung up around it during the last few years. If no other spiritual books were in existence than five which have appeared in the last year or so – I allude to Professor Lodge's *Raymond*, Arthur Hill's *Psychical Investigations*, Professor Crawford's *Reality of Psychical Phenomena*, Professor Barrett's *Threshold of the Unseen*, and Gerald Balfour's *Ear of Dionysius* – those five alone would, in my opinion, be sufficient to establish the facts for any reasonable enquirer.

Before going into this question of a new religious revelation, how it is reached, and what it consists of, I would say a word upon one other subject. There have always been two lines of attack by our opponents. The one is that our facts are not true. This I have dealt with. The other is that we are upon forbidden ground and should come off it and leave it alone. As I started from a position of comparative materialism, this objection has never had any meaning for me, but to others I would submit one or two considerations. The chief is that God has given us no power at all which is under no circumstances to be used. The fact that we possess it is in itself proof that it is our bounden duty to study and to develop it. It is true that this, like every other power, may be abused if we lose our general sense of proportion and of reason. But I repeat that its mere possession is a strong reason why it is lawful and binding that it be used.

It must also be remembered that this cry of illicit knowledge, backed by more or less appropriate texts, has been used against every advance of human knowledge. It was used against the new astronomy, and Galileo had actually to recant. It was used against Galvani and electricity. It was used against Darwin, who would certainly have been burned had he lived a few centuries before. It was even used against Simpson's use of chloroform in child-birth, on the ground that the Bible declared "in pain shall ye bring them forth."¹⁰ Surely a plea which has been made so often, and so often abandoned, cannot be regarded very seriously.

To those, however, to whom the theological aspect is still a stumbling block, I would recommend the reading of two short books, each of them by clergymen. The one is the Rev. Fielding Ould's *Is Spiritualism of the Devil*, purchasable for twopence; the other is the Rev. Arthur Chambers' *Our Self After Death*. I can also recommend the Rev. Charles Tweedale's writings upon the subject. I may add that when I first began to make public my own views, one of the first letters of sympathy which I received was from the late Archdeacon Wilberforce.

There are some theologians who are not only opposed to such a

cult, but who go the length of saying that the phenomena and messages come from friends who personate our dead, or pretend to be heavenly teachers. It is difficult to think that those who hold this view have ever had any personal experience of the consoling and uplifting effect of such communications upon the recipient. Ruskin has left it on record that his conviction of a future life came from Spiritualism, though he somewhat ungratefully and illogically added that having got that, he wished to have no more to do with it. There are many, however – *quorum pars parva sum*¹¹ – who without any reserve can declare that they were turned from materialism to a belief in future life, with all that that implies, by the study of this subject. If this be the devil's work one can only say that the devil seems to be a very bungling workman and to get results very far from what he might be expected to desire.

* * *

Chapter II

THE REVELATION

I can now turn with some relief to a more impersonal view of this great subject. Allusion has been made to a body of fresh doctrine. Whence does this come? It comes in the main through automatic writing where the hand of the human medium is controlled, either by an alleged dead human being, as in the case of Miss Julia Ames, or by an alleged higher teacher, as in that of Mr. Stainton Moses. These written communications are supplemented by a vast number of trance utterances, and by the verbal messages of spirits, given through the lips of mediums. Sometimes it has even come by direct voices, as in the numerous cases detailed by Admiral Usborne Moore in his book *The Voices*.¹² Occasionally it has come through the family circle and table-tilting, as, for example, in the two cases I have previously detailed within my own experience. Sometimes, as in a case recorded by Mrs. de Morgan, it has come through the hand of a child.

Now, of course, we are at once confronted with the obvious objection – how do we know that these messages are really from beyond? How do we know that the medium is not consciously writing, or if that be improbable, that he or she is unconsciously writing them by his or her own higher self? This is a perfectly just criticism, and it is one which we must rigorously apply in every case, since if the whole world is to become full of minor prophets, each of them stating their own views of the religious state with no proof save their own assertion, we should, indeed, be back in the dark ages of implicit faith. The answer must be that we require signs which we can test before we accept assertions which we cannot test. In old days they demanded a sign from a prophet, and it was a perfectly reasonable request, and still holds good. If a person comes to me with an account of life in some further world, and has no credentials save his own assertion, I would rather have it in my waste-paperbasket than on my study table. Life is too short to weigh the merits of such productions. But if, as in the case of Stainton Moses, with his *Spirit Teachings*, the doctrines which are said to come from beyond are accompanied with a great number of abnormal gifts – and Stainton Moses was one of the greatest mediums in all ways that England has ever produced – then I look upon the matter in a more serious light. Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also. Or once again, if Raymond can tell us of a photograph no copy of which had reached

England, and which proved to be exactly as he described it, and if he can give us, through the lips of strangers, all sorts of details of his home life, which his own relatives had to verify before they found them to be true, is it unreasonable to suppose that he is fairly accurate in his description of his own experiences and state of life at the very moment at which he is communicating? Or when Mr. Arthur Hill receives messages from folk of whom he never heard, and afterwards verifies that they are true in every detail, is it not a fair inference that they are speaking truths also when they give any light upon their present condition?¹³ The cases are manifold, and I mention only a few of them, but my point is that the whole of this system, from the lowest physical phenomenon of a table-rap up to the most inspired utterance of a prophet, is one complete whole, each link attached to the next one, and that when the humbler end of that chain was placed in the hand of humanity, it was in order that they might, by diligence and reason, feel their way up it until they reached the Revelation which waited in the end. Do not sneer at the humble beginnings, the heaving table or the flying tambourine, however much such phenomena may have been abused or simulated, but remember that a falling apple taught us gravity, a boiling kettle brought us the steam engine, and the twitching leg of a frog opened up the train of thought and experiment which gave us electricity. So the lowly manifestations of Hydesville have ripened into results which have engaged the finest group of intellects in this country during the last twenty years, and which are destined, in my opinion, to bring about far the greatest development of human experience which the world has ever seen.

It has been asserted by men for whose opinion I have a deep regard – notably by Sir William Barratt – that psychical research is quite distinct from religion. Certainly it is so, in the sense that a man might be a very good psychical researcher but a very bad man. But the results of psychical research, the deductions which we may draw, and the lessons we may learn, teach us of the continued life of the soul, of the nature of that life, and of how it is influenced by our conduct here. If this is distinct from religion, I must confess that I do not understand the distinction. To me it is religion – the very essence of it. But that does not mean that it will necessarily crystallize into a new religion. Personally I trust that it will not do so. Surely we are disunited enough already? Rather would I see it the great unifying force, the one provable thing connected with every religion, Christian or non-Christian, forming the common solid basis upon which each raises, if it must needs raise, that separate system which appeals to the varied types of mind. The Southern races will always demand what is less austere than the North, the West will always be more critical than the East. One cannot shape all to a level conformity. But if the broad premises

which are guaranteed by this teaching from beyond are accepted, then the human race has made a great stride towards religious peace and unity. The question which faces us, then, is how will this influence bear upon the older organised religions and philosophies which have influenced the actions of men.

The answer is, that to only one of these religions or philosophies is this New Revelation absolutely fatal. That is to Materialism. I do not say this in any spirit of hostility to Materialists, who, so far as they are an organised body, are, I think, as earnest and moral as any other class. But the fact is manifest that if spirit can live without matter, then the foundation of Materialism is gone, and the whole scheme of thought crashes to the ground.

As to other creeds, it must be admitted that an acceptance of the teaching brought to us from beyond would deeply modify conventional Christianity. But these modifications would be rather in the direction of explanation and development than of contradiction. It would set right grave misunderstandings which have always offended the reason of every thoughtful man, but it would also confirm and make absolutely certain the fact of life after death, the base of all religion. It would confirm the unhappy results of sin, though it would show that those results are never absolutely permanent. It would confirm the existence of higher beings, whom we have called angels, and of an ever-ascending hierarchy above us, in which the Christ spirit finds its place, culminating in heights of the infinite with which we associate the idea of all-power or of God. It would confirm the idea of heaven and of a temporary penal state which corresponds to purgatory rather than to hell. Thus this New Revelation, on some of the most vital points, is *not* destructive of the beliefs, and it should be hailed by really earnest men of all creeds as a most powerful ally rather than a dangerous devil-begotten enemy.

On the other hand, let us turn to the points in which Christianity must be modified by this New Revelation.

First of all I would say this, which must be obvious to many, however much they deplore it: Christianity must change or must perish. That is the law of life – that things must adapt themselves or perish. Christianity has deferred the change very long, she has deferred it until her churches are half empty, until women are her chief supporters, and until both the learned part of the community on one side, and the poorest class on the other, both in town and country, are largely alienated from her. Let us try and trace the reason for this. It is apparent in all sects, and comes, therefore, from some deep common cause.

People are alienated because they frankly do not believe the facts as presented to them to be true. Their reason and their sense of justice are

equally offended. One can see no justice in a vicarious sacrifice, nor in the God who could be placated by such means. Above all, many cannot understand such expressions as the “redemption from sin,” “cleansed by the blood of the Lamb,” and so forth. So long as there was any question of the fall of man there was at least some sort of explanation of such phrases; but when it became certain that man *had never fallen* – when with ever fuller knowledge we could trace our ancestral course down through the cave-man and the drift-man, back to that shadowy and far-off time when the man-like ape slowly evolved into the apelike man – looking back on all this vast succession of life, we knew that it *had always been rising* from step to step. Never was there any evidence of a fall. But if there were no fall, then what became of the atonement, of the redemption, of original sin, of a large part of Christian mystical philosophy? Even if it were as reasonable in itself as it is actually unreasonable, it would still be quite divorced from the facts.

Again, too much seemed to be made of Christ’s death. It is no uncommon thing to die for an idea. Every religion has equally had its martyrs. Men die continually for their convictions. Thousands of our lads are doing it at this instant in France. Therefore the death of Christ, beautiful as it is in the Gospel narrative, has seemed to assume an undue importance, as though it were an isolated phenomenon for a man to die in pursuit of a reform. In my opinion, far too much stress has been laid upon Christ’s death, and far too little upon His life. That was where the true grandeur and the true lesson lay. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Especially one loves His readiness to get at the spirit of religion, sweeping aside the texts and the forms. Never had anyone such a robust common sense, or such a sympathy for weakness. It was this most wonderful and uncommon life, and not his death, which is the true centre of the Christian religion.

Now, let us look at the light which we get from the spirit guides upon this question of Christianity. Opinion is not absolutely uniform yonder, any more than it is here; but reading a number of messages upon this subject, they amount to this: there are many higher spirits with our departed. They vary in degree. Call them “angels,” and you are in touch with old religious thought. High above all these is the greatest spirit of whom they have cognizance – not God, since God is so infinite that He is not within their ken – but one who is nearer God and to that extent

represents God. This is the Christ Spirit. His special care is the Earth. He came down upon it at a time of great earthly depravity – a time when the world was almost as wicked as it is now, in order to give the people the lesson of an ideal life. Then he returned to his own high station, having left an example which is still occasionally followed. That is the story of Christ as spirits have described it. There is nothing here of Atonement or Redemption. But there is a perfectly feasible and reasonable scheme, which I, for one, could readily believe.

If such a view of Christianity were generally accepted, and if it were enforced by assurance and demonstration from the New Revelation which is coming to us from the other side, then we should have a creed which might unite the Churches, which might be reconciled to science, which might defy all attacks, and which might carry the Christian Faith on for an indefinite period. Reason and Faith would at last be reconciled, a nightmare would be lifted from our minds, and spiritual peace would prevail. I do not see such results coming as a sudden conquest or a violent revolution.¹⁴ Rather will it come as a peaceful penetration, as some crude ideas, such as the Eternal Hell idea, have already gently faded away within our own lifetime.¹⁵ It is, however, when the human soul is ploughed and harrowed by suffering that the seeds of truth may be planted, and so some future spiritual harvest will surely rise from the days in which we live.

When I read the New Testament with the knowledge which I have of Spiritualism, I am left with a deep conviction that the teaching of Christ was in many most important respects lost by the early Church, and has not come down to us. All these allusions to a conquest over death have, as it seems to me, little meaning in the present Christian philosophy, whereas for those who have seen, however dimly, through the veil, and touched, however slightly, the out-stretched hands beyond, death has indeed been conquered. When we read so many references to the phenomena with which we are familiar, the levitations, the tongues of fire, the rushing wind, the spiritual gifts, the working of wonders, we feel that the central fact of all, the continuity of life and the communication with the dead, was most certainly known. Our attention is arrested by such a saying as: "Here he worked no wonders because the people were wanting in faith." Is this not absolutely in accordance with psychic law as we know it? Or when Christ, on being touched by the sick woman, said: "Who has touched me? Much virtue has passed out of me." Could He say more clearly what a healing medium would say now, save that He would use the word "power" instead of "virtue"; or when we read: "Try the spirits whether they be of God," is it not the very advice which would now be given to a novice approaching a séance? It is too large a question for me to do more than indicate, but I believe that this subject, which the more rigid Christian

Churches now attack so bitterly, is really the central teaching of Christianity itself. To those who would read more upon this line of thought, I strongly recommend Dr. Abraham Wallace's *Jesus of Nazareth*, if this valuable little work is not out of print. He demonstrates in it most convincingly that Christ's miracles were all within the powers of psychic law as we now understand it, and were on the exact lines of such law even in small details. Two examples have already been given. Many are worked out in that pamphlet. One which convinced me as a truth was the thesis that the story of the materialisation of the two prophets upon the mountain was extraordinarily accurate when judged by psychic law. There is the fact that Peter, James and John (who formed the psychic circle when the dead was restored to life, and were presumably the most helpful of the group) were taken. Then there is the choice of the high pure air of the mountain, the drowsiness of the attendant mediums, the transfiguring, the shining robes, the cloud, the words: "Let us make three tabernacles," with its alternate reading: "Let us make three booths or cabinets" (the ideal way of condensing power and producing materialisations) – all these make a very consistent theory of the nature of the proceedings. For the rest, the list of gifts which St. Paul gives as being necessary for the Christian Disciple, is simply the list of gifts of a very powerful medium, including prophecy, healing, causing miracles (or physical phenomena), clairvoyance, and other powers (I Corinth, xii, 8, 11). The early Christian Church was saturated, with Spiritualism, and they seem to have paid no attention to those Old Testament prohibitions which were meant to keep these powers only for the use and profit of the priesthood.¹⁶

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Chapter III

THE COMING LIFE

Now, leaving this large and possibly contentious subject of the modifications which such New Revelations must produce in Christianity, let us try to follow what occurs to man after death. The evidence on this point is fairly full and consistent. Messengers from the dead have been received in many lands at various times, mixed up with a good deal about this world, which we could verify. When messages come thus, it is only fair, I think, to suppose that if what we can test is true, then what we cannot test is true also. When in addition we find a very great uniformity in the messages and an agreement, as to details which are not at all in accordance with any pre-existing scheme of thought, then I think the presumption of truth is very strong. It is difficult to think that some fifteen or twenty messages from various sources of which I have personal notes, all agree, and yet are all wrong, nor is it easy to suppose that spirits can tell the truth about our world but untruth about their own.

I received lately, in the same week, two accounts of life in the next world, one received through the hand of the near relative of a high dignitary of the Church, while the other came through the wife of a working mechanic in Scotland. Neither could have been aware of the existence of the other, and yet the two accounts are so alike as to be practically the same.*

The message upon these points seems to me to be infinitely reassuring, whether we regard our own fate or that of our friends. The departed all agree that passing is usually both easy and painless, and followed by an enormous reaction of peace and ease. The individual finds himself in a spirit body, which is the exact counter part of his old one, save that all disease, weakness, or deformity has passed from it. This body is standing or floating beside the old body, and conscious both of it and of the surrounding people. At this moment the dead man is nearer to matter than he will ever be again, and hence it is that at that moment the greater part of those cases occur where, his thoughts having turned to someone in the distance, the spirit body went with the thoughts and was manifest to the person. Out of some 250 cases carefully examined by Mr. Gurney,¹⁷ 134 of such apparitions were actually at this moment of dissolution, when one could imagine that the new spirit body was possibly so far material as to be more visible to a sympathetic human eye than it would later become.

These cases, however, are very rare in comparison with the total number of deaths. In most cases I imagine that the dead man is too

preoccupied with his own amazing experience to have much thought for others. He soon finds, to his surprise, that though he endeavours to communicate with those whom he sees, his ethereal voice and his ethereal touch are equally unable to make any impression upon those human organs which are only attuned to coarser stimuli. It is a fair subject for speculation, whether a fuller knowledge of those light rays which we know to exist on either side of the spectrum, or of those sounds which we can prove by the vibrations of a diaphragm to exist, although they are too high for mortal ear, may not bring us some further psychical knowledge. Setting that aside, however, let us follow the fortunes of the departing spirit. He is presently aware that there are others in the room besides those who were there in life, and among these others, who seem to him as substantial as the living, there appear familiar faces, and he finds his hand grasped or his lips kissed by those whom he had loved and lost. Then in their company, and with the help and guidance of some more radiant being who has stood by and waited for the newcomer, he drifts to his own surprise through all solid obstacles and out upon his new life.

This is a definite statement, and this is the story told by one after the other with a consistency which impels belief. It is already very different from any old theology. The Spirit is not a glorified angel or goblin damned, but it is simply the person himself, containing all his strength and weakness, his wisdom and his folly, exactly as he has retained his personal appearance. We can well believe that the most frivolous and foolish would be awed into decency by so tremendous an experience, but impressions soon become blunted, the old nature may soon reassert itself in new surroundings, and the frivolous still survive, as our séance rooms can testify.

And now, before entering upon his new life, the new Spirit has a period of sleep which varies in its length, sometimes hardly existing at all, at others extending for weeks or months. Raymond said that his lasted for six days. That was the period also in a case of which I had some personal evidence. Mr. Myers, on the other hand, said that he had a very prolonged period of unconsciousness. I could imagine that the length is regulated by the amount of trouble or mental preoccupation of this life, the longer rest giving the better means of wiping this out. Probably the little child would need no such interval at all. This, of course, is pure speculation, but there is a considerable consensus of opinion as to the existence of a period of oblivion after the first impression of the new life and before entering upon its duties.

Having wakened from this sleep, the spirit is weak, as the child is weak after earth birth. Soon, however, strength returns and the new life begins. This leads us to the consideration of heaven and hell. Hell, I may

say, drops out altogether, as it has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man. This odious conception, so blasphemous in its view of the Creator, arose from the exaggerations of Oriental phrases, and may perhaps have been of service in a coarse age where men were frightened by fires, as wild beasts are scared by the travellers. Hell as a permanent place does not exist. But the idea of punishment, of purifying chastisement, in fact of Purgatory, is justified by the reports from the other side. Without such punishment there could be no justice in the Universe, for how impossible it would be to imagine that the fate of a Rasputin is the same as that of a Father Damien. The punishment is very certain and very serious, though in its less severe forms it only consists in the fact that the grosser souls are in lower spheres with a knowledge that their own deeds have placed them there, but also with the hope that expiation and the help of those above them will educate them and bring them level with the others. In this saving process the higher spirits find part of their employment. Miss Julia Ames in her beautiful posthumous book, says in memorable words: "The greatest joy of Heaven is emptying Hell."

Setting aside those probationary spheres, which should perhaps rather be looked upon as a hospital for weakly souls than as a penal community, the reports from the other world are all agreed as to the pleasant conditions of life in the beyond. They agree that like goes to like, that all who love or who have interests in common are united, that life is full of interest and of occupation, and that they would by no means desire to return. All of this is surely tidings of great joy, and I repeat that it is not a vague faith or hope, but that it is supported by all the laws of evidence which agree that where many independent witnesses give a similar account, that account has a claim to be considered a true one. If it were an account of glorified souls purged instantly froze all human weakness and of a constant ecstasy of adoration round the throne of the all powerful, it might well be suspected as being the mere reflection of that popular theology which all the mediums had equally received in their youth. It is, however, very different to any pre-existing system. It is also supported, as I have already pointed out, not merely by the consistency of the accounts, but by the fact that the accounts are the ultimate product of a long series of phenomena, all of which have been attested as true by those who have carefully examined them.

In connection with the general subject of life after death, people may say we have got this knowledge already through faith. But faith, however beautiful in the individual, has always in collective bodies been a very two-edged quality. All would be well if every faith were alike and the intuitions of the human race were constant. We know that it is not so. Faith means to say that you entirely believe a thing which you cannot

prove. One man says: "My faith is *this*." Another says: "My faith is *that*." Neither can prove it, so they wrangle for ever, either mentally or in the old days physically. If one is stronger than the other, he is inclined to persecute him just to twist him round to the true faith. Because Philip the Second's faith was strong and clear he, quite logically, killed a hundred thousand Lowlanders in the hope that their fellow countrymen would be turned to the all-important truth. Now, if it were recognised that it is by no means virtuous to claim what you could not prove, we should then be driven to observe facts, to reason from them, and perhaps reach common agreement. That is why this psychical movement appears so valuable. Its feet are on something more solid than texts or traditions or intuitions. It is religion from the double point of view of both worlds up to date, instead of the ancient traditions of one world.

We cannot look upon this coming world as a tidy Dutch garden of a place which is so exact that it can easily be described. It is probable that those messengers who come back to us are all, more or less, in one state of development and represent the same wave of life as it recedes from our shores. Communications usually come from those who have not long passed over, and tend to grow fainter, as one would expect. It is instructive in this respect to notice that Christ's reappearances to his disciples or to Paul, are said to have been within a very few years of his death, and that there is no claim among the early Christians to have seen him later. The cases of spirits who give good proof of authenticity and yet have passed some time are not common. There is, in Mr. Dawson Roger's life, a very good case of a spirit who called himself Manton, and claimed to have been born at Lawrence Lydiard and buried at Stoke Newington in 1677. It was clearly shown afterwards that there was such a man, and that he was Oliver Cromwell's chaplain. So far as my own reading goes, this is the oldest spirit who is on record as returning, and generally they are quite recent. Hence, one gets all one's views from the one generation, as it were, and we cannot take them as final, but only as partial. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. She had been misled by the fact that when she first passed over everyone she met was newly arrived like herself.

Thus the account we give may be partial, but still such as it is it is very consistent and of extraordinary interest, since it refers to our own destiny and that of those we love. All agree that life beyond is for a limited period, after which they pass on to yet other phases, but apparently there is

more communication between these phases than there is between us and Spiritland. The lower cannot ascend, but the higher can descend at will. The life has a close analogy to that of this world at its best. It is pre-eminently a life of the mind, as this is of the body. Preoccupations of food, money, lust, pain, etc., are of the body and are gone. Music, the Arts, intellectual and spiritual knowledge, and progress have increased. The people are clothed, as one would expect, since there is no reason why modesty should disappear with our new forms.¹⁸ These new forms are the absolute reproduction of the old ones at their best, the young growing up and the old reverting until all come to the normal. People live in communities, as one would expect if like attracts like, and the male spirit still finds his true mate though there is no sexuality in the grosser sense and no childbirth. Since connections still endure, and those in the same state of development keep abreast, one would expect that nations are still roughly divided from each other, though language is no longer a bar, since thought has become a medium of conversation. How close is the connection between kindred souls over there is shown by the way in which Myers, Gurney and Roden Noel, all friends and co-workers on earth, sent messages together through Mrs. Holland, who knew none of them, each message being characteristic to those who knew the men in life – or the way in which Professor Verrall and Professor Butcher, both famous Greek scholars, collaborated to produce the Greek problem which has been analyzed by Mr. Gerald Balfour in *The Ear of Dionysius*, with the result that that excellent authority testified that the effect *could* have been attained by no other entities, save only Verrall and Butcher. It may be remarked in passing that these and other examples show clearly either that the spirits have the use of an excellent reference library or else that they have memories which produce something like omniscience.¹⁹ No human memory could possibly carry all the exact quotations which occur in such communications as *The Ear of Dionysius*.

These, roughly speaking, are the lines of the life beyond in its simplest expression, for it is not all simple, and we catch dim glimpses of endless circles below descending into gloom and endless circles above, ascending into glory, all improving, all purposeful, all intensely alive. All are agreed that no religion upon earth has any advantage over another, but that character and refinement are everything. At the same time, all are also in agreement that all religions which inculcate prayer, and an upward glance rather than eyes for ever on the level, is good. In this sense, and in no other – as a help to spiritual life – every form may have a purpose for somebody. If to twirl a brass cylinder forces the Thibetan to admit that there is something higher than his mountains, and more precious than his yaks, then to that extent it is good. We must not be censorious in such

matters.

There is one point which may be mentioned here which is at first startling and yet must commend itself to our reason when we reflect upon it. This is the constant assertion from the other side that the newly passed do not know that they are dead, and that it is a long time, sometimes a very long time, before they can be made to understand it. All of them agree that this state of bewilderment is harmful and retarding to the spirit, and that some knowledge of the actual truth upon this side is the only way to make sure of not being dazed upon the other. Finding conditions entirely different from anything for which either scientific or religious teaching had prepared them, it is no wonder that they look upon their new sensations as some strange dream, and the more rigidly orthodox have been their views, the more impossible do they find it to accept these new surroundings with all that they imply. For this reason, as well as for many others, this New Revelation is a very needful thing for mankind. A smaller point of practical importance is that the aged should realise that it is still worth while to improve their minds, for though they have no time to use their fresh knowledge in this world it will remain as part of their mental outfit in the next.

As to the smaller details of this life beyond, it is better perhaps not to treat them, for the very good reason that they are small details. We will learn them all soon for ourselves, and it is only vain curiosity which leads us to ask for them now. One thing is clear: there are higher intelligences over yonder to whom synthetic chemistry, which not only makes the substance but moulds the form, is a matter of absolute ease. We see them at work in the coarser media, perceptible to our material senses, in the séance room. If they can build up simulacra in the séance room, how much may we expect them to do when they are working upon ethereal objects in that ether which is their own medium. It may be said generally that they can make something which is analogous to anything which exists upon earth. How they do it may well be a matter of guess and speculation among the less advanced spirits, as the phenomena of modern science are a matter of guess and speculation to us. If one of us were suddenly called up by the denizen of some sub-human world, and were asked to explain exactly what gravity is, or what magnetism is, how helpless we should be! We may put ourselves in the position, then, of a young engineer soldier like Raymond Lodge, who tries to give some theory of matter in the beyond – a theory which is very likely contradicted by some other spirit who is also guessing at things above him. He may be right, or he may be wrong, but he is doing his best to say what he thinks, as we should do in similar case. He believes that his transcendental chemists can make anything, and that even such unspiritual matter as alcohol or tobacco could

come within their powers and could still be craved for by unregenerate spirits. This has tickled the critics to such an extent that one would really think to read the comments that it was the only statement in a book which contains 400 closely-printed pages. Raymond may be right or wrong, but the only thing which the incident proves to me is the unflinching courage and honesty of the man who chronicled it, knowing well the handle that he was giving to his enemies.

There are many who protest that this world which is described to us is too material for their liking. It is not as they would desire it. Well, there are many things in this world which seem different from what we desire, but they exist none the less. But when we come to examine this charge of materialism and try to construct some sort of system which would satisfy the idealists, it becomes a very difficult task. Are we to be mere wisps of gaseous happiness floating about in the air? That seems to be the idea. But if there is no body like our own, and if there is no character like our own, then say what you will, we have become extinct. What is it to a mother if some impersonal glorified entity is shown to her? She will say, "that is not the son I lost – I want his yellow hair, his quick smile, his little moods that I know so well." That is what she wants; that, I believe, is what she will have; but she will not have them by any system which cuts us away from all that reminds us of matter and takes us to a vague region of floating emotions.

There is an opposite school of critics which rather finds the difficulty in picturing a life which has keen perceptions, robust emotions, and a solid surrounding all constructed in so diaphanous a material. Let us remember that everything depends upon its comparison with the things around it.

If we could conceive a world a thousand times denser, heavier and duller than this world, we can clearly see that to its inmates it would seem much the same as this, since their strength and texture would be in proportion. If, however, these inmates came in contact with us, they would look upon us as extraordinarily airy beings living in a strange, light, spiritual atmosphere. They would not remember that we also, since our beings and our surroundings are in harmony and in proportion to each other, feel and act exactly as they do.

We have now to consider the case of yet another stratum of life, which is as much above us as the leaden community would be below us. To us also it seems as if these people, these spirits, as we call them, live the lives of vapour and of shadows. We do not recollect that there also everything is in proportion and in harmony so that the spirit scene or the spirit dwelling, which might seem a mere dream thing to us, is as actual to the spirit as are our own scenes or our own dwellings, and that the spirit

body is as real and tangible to another spirit as ours to our friends.

* * *

Chapter IV

PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS

Leaving for a moment the larger argument as to the lines of this Revelation and the broad proofs of its validity, there are some smaller points which have forced themselves upon my attention during the consideration of the subject. This home of our dead seems to be very near to us – so near that we continually, as they tell us, visit them in our sleep. Much of that quiet resignation which we have all observed in people who have lost those whom they loved – people who would in our previous opinion have been driven mad by such loss – is due to the fact that they have seen their dead, and that although the switch-off complete and they can recall nothing whatever of the spirit experience in sleep, the soothing result of it is still carried on by the subconscious self. The switch-off is, as I say, complete, but sometimes for some reason it is hung up for a fraction of a second, and it is at such moments that the dreamer comes back from his dream “trailing clouds of glory.” From this also come all those prophetic dreams many of which are well attested. I have had a recent personal experience of one which has not yet perhaps entirely justified itself but is even now remarkable. Upon April 4th of last year, 1917, I awoke with a feeling that some communication had been made to me of which I had only carried back one word which was ringing in my head. That word was “Piave.” To the best of my belief I had never heard the word before. As it sounded like the name of a place I went into my study the moment I had dressed and I looked up the index of my Atlas. There was “Piave” sure enough, and I noted that it was a river in Italy some forty miles behind the front line, which at that time was victoriously advancing. I could imagine few more unlikely things than that the war should roll back to the Piave, and I could not think how any military event of consequence could arise there, but none the less I was so impressed that I drew up a statement that some such event would occur there, and I had it signed by my secretary and witnessed by my wife with the date, April 4th, attached. It is a matter of history how six months later the whole Italian line fell back, how it abandoned successive positions upon rivers, and how it stuck upon this stream which was said by military critics to be strategically almost untenable. If nothing more should occur (I write upon February 20th, 1918), the reference to the name has been fully justified, presuming that some friend in the beyond was forecasting the coming events of the war. I have still a hope, however, that more was meant, and that some crowning victory of the Allies at this spot may justify still

further the strange way in which the name was conveyed to my mind.²⁰

People may well cry out against this theory of sleep on the grounds that all the grotesque, monstrous and objectionable dreams which plague us cannot possibly come from a high source. On this point I have a very definite theory, which may perhaps be worthy of discussion. I consider that there are two forms of dreams, and only two, the experiences of the released spirit, and the confused action of the lower faculties which remain in the body when the spirit is absent. The former is rare and beautiful, for the memory of it fails us. The latter are common and varied, but usually fantastic or ignoble. By noting what is absent in the lower dreams one can tell what the missing qualities are, and so judge what part of us goes to make up the spirit. Thus in these dreams humour is wanting, since we see things which strike us afterwards as ludicrous, and are not amused. The sense of proportion and of judgment and of aspiration is all gone. In short, the higher is palpably gone, and the lower, the sense of fear, of sensual impression, of self-preservation, is functioning all the more vividly because it is relieved from the higher control.

The limitations of the powers of spirits is a subject which is brought home to one in these studies. People say, "If they exist why don't they do this or that?" The answer usually is that they can't. They appear to have very fixed limitations like our own. This seemed to be very clearly brought out in the cross-correspondence experiments where several writing mediums were operating at a distance quite independently of each other, and the object was to get agreement which was beyond the reach of coincidence. The spirits seem to know exactly what they impress upon the minds of the living, but they do not know how far they carry their instruction out. Their touch with us is intermittent. Thus, in the cross-correspondence experiments we continually have them asking, "Did you get that?" or "Was it all right?" Sometimes they have partial cognisance of what is done, as where Myers says: "I saw the circle, but was not sure about the triangle." It is everywhere apparent that their spirits, even the spirits of those who, like Myers and Hodgson, were in specially close touch with psychic subjects, and knew all that could be done, were in difficulties when they desired to get cognisance of a material thing, such as a written document. Only, I should imagine, by partly materializing themselves could they do so, and they may not have had the power of self-materialisation. This consideration throws some light upon the famous case, so often used by our opponents, where Myers failed to give some word or phrase which had been left behind in a sealed box. Apparently he could not see this document from his present position, and if his memory failed him he would be very likely to go wrong about it.

Many mistakes may, I think, be explained in this fashion. It has

been asserted from the other side, and the assertion seems to me reasonable, that when they speak of their own conditions they are speaking of what they know and can readily and surely discuss; but that when we insist (as we must sometimes insist) upon earthly tests, it drags them back to another plane of things, and puts them in a position which is far more difficult, and liable to error.

Another point which is capable of being used against us is this: the spirits have the greatest difficulty in getting names through to us, and it is this which makes many of their communications so vague and unsatisfactory. They will talk all round a thing, and yet never get the name which would clinch the matter. There is an example of the point in a recent communication in *Light*, which describes how a young officer, recently dead, endeavoured to get a message through the direct voice method of Mrs. Susannah Harris to his father. He could not get his name through. He was able, however, to make it clear that his father was a member of the Kildare Street Club in Dublin. Inquiry found the father, and it was then learned that the father had already received an independent message in Dublin to say that an inquiry was coming through from London. I do not know if the earth name is a merely ephemeral thing, quite disconnected from the personality, and perhaps the very first thing to be thrown aside. That is, of course, possible. Or it may be that some law regulates our intercourse from the other side by which it shall not be too direct, and shall leave something to our own intelligence.

This idea, that there is some law which makes an indirect speech more easy than a direct one, is greatly borne out by the cross-correspondences, where circumlocution continually takes the place of assertion. Thus, in the St. Paul correspondence, which is treated in the July pamphlet of the S.P.R., the idea of St. Paul was to be conveyed from one automatic writer to two others, both of whom were at a distance, one of them in India. Dr. Hodgson was the spirit who professed to preside over this experiment. You would think that the simple words "St. Paul" occurring in the other scripts would be all-sufficient. But no; he proceeds to make all sorts of indirect allusions, to talk all round St. Paul in each of the scripts, and to make five quotations from St. Paul's writings. This is beyond coincidence, and quite convincing, but none the less it illustrates the curious way in which they go round instead of going straight. If one could imagine some wise angel on the other side saying, "Now, don't make it too easy for these people. Make them use their own brains a little. They will become mere automatons if we do everything for them" – if we could imagine that, it would just cover the case. Whatever the explanation, it is a noteworthy fact.

There is another point about spirit communications which is worth

noting. This is their uncertainty wherever any time element comes in. Their estimate of time is almost invariably wrong. Earth time is probably a different idea to spirit time, and hence the confusion. We had the advantage, as I have stated, of the presence of a lady in our household who developed writing mediumship. She was in close touch with three brothers, all of whom had been killed in the war. This lady, conveying messages from her brothers, was hardly ever entirely wrong upon facts, and hardly ever right about time. There was one notable exception, however, which in itself is suggestive. Although her prophecies as to public events were weeks or even months out, she in one case foretold the arrival of a telegram from Africa to the day. Now the telegram had already been sent, but was delayed, so that the inference seems to be that she could foretell a course of events which had actually been set in motion, and calculate how long they would take to reach their end.²¹ On the other hand, I am bound to admit that she confidently prophesied the escape of her fourth brother, who was a prisoner in Germany, and that this was duly fulfilled. On the whole I preserve an open mind upon the powers and limitations of prophecy.

But apart from all these limitations we have, unhappily, to deal with absolute cold-blooded lying on the part of wicked or mischievous intelligences. Everyone who has investigated the matter has, I suppose, met with examples of wilful deception, which occasionally are mixed up with good and true communications. It was of such messages, no doubt, that the Apostle wrote when he said: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."²² These words can only mean that the early Christians not only practised Spiritualism as we understand it, but also that they were faced by the same difficulties. There is nothing more puzzling than the fact that one may get a long connected description with every detail given, and that it may prove to be entirely a concoction. However, we must bear in mind that if one case comes absolutely correct, it atones for many failures, just as if you had one telegram correct you would know that there was a line and a communicator, however much they broke down afterwards. But it must be admitted that it is very discomposing and makes one sceptical of messages until they are tested. Of a kin with these false influences are all the Miltons who cannot scan, and Shelleys who cannot rhyme, and Shakespeares who cannot think, and all the other absurd impersonations which make our cause ridiculous. They are, I think, deliberate frauds, either from this side or from the other, but to say that they invalidate the whole subject is as senseless as to invalidate our own world because we encounter some unpleasant people.

One thing I can truly say, and that is, that in spite of false messages, I have never in all these years known a blasphemous, an unkind, or an

obscene message. Such incidents must be of very exceptional nature. I think also that, so far as allegations concerning insanity, obsession, and so forth go, they are entirely imaginary. Asylum statistics do not bear out such assertions, and mediums live to as good an average age as anyone else. I think, however, that the cult of the séance may be very much overdone. When once you have convinced yourself of the truth of the phenomena the physical séance has done its work, and the man or woman who spends his or her life in running from séance to séance is in danger of becoming a mere sensation hunter. Here, as in other cults, the form is in danger of eclipsing the real thing, and in pursuit of physical proofs one may forget that the real object of all these things is, as I have tried to point out, to give us assurance in the future and spiritual strength in the present, to attain a due perception of the passing nature of matter and the all-importance of that which is immaterial.

The conclusion, then, of my long search after truth, is that in spite of occasional fraud, which Spiritualists deplore, and in spite of wild imaginings, which they discourage, there remains a great solid core in this movement which is infinitely nearer to positive proof than any other religious development with which I am acquainted. As I have shown, it would appear to be a rediscovery rather than an absolutely new thing, but the result in this material age is the same. The days are surely passing when the mature and considered opinions of such men as Crookes, Wallace, Flammarion, Ch.Richet, Lodge, Barratt, Lombroso, Generals Drayson and Turner, Sergeant Ballantyne, W.T.Stead, Judge Edmunds, Admiral Osborne Moore, the late Archdeacon Wilberforce, and such a cloud of other witnesses, can be dismissed with the empty "All rot" or "Nauseating drivel" formulæ. As Mr.Arthur Hill has well said, we have reached a point where further proof is superfluous, and where the weight of disproof lies upon those who deny. The very people who clamour for proofs have as a rule never taken the trouble to examine the copious proofs which already exist. Each seems to think that the whole subject should begin *de novo* because he has asked for information. The method of our opponents is to fasten upon the latest man who has stated the case – at the present instant it happens to be Sir Oliver Lodge – and then to deal with him as if he had come forward with some new opinions which rested entirely upon his own assertion, with no reference to the corroboration of so many independent workers before him. This is not an honest method of criticism, for in every case the agreement of witnesses is the very root of conviction. But as a matter of fact, there are many single witnesses upon whom this case could rest. If, for example, our only knowledge of unknown forces depended upon the researches of Dr.Crawford of Belfast, who places his amateur medium in a weighing chair with her feet from the

ground, and has been able to register a difference of weight of many pounds, corresponding with the physical phenomena produced, a result which he has tested and recorded in a true scientific spirit of caution, I do not see how it could be shaken. The phenomena are and have long been firmly established for every open mind. One feels that the stage of investigation is passed, and that of religious construction is overdue.

For are we to satisfy ourselves by observing phenomena with no attention to what the phenomena mean, as a group of savages might stare at a wireless installation with no appreciation of the messages coming through it, or are we resolutely to set ourselves to define these subtle and elusive utterances from beyond, and to construct from them a religious scheme, which will be founded upon human reason on this side and upon spirit inspiration upon the other? These phenomena have passed through the stage of being a parlour game; they are now emerging from that of a debatable scientific novelty; and they are, or should be, taking shape as the foundations of a definite system of religious thought, in some ways confirmatory of ancient systems, in some ways entirely new. The evidence upon which this system rests is so enormous that it would take a very considerable library to contain it, and the witnesses are not shadowy people living in the dim past and inaccessible to our cross-examination,²³ but are our own contemporaries, men of character and intellect whom all must respect. The situation may, as it seems to me, be summed up in a simple alternative. The one supposition is that there has been an outbreak of lunacy extending over two generations of mankind, and two great continents – a lunacy which assails men or women who are otherwise eminently sane. The alternative supposition is that in recent years there has come to us from divine sources a New Revelation which constitutes by far the greatest religious event since the death of Christ (for the Reformation was a re-arrangement of the old, not a revelation of the new), a Revelation which alters the whole aspect of death and the fate of man. Between these two suppositions there is no solid position. Theories of fraud or of delusion will not meet the evidence. It is absolute lunacy or it is a revolution in religious thought, a revolution which gives us as by-products an utter fearlessness of death, and an immense consolation when those who are dear to us pass behind the veil.

I should like to add a few practical words to those who know the truth of what I say. We have here an enormous new development, the greatest in the history of mankind. How are we to use it? We are bound in honour, I think, to state our own belief, especially to those who are in trouble. Having stated it, we should not force it, but leave the rest to higher wisdom than our own. We wish to subvert no religion. We wish only to bring back the material-minded – to take them out of their cramped valley

and put them on the ridge, whence they can breathe purer air and see other valleys and other ridges beyond. Religions are mostly petrified and decayed, overgrown with forms and choked with mysteries. We can prove that there is no need for this. All that is essential is both very simple and very sure.

The clear call for our help comes from those who have had a loss and who yearn to re-establish connection. This also can be overdone. If your boy were in Australia, you would not expect him to continually stop his work and write long letters at all seasons. Having got in touch, be moderate in your demands. Do not be satisfied with any evidence short of the best, but having got that, you can, it seems to me, wait for that short period when we shall all be re-united. I am in touch at present with thirteen mothers who are in correspondence with their dead sons. In each case, the husband, where he is alive, is agreed as to the evidence. In only one case so far as I knew was the parent acquainted with psychic matters before the war.

Several of these cases have peculiarities of their own. In two of them the figures of the dead lads have appeared beside the mothers in a photograph. In one case the first message to the mother came through a stranger to whom the correct address of the mother was given. The communication afterwards became direct. In another case the method of sending messages was to give references to particular pages and lines of books in distant libraries, the whole conveying a message. The procedure was to weed out all fear of telepathy. Verily there is no possible way by which a truth can be proved by which this truth has not been proved.

How are you to act? There is the difficulty. There are true men and there are frauds. You have to work warily. So far as professional mediums go, you will not find it difficult to get recommendations. Even with the best you may draw entirely blank. The conditions are very elusive. And yet some get the result at once. We cannot lay down laws, because the law works from the other side as well as this. Nearly every woman is an undeveloped medium. Let her try her own powers of automatic writing. There again, what is done must be done with every precaution against self-deception, and in a reverent and prayerful mood. But if you are earnest, you will win through somehow, for someone else is probably trying on the other side.

Some people discountenance communication upon the ground that it is hindering the advance of the departed. There is not a little of evidence for this. The assertions of the spirits are entirely to the contrary and they declare that they are helped and strengthened by the touch with those whom they love. I know few more moving passages in their simple boyish eloquence than those in which Raymond describes the feelings of the dead

boys who want to get messages back to their people and find that ignorance and prejudice are a perpetual bar. "It is hard to think your sons are dead, but such a lot of people do think so. It is revolting to hear the boys tell you how no one speaks of them ever. It hurts me through and through."

Above all read the literature of this subject. It has been far too much neglected, not only by the material world but by believers. Soak yourself with this grand truth. Make yourself familiar with the overpowering evidence. Get away from the phenomenal side and learn the lofty teaching from such beautiful books as *After Death*²⁴ or from Stainton Moses' *Spirit Teachings*. There is a whole library of such literature, of unequal value but of a high average.²⁵ Broaden and spiritualise your thoughts. Show the results in your lives. Unselfishness, that is the keynote to progress. Realise not as a belief or a faith, but as a fact which is as tangible as the streets of London, that we are moving on soon to another life, that all will be very happy there, and that the only possible way in which that happiness can be marred or deferred is by folly and selfishness in these few fleeting years.

It must be repeated that while the New Revelation may seem destructive to those who hold Christian dogmas with extreme rigidity, it has quite the opposite effect upon the mind which, like so many modern minds, had come to look upon the whole Christian scheme as a huge delusion. It is shown clearly that the Old Revelation has so many resemblances, defaced by time and mangled by man's mishandling and materialism, but still denoting the same general scheme, that undoubtedly both have come from the same source. The accepted ideas of life after death, of higher and lower spirits, of comparative happiness depending upon our own conduct, of chastening by pain, of guardian spirits, of high teachers, of an infinite central power, of circles above circles approaching nearer to His presence – all of these conceptions appear once more and are confirmed by many witnesses. It is only the claims of infallibility and of monopoly, the bigotry and pedantry of theologians, and the man-made rituals which take the life out of the God-given thoughts – it is only this which has defaced the truth.

I cannot end this little book better than by using words more eloquent than any which I could write, a splendid sample of English style as well as of English thought. They are from the pen of that considerable thinker and poet, Mr. Gerald Massey, and were written many years ago.

"Spiritualism has been for me, in common with many others, such as lifting of the mental horizon and letting-in of the heavens – such a formation of faith into facts, that I can only compare life without it to

sailing on board ship with hatches battened down and being kept a prisoner, living by the light of a candle, and then suddenly, on some splendid starry night, allowed to go on deck for the first time to see the stupendous mechanism of the heavens all aglow with the glory of God.”

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SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

I

THE NEXT PHASE OF LIFE

I have spoken in the text of the striking manner in which accounts of life in the next phase, though derived from the most varied and independent sources, are still in essential agreement – an agreement which occasionally descends to small details. A variety is introduced by that fuller vision which can see and describe more than one plane, but the accounts of that happy land to which the ordinary mortal may hope to aspire, are very consistent. Since I wrote the statement I have read three fresh independent descriptions which again confirm the point. One is the account given by “A King’s Counsel,” in his recent book, *I Heard a Voice* (Kegan Paul), which I recommended to inquirers, though it has a strong Roman Catholic bias running through it which shows that our main lines of thought are persistent. A second is the little book *The Light on the Future*, giving the very interesting details of the beyond, gathered by an earnest and reverent circle in Dublin. The other came in a private letter from Mr. Hubert Wales, and is, I think, most instructive. Mr. Wales is a cautious and rather sceptical inquirer who had put away his results with incredulity (he had received them through his own automatic writing). On reading my account of the conditions described in the beyond, he hunted up his own old script which had commended itself so little to him when he first produced it. He says: “After reading your article, I was struck, almost startled, by the circumstance that the statements which had purported to be made to me regarding conditions after death coincided – I think almost to the smallest detail – with those you set out as the result of your collation of material obtained from a great number of sources. I cannot think there was anything in my antecedent reading to account for this coincidence. I had certainly read nothing you had published on the subject. I had purposely avoided *Raymond* and books like it, in order not to vitiate my own results, and the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. which I had read at that time, do not touch, as you know, upon after-death conditions. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they

spoke of passing occasionally into a semi-conscious state which they called 'lying asleep' – a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the 'hypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence;²⁶ that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realisation; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. I got no reference to 'work' by that word, but much to the various interests that were said to occupy them. That is probably only another way of saying the same thing. 'Work' with us has come usually to mean 'work to live,' and that, I was emphatically informed, was not the case with them – that all the requirements of life were somehow mysteriously 'provided.' Neither did I get any reference to a definite 'temporary penal state,' but I gathered that people begin there at the point of intellectual and moral development where they leave off here; and since their state of happiness was based mainly upon sympathy, those who came over in a low moral condition, failed at first for various lengths of time to have the capacity to appreciate and enjoy it."

II

AUTOMATIC WRITING

This form of mediumship gives the very highest results, and yet in its very nature is liable to self-deception. Are we using our own hand or is an outside power directing it? It is only by the information received that we can tell, and even then we have to make broad allowance for the action of our own subconscious knowledge. It is worth while perhaps to quote what appears to me to be a thoroughly critic-proof case, so that the inquirer may see how strong the evidence is that these messages are not self-evolved. This case is quoted in Mr. Arthur Hill's recent book *Man Is a Spirit* (Cassell & Co.) and is contributed by a gentleman who takes the name of Captain James Burton. He is, I understand, the same medium (amateur) through whose communications the position of the buried ruins at Glastonbury have recently been located. "A week after my father's funeral

I was writing a business letter, when something seemed to intervene between my hand and the motor centres of my brain, and the hand wrote at an amazing rate a letter, signed with my father's signature and purporting to come from him. I was upset, and my right side and arm became cold and numb. For a year after this letters came frequently, and always at unexpected times. I never knew what they contained until I examined them with a magnifying-glass: they were microscopic. And they contained a vast amount of matter with which it was impossible for me to be acquainted"... "Unknown to me, my mother, who was staying some sixty miles away, lost her pet dog, which my father had given her. The same night I had a letter from him condoling with her, and stating that the dog was now with him. 'All things which love us and are necessary to our happiness in the world are with us here.' A most sacred secret, known to no one but my father and mother, concerning a matter which occurred years before I was born, was afterwards told me in the script, with the comment: 'Tell your mother this, and she will know that it is I, your father, who am writing.' My mother had been unable to accept the possibility up to now, but when I told her this she collapsed and fainted. From that moment the letters became her greatest comfort, for they were lovers during the forty years of their married life, and his death almost broke her heart.

"As for myself, I am as convinced that my father, in his original personality, still exists, as if he were still in his study with the door shut. He is no more dead than he would be were he living in America.

"I have compared the diction and vocabulary of these letters with those employed in my own writing – I am not unknown as a magazine contributor – and I find no points of similarity between the two." There is much further evidence in this case for which I refer the reader to the book itself.

III

THE CHERITON DUG-OUT

I have mentioned in the text that I had some recent experience of a case where a "polter-geist" or mischievous spirit had been manifesting. These entities appear to be of an undeveloped order and nearer to earth conditions than any others with which we are acquainted. This comparative materialism upon their part places them low in the scale of spirit, and undesirable perhaps as communicants, but it gives them a special value as calling attention to crude obvious phenomena, and so

arresting the human attention and forcing upon our notice that there are other forms of life within the universe. These borderland forces have attracted passing attention at several times and places in the past, such cases as the Wesley persecution at Epworth, the Drummer of Tedworth, the Bells of Bealing, etc., startling the country for a time – each of them being an impingement of unknown forces upon human life. Then almost simultaneously came the Hydesville case in America and the Cideville disturbances in France, which were so marked that they could not be overlooked. From them sprang the whole modern movement which, reasoning upwards from small things to great, from raw things to developed ones, from phenomena to messages, is destined to give religion the firmest basis upon which it has ever stood. Therefore, humble and foolish as these manifestations may seem, they have been the seed of large developments, and are worthy of our respectful, though critical, attention.

Many such manifestations have appeared of recent years in various quarters of the world, each of which is treated by the press in a more or less comic vein, with a conviction apparently that the use of the word “spook” discredits the incident and brings discussion to an end. It is remarkable that each is treated as an entirely isolated phenomenon, and thus the ordinary reader gets no idea of the strength of the cumulative evidence. In this particular case of the Cheriton Dugout the facts are as follows:

Mr. Jaques, a Justice of the Peace and a man of education and intelligence, residing at Embrook House, Cheriton, near Folkestone, made a dugout just opposite to his residence as a protection against air raids. The house was, it may be remarked, of great antiquity, part of it being an old religious foundation of the 14th Century. The dugout was constructed at the base of a small bluff, and the sinking was through ordinary soft sandstone. The work was carried out by a local jobbing builder called Rolfe, assisted by a lad. Soon after the inception of his task he was annoyed by his candle being continually blown out by jets of sand, and by similar jets hitting up against his own face. These phenomena he imagined to be due to some gaseous or electrical cause, but they reached such a point that his work was seriously hampered, and he complained to Mr. Jaques, who received the story with absolute incredulity. The persecution continued, however, and increased in intensity, taking the form now of actual blows from moving material, considerable objects, such as stones and bits of brick, flying past him and hitting the walls with a violent impact. Mr. Rolfe, still searching for a physical explanation, went to Mr. Hesketh, the Municipal Electrician of Folkestone, a man of high education and intelligence, who went out to the scene of the affair and saw enough to convince himself that the phenomena were perfectly genuine

and inexplicable by ordinary laws. A Canadian soldier who was billeted upon Mr. Rolfe, heard an account of the happenings from his host, and after announcing his conviction that the latter had "bats in his belfry" proceeded to the dugout, where his experiences were so instant and so violent that he rushed out of the place in horror. The housekeeper at the Hall also was a witness of the movement of bricks when no human hands touched them. Mr. Jacques, whose incredulity had gradually thawed before all this evidence, went down to the dugout in the absence of everyone, and was departing from it when five stones rapped up against the door from the inside. He reopened the door and saw them lying there upon the floor. Sir William Barratt had meanwhile come down, but had seen nothing. His stay was a short one. I afterwards made four visits of about two hours each to the grotto, but got nothing direct, though I saw the new brickwork all chipped about by the blows which it had received. The forces appeared to have not the slightest interest in psychical research, for they never played up to an investigator, and yet their presence and action have been demonstrated to at least seven different observers, and, as I have said, they left their traces behind them, even to the extent of picking the flint stones out of the new cement which was to form the floor, and arranging them in tidy little piles. The obvious explanation that the boy was an adept at mischief had to be set aside in view of the fact that the phenomena occurred in his absence. One extra man of science wandered on to the scene for a moment, but as his explanation was that the movements occurred through the emanation of marsh-gas, it did not advance matters much. The disturbances are still proceeding, and I have had a letter this very morning (February 21st, 1918) with fuller and later details from Mr. Hesketh, the Engineer.

What is the real explanation of such a matter? I can only say that I have advised Mr. Jacques to dig into the bluff under which he is constructing his cellar. I made some investigation myself upon the top of it and convinced myself that the surface ground at that spot has at some time been disturbed to the depth of at least five feet. Something has, I should judge, been buried at some date, and it is probable that, as in the case cited in the text, there is a connection between this and the disturbances. It is very probable that Mr. Rolfe is, unknown to himself, a physical medium, and that when he was in the confined space of the cellar he turned it into a cabinet in which his magnetic powers could accumulate and be available for use. It chanced that there was on the spot some agency which chose to use them, and hence the phenomena. When Mr. Jacques went alone to the grotto the power left behind by Mr. Rolfe, who had been in it all morning, was not yet exhausted and he was able to get some manifestations. So I read it, but it is well not to be dogmatic on such matters. If there is

systematic digging I should expect an epilogue to the story.

Whilst these proofs were in the press a second very marked case of a Poltergeist came within my knowledge. I cannot without breach of confidence reveal the details and the phenomena are still going on. Curiously enough, it was because one of the sufferers from the invasion read some remarks of mine upon the Cheriton dugout that this other case came to my knowledge, for the lady wrote to me at once for advice and assistance. The place is remote and I have not yet been able to visit it, but from the full accounts which I have now received it seems to present all the familiar features, with the phenomenon of direct writing superadded. Some specimens of this script have reached me. Two clergymen have endeavoured to mitigate the phenomena, which are occasionally very violent, but so far without result. It may be some consolation to any others who may be suffering from this strange infliction, to know that in the many cases which have been carefully recorded there is none in which any physical harm has been inflicted upon man or beast.*

1918

THE VITAL MESSAGE

PREFACE

In *The New Revelation* the first dawn of the coming change has been described. In *The Vital Message* the sun has risen higher, and one sees more clearly and broadly what our new relations with the Unseen may be. As I look into the future of the human race I am reminded of how once, from amid the bleak chaos of rock and snow at the head of an Alpine pass, I looked down upon the far stretching view of Lombardy, shimmering in the sunshine and extending in one splendid panorama of blue lakes and green rolling hills until it melted into the golden haze which draped the far horizon. Such a promised land is at our very feet which, when we attain it, will make our present civilization seem barren and uncouth. Already our vanguard is well over the pass. Nothing can now prevent us from reaching that wonderful land which stretches so clearly before those eyes which are opened to see it.

That stimulating writer, V.C.Desertis, has remarked that the Second Coming, which has always been timed to follow Armageddon, may be fulfilled not by a descent of the spiritual to us, but by the ascent of our material plane to the spiritual, and the blending of the two phases of existence. It is, at least, a fascinating speculation. But without so complete an overthrow of the partition walls as this would imply we know enough already to assure ourselves of such a close approximation as will surely deeply modify all our views of science, of religion and of life. What form these changes may take and what the evidence is upon which they will be founded are briefly set forth in this volume.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Crowborough, July, 1919.

Chapter I

THE TWO NEEDFUL READJUSTMENTS

It has been our fate, among all the innumerable generations of mankind, to face the most frightful calamity that has ever befallen the world.¹ There is a basic fact which cannot be denied, and should not be overlooked. For a most important deduction must immediately follow from it. That deduction is that we, who have borne the pains, shall also learn the lesson which they were intended to convey. If we do not learn it and proclaim it, then when can it ever be learned and proclaimed, since there can never again be such a spiritual ploughing and harrowing and preparation for the seed? If our souls, wearied and tortured during these dreadful five years of self-sacrifice and suspense, can show no radical changes, then what souls will ever respond to a fresh influx of heavenly inspiration? In that case the state of the human race would indeed be hopeless, and never in all the coming centuries would there be any prospect of improvement.

Why was this tremendous experience forced upon mankind? Surely it is a superficial thinker who imagines that the great Designer of all things has set the whole planet in a ferment, and strained every nation to exhaustion, in order that this or that frontier be moved, or some fresh combination be formed in the kaleidoscope of nations. No, the causes of the convulsion, and its objects, are more profound than that. They are essentially religious, not political. They lie far deeper than the national squabbles of the day. A thousand years hence those national results may matter little, but the religious result will rule the world. That religious result is the reform of the decadent Christianity of today, its simplification, its purification, and its reinforcement by the facts of spirit communion and the clear knowledge of what lies beyond the exit-door of death. The shock of the war was meant to rouse us to mental and moral earnestness, to give us the courage to tear away venerable shams, and to force the human race to realise and use the vast new revelation which has been so clearly stated and so abundantly proved for all who will examine the statements and proofs with an open mind.

Consider the awful condition of the world before this thunderbolt struck it. Could anyone, tracing back down the centuries and examining the record of the wickedness of man, find anything which could compare with the story of the nations during the last twenty years! Think of the condition of Russia during that time, with her brutal aristocracy and her drunken democracy, her murders on either side, her Siberian horrors, her

Jew baitings and her corruption. Think of the figure of Leopold of Belgium, an incarnate devil who from motives of greed carried murder and torture through a large section of Africa,² and yet was received in every court, and was eventually buried after a panegyric from a Cardinal of the Roman Church – a church which had never once raised her voice against his diabolical career. Consider the similar crimes in the Putumayo, where British capitalists, if not guilty of outrage, can at least not be acquitted of having condoned it by their lethargy and trust in local agents. Think of Turkey and the recurrent massacres of her subject races. Think of the heartless grind of the factories everywhere, where work assumed a very different and more unnatural shape than the ancient labour of the fields. Think of the sensuality of many rich, the brutality of many poor, the shallowness of many fashionable, the coldness and deadness of religion, the absence anywhere of any deep, true spiritual impulse. Think, above all, of the organised materialism of Germany, the arrogance, the heartlessness, the negation of everything which one could possibly associate with the living spirit of Christ as evident in the utterances of Catholic Bishops, like Hartmann of Cologne, as in those of Lutheran Pastors. Put all this together and say if the human race has ever presented a more unlovely aspect. When we try to find the brighter spots they are chiefly where civilization, as apart from religion, has built up necessities for the community, such as hospitals, universities, and organised charities, as conspicuous in Buddhist Japan as in Christian Europe. We cannot deny that there has been much virtue, much gentleness, much spirituality in individuals. But the churches were empty husks, which contained no spiritual food for the human race, and had in the main ceased to influence its actions, save in the direction of soulless forms.

This is not an over-coloured picture. Can we not see, then, what was the inner reason for the war? Can we not understand that it was needful to shake mankind loose from gossip and pink teas, and sword-worship, and Saturday night drunks, and self-seeking politics and theological quibbles – to wake them up and make them realise that they stand upon a narrow knife-edge between two awful eternities,³ and that, here and now, they have to finish with make-beliefs, and with real earnestness and courage face those truths which have always been palpable where indolence, or cowardice, or vested interests have not obscured the vision. Let us try to appreciate what those truths are and the direction which reform must take. It is the new spiritual developments which predominate in my own thoughts, but there are two other great readjustments which are necessary before they can take their full effect. On the spiritual side I can speak with the force of knowledge from the beyond. On the other two points of reform, I make no such claim.

The first is that in the Bible, which is the foundation of our present religious thought, we have bound together the living and the dead, and the dead has tainted the living. A mummy and an angel are in most unnatural partnership. There can be no clear thinking, and no logical teaching until the old dispensation has been placed on the shelf of the scholar, and removed from the desk of the teacher. It is indeed a wonderful book, in parts the oldest which has come down to us, a book filled with rare knowledge, with history, with poetry, with occultism, with folklore. But it has no connection with modern conceptions of religion. In the main it is actually antagonistic to them. Two contradictory codes have been circulated under one cover, and the result is dire confusion. The one is a scheme depending upon a special tribal God, intensely anthropomorphic and filled with rage, jealousy and revenge. The conception pervades every book of the Old Testament. Even in the psalms, which are perhaps the most spiritual and beautiful section, the psalmist, amid much that is noble, sings of the fearsome things which his God will do to his enemies. "They shall go down alive into hell." There is the keynote of this ancient document – a document which advocates massacre, condones polygamy, accepts slavery, and orders the burning of so-called witches. Its Mosaic provisions have long been laid aside. We do not consider ourselves accursed if we fail to mutilate our bodies, if we eat forbidden dishes, fail to trim our beards, or wear clothes of two materials. But we cannot lay aside the provisions and yet regard the document as divine. No learned quibbles can ever persuade an honest earnest mind that that is right. One may say: "Everyone knows that that is the old dispensation, and is not to be acted upon." It is not true. It is continually acted upon, and always will be so long as it is made part of one sacred book. William the Second acted upon it. His German God which wrought such mischief in the world was the reflection of the dreadful being who ordered that captives be put under the harrow. The cities of Belgium were the reflection of the cities of Moab. Every hard-hearted brute in history, more especially in the religious wars, has found his inspiration in the Old Testament. "Smite and spare not!" "An eye for an eye!", how readily the texts spring to the grim lips of the murderous fanatic. Francis on St. Bartholomew's night, Alva in the Lowlands, Tilly at Magdeburg, Cromwell at Drogheda, the Covenanters at Phillippaugh, the Anabaptists of Munster, and the early Mormons of Utah, all found their murderous impulses fortified from this unholy source. Its red trail runs through history. Even where the New Testament prevails, its teaching must still be dulled and clouded by its sterner neighbour. Let us retain this honoured work of literature. Let us remove the taint which poisons the very spring of our religious thought.

This is, in my opinion, the first clearing which should be made for

the more beautiful building to come. The second is less important, as it is a shifting of the point of view, rather than an actual change. It is to be remembered that Christ's life in this world occupied, so far as we can estimate, 33 years, whilst from His arrest to His resurrection was less than a week. Yet the whole Christian system has come to revolve round His death, to the partial exclusion of the beautiful lesson of His life. Far too much weight has been placed upon the one, and far too little upon the other, for the death, beautiful, and indeed perfect, as it was, could be matched by that of many scores of thousands who have died for an idea, while the life, with its consistent record of charity, breadth of mind, unselfishness, courage, reason, and progressiveness, is absolutely unique and superhuman. Even in these abbreviated, translated, and second-hand records we receive an impression such as no other life can give – an impression which fills us with utter reverence. Napoleon, no mean judge of human nature, said of it: "It is different with Christ. Everything about Him astonishes me. His spirit surprises me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and anything of this world there is no possible comparison. He is really a being apart. The nearer I approach Him and the closer I examine Him, the more everything seems above me."

It is this wonderful life, its example and inspiration, which was the real object of the descent of this high spirit on to our planet. If the human race had earnestly centred upon that instead of losing itself in vain dreams of vicarious sacrifices and imaginary falls, with all the mystical and contentious philosophy which has centred round the subject, how very different the level of human culture and happiness would be today! Such theories, with their absolute want of reason or morality, have been the main cause why the best minds have been so often alienated from the Christian system and proclaimed themselves materialists. In contemplating what shocked their instincts for truth they have lost that which was both true and beautiful. Christ's death was worthy of His life, and rounded off a perfect career, but it is the life which He has left as the foundation for the permanent religion of mankind. All the religious wars, the private feuds, and the countless miseries of sectarian contention, would have been at least minimised, if not avoided, had the bare example of Christ's life been adopted as the standard of conduct and of religion.

But there are certain other considerations which should have weight when we contemplate this life and its efficacy as an example. One of these is that the very essence of it was that He critically examined religion as He found it, and brought His robust common sense and courage to bear in exposing the shams and in pointing out the better path. *That* is the hallmark of the true follower of Christ, and not the mute acceptance of doctrines which are, upon the face of them, false and pernicious, because

they come to us with some show of authority. What authority have we now, save this very life, which could compare with those Jewish books which were so binding in their force, and so immutably sacred that even the misspellings or pen-slips of the scribe, were most carefully preserved? It is a simple obvious fact that if Christ had been orthodox, and had possessed what is so often praised as a "child-like faith," there could have been no such thing as Christianity. Let reformers who love Him take heart as they consider that they are indeed following in the footsteps of the Master, who has at no time said that the revelation which He brought, and which has been so imperfectly used, is the last which will come to mankind. In our own times an equally great one has been released from the centre of all truth, which will make as deep an impression upon the human race as Christianity, though no predominant figure has yet appeared to enforce its lessons.⁴ Such a figure has appeared once when the days were ripe, and I do not doubt that this may occur once more.

One other consideration must be urged. Christ has not given His message in the first person. If He had done so our position would be stronger. It has been repeated by the hearsay and report of earnest but ill-educated men. It speaks much for education in the Roman province of Judea that these fishermen, publicans and others could even read or write. Luke and Paul were, of course, of a higher class, but their information came from their lowly predecessors. Their account is splendidly satisfying in the unity of the general impression which it produces, and the clear drawing of the Master's teaching and character. At the same time it is full of inconsistencies and contradictions upon immaterial matters. For example, the four accounts of the resurrection differ in detail, and there is no orthodox learned lawyer who dutifully accepts all four versions who could not shatter the evidence if he dealt with it in the course of his profession. These details are immaterial to the spirit of the message. It is not common sense to suppose that every item is inspired, or that we have to make no allowance for imperfect reporting, individual convictions, oriental phraseology, or faults of translation. These have, indeed, been admitted by revised versions. In His utterance about the letter and the spirit we could almost believe that Christ had foreseen the plague of texts from which we have suffered, even as He Himself suffered at the hands of the theologians of His day, who then, as now, have been a curse to the world. We were meant to use our reasons and brains in adapting His teaching to the conditions of our altered lives and times. Much depended upon the society and mode of expression which belonged to His era. To suppose in these days that one has literally to give all to the poor, or that a starved English prisoner should literally love his enemy the Kaiser, or that because Christ protested against the lax marriages of His day therefore two

spouses who loathe each other should be for ever chained in a life servitude and martyrdom – all these assertions are to travesty His teaching and to take from it that robust quality of common sense which was its main characteristic. To ask what is impossible from human nature is to weaken your appeal when you ask for what is reasonable.

It has already been stated that of the three headings under which reforms are grouped, the exclusion of the old dispensation, the greater attention to Christ's life as compared to His death, and the new spiritual influx which is giving us psychic religion, it is only on the latter that one can quote the authority of the beyond. Here, however, the case is really understated. In regard to the Old Testament I have never seen the matter treated in a spiritual communication. The nature of Christ, however, and His teaching, have been expounded a score of times with some variation of detail, but in the main as reproduced here. Spirits have their individuality of view, and some carry over strong earthly prepossessions which they do not easily shed; but reading many authentic spirit communications one finds that the idea of redemption is hardly ever spoken of, while that of example and influence is for ever insisted upon. In them Christ is the highest spirit known, the son of God, as we all are, but nearer to God, and therefore in a more particular sense His son. He does not, save in most rare and special cases, meet us when we die. Since souls pass over, night and day, at the rate of about 100 a minute, this would seem self-evident. After a time we may be admitted to His presence, to find a most tender, sympathetic and helpful comrade and guide, whose spirit influences all things even when His bodily presence is not visible. This is the general teaching of the other world communications concerning Christ, the gentle, loving and powerful Spirit which broods ever over that world which, in all its many spheres, is His special care.

Before passing to the new revelation, its certain proofs and its definite teaching, let us hark back for a moment upon the two points which have already been treated. They are not absolutely vital points. The fresh developments can go on and conquer the world without them. There can be no sudden change in the ancient routine of our religious habits, nor is it possible to conceive that a congress of theologians could take so heroic a step as to tear the Bible in twain, laying one half upon the shelf and one upon the table. Neither is it to be expected that any formal pronouncements could ever be made that the churches have all laid the wrong emphasis upon the story of Christ. Moral courage will not rise to such a height. But with the spiritual quickening and the greater earnestness which will have their roots in this bloody passion of mankind, many will perceive what is reasonable and true, so that even if the Old Testament should remain, like some obsolete appendix in the animal frame, to mark a

lower stage through which development has passed, it will more and more be recognised as a document which has lost all validity and which should no longer be allowed to influence human conduct, save by way of pointing out much which we may avoid. So also with the teaching of Christ, the mystical portions may fade gently away, as the grosser views of eternal punishment have faded within our own lifetime, so that while mankind is hardly aware of the change the heresy of today will become the commonplace of tomorrow. These things will adjust themselves in God's own time. What is, however, both new and vital are those fresh developments which will now be discussed. In them may be found the signs of how the dry bones may be stirred, and how the mummy may be quickened with the breath of life. With the actual certainty of a definite life after death, and a sure sense of responsibility for our own spiritual development, a responsibility which cannot be put upon any other shoulders, however exalted, but must be borne by each individual for himself, there will come the greatest reinforcement of morality which the human race has ever known. We are on the verge of it now, but our descendants will look upon the past century as the culmination of the dark ages when man lost his trust in God, and was so engrossed in his temporary earth life that he lost all sense of spiritual reality.

* * *

Chapter II

THE DAWNING OF THE LIGHT

Some sixty years ago that acute thinker Lord Brougham remarked that in the clear sky of scepticism he saw only one small cloud drifting up and that was Modern Spiritualism. It was a curiously inverted simile, for one would surely have expected him to say that in the drifting clouds of scepticism he saw one patch of clear sky, but at least it showed how conscious he was of the coming importance of the movement. Ruskin, too, an equally agile mind, said that his assurance of immortality depended upon the observed facts of Spiritualism. Scores, and indeed hundreds, of famous names could be quoted who have subscribed the same statement, and whose support would dignify any cause upon earth. They are the higher peaks who have been the first to catch the light, but the dawn will spread until none are too lowly to share it. Let us turn, therefore, and inspect this movement which is most certainly destined to revolutionize human thought and action as none other has done within the Christian era. We shall look at it both in its strength and in its weakness, for where one is dealing with what one knows to be true one can fearlessly insist upon the whole of the truth.

The movement which is destined to bring vitality to the dead and cold religions has been called "Modern Spiritualism." The "modern" is good, since the thing itself, in one form or another, is as old as history, and has always, however obscured by forms, been the red central glow in the depths of all religious ideas, permeating the Bible from end to end. But the word "Spiritualism" has been so befouled by wicked charlatans, and so cheapened by many a sad incident, that one could almost wish that some such term as "psychic religion" would clear the subject of old prejudices, just as mesmerism, after many years of obloquy, was rapidly accepted when its name was changed to hypnotism.⁵ On the other hand, one remembers the sturdy pioneers who have fought under this banner, and who were prepared to risk their careers, their professional success, and even their reputation for sanity, by publicly asserting what they knew to be the truth.

Their brave, unselfish devotion must do something to cleanse the name for which they fought and suffered. It was they who nursed the system which promises to be, not a new religion – it is far too big for that – but part of the common heritage of knowledge shared by the whole human race. Perfected Spiritualism, however, will probably bear about the same relation to the Spiritualism of 1850 as a modern locomotive to the

bubbling little kettle which heralded the era of steam. It will end by being rather the proof and basis of all religions than a religion in itself. We have already too many religions – but too few proofs.

Those first manifestations at Hydesville varied in no way from many of which we have record in the past, but the result arising from them differed very much, because, for the first time, it occurred to a human being not merely to listen to inexplicable sounds, and to fear them or marvel at them, but to establish communication with them. John Wesley's father might have done the same more than a century before had the thought occurred to him when he was a witness of the manifestations at Epworth in 1726. It was only when the young Fox girl struck her hands together and cried "Do as I do" that there was instant compliance, and consequent proof of the presence of an *intelligent* invisible force, thus differing from all other forces of which we know. The circumstances were humble, and even rather sordid, upon both sides of the veil, human and spirit, yet it was, as time will more and more clearly show, one of the turning points of the world's history, greater far than the fall of thrones or the rout of armies. Some artist of the future will draw the scene – the sitting-room of the wooden, shack-like house, the circle of half-awed and half-critical neighbours, the child clapping her hands with upturned laughing face, the dark corner shadows where these strange new forces seem to lurk – forces often apparent, and now come to stay and to effect the complete revolution of human thought. We may well ask why should such great results arise from such petty sources? So argued the highbrowed philosophers of Greece and Rome when the outspoken Paul, with the fisherman Peter and his half-educated disciples, traversed all their learned theories, and with the help of women, slaves, and schismatic Jews, subverted their ancient creeds. One can but answer that Providence has its own way of attaining its results, and that it seldom conforms to our opinion of what is most appropriate.

We have a larger experience of such phenomena now, and we can define with some accuracy what it was that happened at Hydesville in the year 1848. We know that these matters are governed by law and by conditions as much as any other phenomena of the universe, though at the moment it seemed to the public to be an isolated and irregular outburst. On the one hand, you had a material, earth-bound spirit of a low order of development which needed a physical medium in order to be able to indicate its presence. On the other, you had that rare thing, a good physical medium. The result followed as surely as the flash follows when the electric battery and wire are both properly adjusted. Corresponding experiments, where effect and cause duly follow, are being worked out at the present moment by Professor Crawford, of Belfast, as detailed in his

two recent books, where he shows that there is an actual loss of weight of the medium in exact proportion to the physical phenomenon produced.* The whole secret of mediumship on this material side appears to lie in the power, quite independent of oneself, of passively giving up some portion of one's bodily substance for the use of outside influences. Why should some have this power and some not? We do not know – nor do we know why one should have the ear for music and another not. Each is born in us, and each has little connection with our moral natures. At first it was only physical mediumship which was known, and public attention centred upon moving tables, automatic musical instruments, and other crude but obvious examples of outside influence, which were unhappily very easily imitated by rogues. Since then we have learned that there are many forms of mediumship, so different from each other that an expert at one may have no powers at all at the other.⁶ The automatic writer, the clairvoyant, the crystal-seer, the trance speaker, the photographic medium, the direct voice medium, and others, are all, when genuine, the manifestations of one force, which runs through varied channels as it did in the gifts ascribed to the disciples. The unhappy outburst of roguery was helped, no doubt, by the need for darkness claimed by the early experimenters – a claim which is by no means essential, since the greatest of all mediums, D.D.Home, was able by the exceptional strength of his powers to dispense with it. At the same time the fact that darkness rather than light, and dryness rather than moisture, are helpful to good results has been abundantly manifested, and points to the physical laws which underlie the phenomena. The observation made long afterwards that wireless telegraphy, another etheric force, acts twice as well by night as by day, may, corroborate the general conclusions of the early Spiritualists, while their assertion that the least harmful light is red light has a suggestive analogy in the experience of the photographer.

There is no space here for the history of the rise and development of the movement. It provoked warm adhesion and fierce opposition from the start. Professor Hare and Horace Greeley were among the educated minority who tested and endorsed its truth. It was disfigured by many grievous incidents, which may explain but does not excuse the perverse opposition which it encountered in so many quarters. This opposition was really largely based upon the absolute materialism of the age, which would not admit that there could exist at the present moment such conditions as might be accepted in the far past.⁷ When actually brought in contact with that life beyond the grave which they professed to believe in, these people winced, recoiled, and declared it impossible. The science of the day was also rooted in materialism, and discarded all its own very excellent axioms when it was faced by an entirely new and unexpected proposition. Faraday

declared that in approaching a new subject one should make up one's mind *a priori* as to what is possible and what is not! Huxley said that the messages, *even if true*, "interested him no more than the gossip of curates in a cathedral city." Darwin said: "God help us if we are to believe such things." Herbert Spencer declared against it, but had no time to go into it. At the same time all science did not come so badly out of the ordeal. As already mentioned, Professor Hare, of Philadelphia, inventor, among other things, of the oxyhydrogen blow-pipe, was the first man of note who had the moral courage, after considerable personal investigation, to declare that these new and strange developments were true. He was followed by many medical men, both in America and in Britain, including Dr. Elliotson, one of the leaders of free thought in this country. Professor Crookes, the most rising chemist in Europe, Dr. Russel Wallace the great naturalist, Varley the electrician, Flammarion the French astronomer, and many others, risked their scientific reputations in their brave assertions of the truth. These men were not credulous fools. They saw and deplored the existence of frauds. Crookes' letters upon the subject are still extant. In very many cases it was the Spiritualists themselves who exposed the frauds. They laughed, as the public laughed, at the sham Shakespeares and vulgar Caesars who figured in certain séance rooms. They deprecated also the low moral tone which would turn such powers to prophecies about the issue of a race or the success of a speculation. But they had that broader vision and sense of proportion which assured them that behind all these follies and frauds there lay a mass of solid evidence which could not be shaken, though like all evidence, it had to be examined before it could be appreciated. They were not such simpletons as to be driven away from a great truth because there are some dishonest camp followers who hang upon its skirts.

A great centre of proof and of inspiration lay during those early days in Mr. D.D. Home, a Scottish-American, who possessed powers which make him one of the most remarkable personalities of whom we have any record. Home's life, written by his second wife, is a book which deserves very careful reading. This man, who in some aspects was more than a man, was before the public for nearly thirty years. During that time he never received payment for his services, and was always ready to put himself at the disposal of any bona-fide and reasonable enquirer. His phenomena were produced in full light, and it was immaterial to him whether the sittings were in his own rooms or in those of his friends. So high were his principles that upon one occasion, though he was a man of moderate means and less than moderate health, he refused the princely fee of two thousand pounds offered for a single sitting by the Union Circle in Paris.

As to his powers, they seem to have included every form of mediumship in the highest degree – self-levitation, as witnessed by hundreds of credible witnesses; the handling of fire, with the power of conferring like immunity upon others; the movement without human touch of heavy objects; the visible materialisation of spirits; miracles of healing; and messages from the dead, such as that which converted the hard-headed Scot, Robert Chambers, when Home repeated to him the actual dying words of his young daughter. All this came from a man of so sweet a nature and of so charitable a disposition, that the union of all qualities would seem almost to justify those who, to Home's great embarrassment, were prepared to place him upon a pedestal above humanity.

The genuineness of his psychic powers has never been seriously questioned, and was as well recognised in Rome and Paris as in London. One incident only darkened his career, and it was one in which he was blameless, as anyone who carefully weighs the evidence must admit. I allude to the action taken against him by Mrs. Lyon, who, after adopting him as her son and settling a large sum of money upon him, endeavoured to regain, and did regain this money by her unsupported assertion that he had persuaded her illicitly to make him the allowance. The facts of his life are, in my judgment, ample proof of the truth of the Spiritualist position, if no other proof at all had been available. It is to be remarked in the career of this entirely honest and unvenal medium that he had periods in his life when his powers deserted him completely, that he could foresee these lapses, and that, being honest and unvenal, he simply abstained from all attempts until the power returned. It is this intermittent character of the gift which is, in my opinion, responsible for cases when a medium who has passed the most rigid tests upon certain occasions is afterwards detected in simulating, very clumsily, the results which he had once successfully accomplished. The real power having failed, he has not the moral courage to admit it, nor the self-denial to forego his fee which he endeavours to earn by a travesty of what was once genuine. Such an explanation would cover some facts which otherwise are hard to reconcile. We must also admit that some mediums are extremely irresponsible and feather-headed people. A friend of mine, who sat with Eusapia Palladino, assured me that he saw her cheat in the most childish and bare-faced fashion, and yet immediately afterwards incidents occurred which were absolutely beyond any normal powers to produce.

Apart from Home, another episode which marks a stage in the advance of this movement was the investigation and report by the Dialectical Society in the year 1869. This body was composed of men of various learned professions who gathered together to investigate the alleged facts, and ended by reporting that they really *were* facts. They

were unbiased, and their conclusions were founded upon results which were very soberly set forth in their report, a most convincing document which, even now in 1919, after the lapse of fifty years, is far more intelligent than the greater part of current opinion upon this subject. None the less, it was greeted by a chorus of ridicule by the ignorant Press of that day, who, if the same men had come to the opposite conclusion in spite of the evidence, would have been ready to hail their verdict as the undoubted end of a pernicious movement.

In the early days, about 1863, a book was written by Mrs.de Morgan, the wife of the well-known mathematician Professor de Morgan, entitled *From Matter to Spirit*. There is a sympathetic preface by the husband. The book is still well worth reading, for it is a question whether anyone has shown greater brain power in treating the subject. In it the prophecy is made that as the movement develops the more material phenomena will decrease and their place be taken by the more spiritual, such as automatic writing. This forecast has been fulfilled, for though physical mediums still exist the other more subtle forms greatly predominate, and call for far more discriminating criticism in judging their value and their truth. Two very convincing forms of mediumship, the direct voice and spirit photography, have also become prominent. Each of these presents such proof that it is impossible for the sceptic to face them, and he can only avoid them by ignoring them.

In the case of the direct voice one of the leading exponents is Mrs.French, an amateur medium in America, whose work is described both by Mr.Funk and Mr.Randall. She is a frail elderly lady, yet in her presence the most masculine and robust voices make communications, even when her own mouth is covered. I have myself investigated the direct voice in the case of four different mediums, two of them amateurs, and can have no doubt of the reality of the voices, and that they are not the effect of ventriloquism. I was more struck by the failures than by the successes, and cannot easily forget the passionate pantings with which some entity strove hard to reveal his identity to me, but without success. One of these mediums was tested afterwards by having the mouth filled with coloured water, but the voice continued as before.

As to spirit photography, the most successful results are obtained by the Crewe circle in England, under the mediumship of Mr.Hope and Mrs.Buxton.* I have seen scores of these photographs, which in several cases reproduce exact images of the dead which do not correspond with any pictures of them taken during life. I have seen father, mother, and dead soldier son, all taken together with the dead son looking far the happier and not the least substantial of the three. It is in these varied forms of proof that the impregnable strength of the evidence lies, for how absurd

do explanations of telepathy, unconscious cerebration or cosmic memory become when faced by such phenomena as spirit photography, materialisation, or the direct voice.⁸ Only one hypothesis can cover every branch of these manifestations, and that is the system of extraneous life and action which has always, for seventy years, held the field for any reasonable mind which had impartially considered the facts.

I have spoken of the need for careful and cool-headed analysis in judging the evidence where automatic writing is concerned. One is bound to exclude spirit explanations until all natural ones have been exhausted, though I do not include among natural ones the extreme claims of far-fetched telepathy such as that another person can read in your thoughts things of which you were never yourself aware. Such explanations are not explanations, but mystifications and absurdities, though they seem to have a special attraction for a certain sort of psychical researcher, who is obviously destined to go on researching to the end of time, without ever reaching any conclusion save that of the patience of those who try to follow his reasoning. To give a good example of valid automatic script, chosen out of many which I could quote, I would draw the reader's attention to the facts as to the excavations at Glastonbury, as detailed in *The Gate of Remembrance* by Mr. Bligh Bond. Mr. Bligh Bond, by the way, is not a Spiritualist, but the same cannot be said of the writer of the automatic script, an amateur medium, who was able to indicate the secrets of the buried abbey, which were proved to be correct when the ruins were uncovered. I can truly say that, though I have read much of the old monastic life, it has never been brought home to me so closely as by the messages and descriptions of dear old Brother Johannes, the earth-bound spirit – earthbound by his great love for the old abbey in which he had spent his human life. This book, with its practical sequel, may be quoted as an excellent example of automatic writing at its highest, for what telepathic explanation can cover the detailed description of objects which lie unseen by any human eye? It must be admitted, however, that in automatic writing you are at one end of the telephone, if one may use such a simile, and you have, no assurance as to who is at the other end. You may have wildly false messages suddenly interpolated among truthful ones – messages so detailed in their mendacity that it is impossible to think that they are not deliberately false. When once we have accepted the central fact that spirits change little in essentials when leaving the body, and that in consequence the world is infested by many low and mischievous types, one can understand that these untoward incidents are rather a confirmation of Spiritualism than an argument against it. Personally I have received and have been deceived by several such messages. At the same time I can say that after an experience of thirty years of such communications I have

never known a blasphemous, an obscene or an unkind sentence come through. I admit, however, that I have heard of such cases. Like attracts like, and one should know one's human company before one joins in such intimate and reverent rites. In clairvoyance the same sudden inexplicable deceptions appear. I have closely followed the work of one female medium, a professional, whose results are so extraordinarily good that in a favourable case she will give the full names of the deceased as well as the most definite and convincing test messages. Yet among this splendid series of results I have notes of several in which she was a complete failure and absolutely wrong upon essentials. How can this be explained? We can only answer that conditions were obviously not propitious, but why or how are among the many problems of the future. It is a profound and most complicated subject, however easily it may be settled by the "ridiculous nonsense" school of critics. I look at the row of books upon the left of my desk as I write – ninety-six solid volumes, many of them annotated and well thumbed, and yet I know that I am like a child wading ankle deep in the margin of an illimitable ocean. But this, at least, I have very clearly realised, that the ocean is there and that the margin is part of it, and that down that shelving shore the human race is destined to move slowly to deeper waters. In the next chapter, I will endeavour to show what is the purpose of the Creator in this strange revelation of new intelligent forces impinging upon our planet. It is this view of the question which must justify the claim that this movement, so long the subject of sneers and ridicule, is absolutely the most important development in the whole history of the human race, so important that, if we could conceive one single man discovering and publishing it, he would rank before Christopher Columbus as a discoverer of new worlds, before Paul as a teacher of new religious truths, and before Isaac Newton as a student of the laws of the Universe.

Before opening up this subject there is one consideration which should have due weight, and yet seems continually to be overlooked. The differences between various sects are a very small thing as compared to the great eternal duel between materialism and the spiritual view of the Universe. That is the real fight. It is a fight in which the Churches championed the anti-material view, but they have done it so unintelligently, and have been continually placed in such false positions, that they have always been losing. Since the days of Hume and Voltaire and Gibbon the fight has slowly but steadily rolled in favour of the attack. Then came Darwin, showing with apparent truth, that man has never fallen but always risen. This cut deep into the philosophy of orthodoxy, and it is folly to deny it. Then again came the so-called "Higher Criticism," showing alleged flaws and cracks in the very foundations. All this time the

Churches were yielding ground, and every retreat gave a fresh jumping-off place for a new assault. It has gone so far that at the present moment a very large section of the people of this country, rich and poor, are out of all sympathy not only with the Churches but with the whole Spiritual view. Now, we intervene with our positive knowledge and actual proof – an ally so powerful that we are capable of turning the whole tide of battle and rolling it back for ever against materialism. We can say: “We will meet you on your own ground and show you by material and scientific tests that the soul and personality survive.” That is the aim of Psychic Science, and it has been fully attained. It means an end to materialism for ever. And yet this movement, this Spiritual movement, is hooted at and reviled by Rome, by Canterbury and even by Little Bethel, each of them for once acting in concert, and including in their battle line such strange allies as the Scientific Agnostics and the militant Free-thinkers. Father Vaughan and the Bishop of London, the Rev.F.B.Meyer and Mr.Clodd, *The Church Times* and *The Freethinker*, are united in battle, though they fight with very different battle cries, the one declaring that the thing is of the devil, while the other is equally clear that it does not exist at all. The opposition of the materialists is absolutely intelligent since it is clear that any man who has spent his life in saying “No” to all extramundane forces is, indeed, in a pitiable position when, after many years, he has to recognise that his whole philosophy is built upon sand and that “Yes” was the answer from the beginning. But as to the religious bodies, what words can express their stupidity and want of all proportion in not running halfway and more to meet the greatest ally who has ever intervened to change their defeat into victory? What gifts this all-powerful ally brings with him, and what are the terms of his alliance, will now be considered.

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Chapter III

THE GREAT ARGUMENT

The physical basis of all psychic belief is that the soul is a complete duplicate of the body, resembling it in the smallest particular, although constructed in some far more tenuous material. In ordinary conditions these two bodies are intermingled so that the identity of the finer one is entirely obscured. At death, however, and under certain conditions in the course of life, the two divide and can be seen separately. Death differs from the conditions of separation before death in that there is a complete break between the two bodies, and life is carried on entirely by the lighter of the two, while the heavier, like a cocoon from which the living occupant has escaped, degenerates and disappears, the world burying the cocoon with much solemnity by taking little pains to ascertain what has become of its nobler contents. It is a vain thing to urge that science has not admitted this contention, and that the statement is pure dogmatism. The science which has not examined the facts has, it is true, not admitted the contention, but its opinion is manifestly worthless, or at the best of less weight than that of the humblest student of psychic phenomena. The real science which has examined the facts is the only valid authority, and it is practically unanimous. I have made personal appeals to at least one great leader of science to examine the facts, however superficially, without any success, while Sir William Crookes appealed to Sir George Stokes, the Secretary of the Royal Society, one of the most bitter opponents of the movement, to come down to his laboratory and see the psychic force at work, but he took no notice. What weight has science of that sort? It can only be compared to that theological prejudice which caused the Ecclesiastics in the days of Galileo to refuse to look through the telescope which he held out to them.

It is possible to write down the names of fifty professors in great seats of learning who have examined and endorsed these facts, and the list would include many of the greatest intellects which the world has produced in our time – Flammarion and Lombroso, Charles Richet and Russel Wallace, Willie Reichel, Myers, Zöllner, James, Lodge, and Crookes. Therefore the facts *have* been endorsed by the only science that has the right to express an opinion. I have never, in my thirty years of experience, known one single scientific man who went thoroughly into this matter and did not end by accepting the Spiritual solution. Such may exist, but I repeat that I have never heard of him. Let us, then, with confidence examine this matter of the “spiritual body,” to use the term

made classical by Saint Paul. There are many signs in his writings that Paul was deeply versed in psychic matters, and one of these is his exact definition of the natural and spiritual bodies in the service which is the final farewell to life of every Christian. Paul picked his words, and if he had meant that man consisted of a natural body and a spirit he would have said so. When he said “a spiritual body” he meant a body which contained the spirit and yet was distinct from the ordinary natural body. That is exactly what psychic science has now shown to be true.

When a man has taken hashish or certain other drugs, he not infrequently has the experience that he is standing or floating beside his own body, which he can see stretched senseless upon the couch. So also under anaesthetics, particularly under laughing gas, many people are conscious of a detachment from their bodies, and of experiences at a distance. I have myself seen very clearly my wife and children inside a cab while I was senseless in the dentist’s chair. Again, when a man is fainting or dying, and his system in an unstable condition, it is asserted in very many definite instances that he can, and does, manifest himself to others at a distance. These phantasms of the living, which have been so carefully explored and docketed by Messrs. Myers and Gurney, ran into hundreds of cases. Some people claim that by an effort of will they can, after going to sleep, propel their own doubles in the direction which they desire, and visit those whom they wish to see. Thus there is a great volume of evidence – how great no man can say who has not spent diligent years in exploring it – which vouches for the existence of this finer body containing the precious jewels of the mind and spirit, and leaving only gross confused animal functions in its heavier companion.

Mr. Funk, who is a critical student of psychic phenomena, and also the joint compiler of the standard American dictionary, narrates a story in point which could be matched from other sources. He tells of an American doctor of his acquaintance, and he vouches personally for the truth of the incident. This doctor, in the course of a cataleptic seizure in Florida, was aware that he had left his body, which he saw lying beside him. He had none the less preserved his figure and his identity. The thought of some friend at a distance came into his mind, and after an appreciable interval he found himself in that friend’s room, half way across the continent. He saw his friend, and was conscious that his friend saw him. He afterwards returned to his own room, stood beside his own senseless body, argued within himself whether he should re-occupy it or not, and finally, duty overcoming inclination, he merged his two frames together and continued his life. A letter from him to his friend explaining matters crossed a letter from the friend, in which he told how he also had been aware of his presence. The incident is narrated in detail in Mr. Funk’s *Psychic Riddle*.

I do not understand how any man can examine the many instances coming from various angles of approach without recognizing that there really is a second body of this sort, which incidentally goes far to account for all stories, sacred or profane, of ghosts, apparitions and visions. Now, what is this second body, and how does it fit into modern religious revelation?

What it is, is a difficult question, and yet when science and imagination unite, as Tyndall said they should unite, to throw a searchlight into the unknown, they may produce a beam sufficient to outline vaguely what will become clearer with the future advance of our race. Science has demonstrated that while ether pervades everything the ether which is actually in a body is different from the ether outside it. "Bound" ether is the name given to this, which Fresnel and others have shown to be denser. Now, if this fact be applied to the human body, the result would be that, if all that is visible of that body were removed, there would still remain a complete and absolute mould of the body, formed in bound ether which would be different from the ether around it. This argument is more solid than mere speculation, and it shows that even the soul may come to be defined in terms of matter and is not altogether "such stuff as dreams are made of."

It has been shown that there is some good evidence for the existence of this second body apart from psychic religion, but to those who have examined that religion it is the centre of the whole system, sufficiently real to be recognised by clairvoyants, to be heard by clairaudients, and even to make an exact impression upon a photographic plate. Of the latter phenomenon, of which I have had some very particular opportunities of judging, I have no more doubt than I have of the ordinary photography of commerce. It had already been shown by the astronomers that the sensitized plate is a more delicate recording instrument than the human retina, and that it can show stars upon a long exposure which the eye has never seen. It would appear that the spirit world is really so near to us that a very little extra help under correct conditions of mediumship will make all the difference. Thus the plate, instead of the eye, may bring the loved face within the range of vision, while the trumpet, acting as a megaphone, may bring back the familiar voice where the spirit whisper with no mechanical aid was still inaudible. So loud may the latter phenomenon be that in one case, of which I have the record, the dead man's dog was so excited at hearing once more his master's voice that he broke his chain, and deeply scarred the outside of the séance room door in his efforts to force an entrance.

Now, having said so much of the spirit body, and having indicated that its presence is not vouched for by only one line of evidence or school

of thought, let us turn to what happens at the time of death, according to the observation of clairvoyants on this side and the posthumous accounts of the dead upon the other. It is exactly what we should expect to happen, granted the double identity. In a painless and natural process the lighter disengages itself from the heavier, and slowly draws itself off until it stands with the same mind, the same emotions, and an exactly similar body, beside the couch of death, aware of those around and yet unable to make them aware of it, save where that finer spiritual eyesight called clairvoyance exists. How, we may well ask, can it see without the natural organs? How did the hashish victim see his own unconscious body? How did the Florida doctor see his friend? There is a power of perception in the spiritual body which does give the power. We can say no more. To the clairvoyant the new spirit seems like a filmy outline. To the ordinary man it is invisible. To another spirit it would, no doubt, seem as normal and substantial as we appear to each other. There is some evidence that it refines with time, and is therefore nearer to the material at the moment of death or closely after it, than after a lapse of months or years. Hence, it is that apparitions of the dead are most clear and most common about the time of death, and hence also, no doubt, the fact that the cataleptic physician already quoted was seen and recognised by his friend. The meshes of his ether, if the phrase be permitted, were still heavy with the matter from which they had only just been disentangled.

Having disengaged itself from grosser matter, what happens to this spirit body, the precious bark which bears our all in all upon this voyage into unknown seas? Very many accounts have come back to us, verbal and written, detailing the experiences of those who have passed on. The verbal are by trance mediums, whose utterances appear to be controlled by outside intelligences. The written from automatic writers whose script is produced in the same way. At these words the critic naturally and reasonably shies, with a "What nonsense! How can you control the statement of this medium who is consciously or unconsciously pretending to inspiration?" This is a healthy scepticism, and should animate every experimenter who tests a new medium. The proofs must lie in the communication itself. If they are not present, then, as always, we must accept natural rather than unknown explanations. But they are continually present, and in such obvious forms that no one can deny them. There is a certain professional medium to whom I have sent many mothers who were in need of consolation. I always ask the applicants to report the result to me, and I have their letters of surprise and gratitude before me as I write. "Thank you for this beautiful and interesting experience. She did not make a single mistake about their names, and everything she said was correct." In this case there was a rift between husband and wife before death, but

the medium was able, unaided, to explain and clear up the whole matter, mentioning the correct circumstances, and names of everyone concerned, and showing the reasons for the non-arrival of certain letters, which had been the cause of the misunderstanding. The next case was also one of husband and wife, but it is the husband who is the survivor. He says: "It was a most successful sitting. Among other things, I addressed a remark in Danish to my wife (who is a Danish girl), and the answer came back in English without the least hesitation." The next case was again of a man who had lost a very dear male friend. "I have had the most wonderful results with Mrs.— today. I cannot tell you the joy it has been to me. Many grateful thanks for your help." The next one says: "Mrs.— was simply wonderful. If only more people knew, what agony they would be spared." In this case the wife got in touch with the husband, and the medium mentioned correctly five dead relatives who were in his company. The next is a case of mother and son. "I saw Mrs.— today, and obtained very wonderful results. She told me nearly everything quite correctly – a very few mistakes." The next is similar. "We were quite successful. My boy even reminded me of something that only he and I knew." Says another: "My boy reminded me of the day when he sowed turnip seed upon the lawn. Only he could have known of this." These are fair samples of the letters, of which I hold a large number. They are from people who present themselves from among the millions living in London, or the provinces, and about whose affair the medium had no possible normal way of knowing. Of all the very numerous cases which I have sent to this medium I have only had a few which have been complete failures. On quoting my results to Sir Oliver Lodge, he remarked that his own experience with another medium had been almost identical. It is no exaggeration to say that our British telephone systems would probably give a larger proportion of useless calls. How is any critic to get beyond these facts save by ignoring or misrepresenting them? Healthy scepticism is the basis of all accurate observation, but there comes a time when incredulity means either culpable ignorance or else imbecility, and this time has been long past in the matter of spirit intercourse.

In my own case, this medium mentioned correctly the first name of a lady who had died in our house, gave several very characteristic messages from her, described the only two dogs which we have ever kept, and ended by saying that a young officer was holding up a gold coin by which I would recognise him. I had lost my brother-in-law, an army doctor, in the war, and I had given him a spade guinea for his first fee, which he always wore on his chain. There were not more than two or three close relatives who knew about this incident, so that the test was a particularly good one. She made no incorrect statements, though some

were vague. After I had revealed the identity of this medium several pressmen attempted to have test séances with her – a test séance being, in most cases, a séance which begins by breaking every psychic condition and making success most improbable. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Ulyss Rogers, had very fair result. Another sent from “Truth” had complete failure. It must be understood that these powers do not work from the medium, but through the medium, and that the forces in the beyond have not the least sympathy with a smart young pressman in search of clever copy, while they have a very different feeling to a bereaved mother who prays with all her broken heart that some assurance may be given her that the child of her love is not gone from her for ever. When this fact is mastered, and it is understood that “Stand and deliver” methods only excite gentle derision on the other side, we shall find some more intelligent manner of putting things of the spirit to the proof.*

I have dwelt upon these results, which could be matched by other mediums, to show that we have solid and certain reasons to say that the verbal reports are not from the mediums themselves. Readers of Arthur Hill’s *Psychical Investigations* will find many even more convincing cases. So in the written communications, I have in a previous paper pointed to the *Gate of Remembrance* case, but there is a great mass of material which proves that, in spite of mistakes and failures, there really is a channel of communication, fitful and evasive sometimes, but entirely beyond coincidence or fraud. These, then, are the usual means by which we receive psychic messages, though table tilting, ouija boards, glasses upon a smooth surface, or anything which can be moved by the vital animal-magnetic force already discussed will equally serve the purpose. Often information is conveyed orally or by writing which could not have been known to anyone concerned. Mr. Wilkinson has given details of the case where his dead son drew attention to the fact that a curio (a coin bent by a bullet) had been overlooked among his effects. Sir William Barrett has narrated how a young officer sent a message leaving a pearl tie-pin to a friend. No one knew that such a pin existed, but it was found among his things. The death of Sir Hugh Lane was given at a private séance in Dublin before the details of the *Lusitania* disaster had been published.* On that morning we ourselves, in a small séance, got the message “It is terrible, terrible, and will greatly affect the war,” at a time when we were convinced that no great loss of life could have occurred. Such examples are very numerous, and are only quoted here to show how impossible it is to invoke telepathy as the origin of such messages. There is only one explanation which covers the facts. They are what they say they are, messages from those who have passed on, from the spiritual body which was seen to rise from the deathbed, which has been so often photographed,

which pervades all religion in every age, and which has been able, under proper circumstances, to materialise back into a temporary solidity so that it could walk and talk like a mortal, whether in Jerusalem two thousand years ago, or in the laboratory of Mr. Crookes, in Mornington Road, London.

Let us for a moment examine the facts in this Crookes' episode. A small book exists which describes them, though it is not as accessible as it should be.⁹ In these wonderful experiments, which extended over several years, Miss Florrie Cook, who was a young lady of from 16 to 18 years of age, was repeatedly confined in Prof. Crookes' study, the door being locked on the inside. Here she lay unconscious upon a couch. The spectators assembled in the laboratory, which was separated by a curtained opening from the study. After a short interval, through this opening there emerged a lady who was in all ways different from Miss Cook. She gave her earth name as Katie King, and she proclaimed herself to be a materialised spirit, whose mission it was "to carry the knowledge of immortality to mortals".

She was of great beauty of face, figure, and manner. She was four and a half inches taller than Miss Cook, fair, whereas the latter was dark, and as different from her as one woman could be from another. Her pulse rate was markedly slower. She became for the time entirely one of the company, walking about, addressing each person present, and taking delight in the children. She made no objection to photography or any other test.¹⁰ Forty-eight photographs of different degrees of excellence were made of her. She was seen at the same time as the medium on several occasions. Finally she departed, saying that her mission was over and that she had other work to do. When she vanished materialism should have vanished also, if mankind had taken adequate notice of the facts.

Now, what can the fair-minded inquirer say to such a story as that – one of many, but for the moment we are concentrating upon it? Was Mr. Crookes a blasphemous liar? But there were very many witnesses, as many sometimes as eight at a single sitting. And there are the photographs which include Miss Cook and show that the two women were quite different. Was he honestly mistaken? But that is inconceivable. Read the original narrative and see if you can find any solution save that it is true. If a man can read that sober, cautious statement and not be convinced, then assuredly his brain is out of gear.¹¹

Finally, ask yourself whether any religious manifestation in the world has had anything like the absolute proof which lies in this one. Cannot the orthodox see that instead of combating such a story, or talking nonsense about devils, they should hail that which is indeed the final answer to that materialism which is their really dangerous enemy. Even as

I write, my eye falls upon a letter on my desk from an officer who had lost all faith in immortality and become an absolute materialist. "I came to dread my return home, for I cannot stand hypocrisy, and I knew well my attitude would cause some members of my family deep grief. Your book has now brought me untold comfort, and I can face the future cheerfully." Are these fruits from the Devil's tree, you timid orthodox critic?

Having then got in touch with our dead, we proceed, naturally, to ask them how it is with them, and under what conditions they exist. It is a very vital question, since what has befallen them yesterday will surely befall us tomorrow. But the answer is tidings of great joy. Of the new vital message to humanity nothing is more important than that. It rolls away all those horrible man-bred fears and fancies, founded upon morbid imaginations and the wild phrases of the oriental. We come upon what is sane, what is moderate, what is reasonable, what is consistent with gradual evolution and with the benevolence of God. Were there ever any conscious blasphemers upon earth who have insulted the Deity so deeply as those extremists, be they Calvinist, Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Jew, who pictured with their distorted minds an implacable torturer as the Ruler of the Universe!

The truth of what is told us as to the life beyond can in its very nature never be absolutely established. It is far nearer to complete proof, however, than any religious revelation which has ever preceded it. We have the fact that these accounts are mixed up with others concerning our present life which are often absolutely true. If a spirit can tell the truth about our sphere, it is difficult to suppose that he is entirely false about his own. Then, again, there is a very great similarity about such accounts, though their origin may be from people very far apart. Thus though "non-veridical," to use the modern jargon, they do conform to all our canons of evidence. A series of books which have attracted far less attention than they deserve have drawn the coming life in very close detail. These books are not found on railway bookstalls or in popular libraries, but the successive editions through which they pass show that there is a deeper public which gets what it wants in spite of artificial obstacles.

Looking over the list of my reading I find, besides nearly a dozen very interesting and detailed manuscript accounts, such published narratives as *Claude's Book*, purporting to come from a young British aviator; *Thy Son liveth*, from an American soldier, *Private Dowding*; *Raymond*, from a British soldier; *Do Thoughts Perish?* which contains accounts from several British soldiers and others; *I Heard a Voice*, where a well-known K.C., through the mediumship of his two young daughters, has a very full revelation of the life beyond; *After Death*, with the alleged experiences of the famous Miss Julia Ames; *The Seven Purposes*, from an

American pressman, and many others. They differ much in literary skill and are not all equally impressive, but the point which must strike any impartial mind is the general agreement of these various accounts as to the conditions of spirit life. An examination would show that some of them must have been in the press at the same time, so that they could not have each inspired the other. *Claude's Book* and *Thy Son Liveth* appeared at nearly the same time on different sides of the Atlantic, but they agree very closely. *Raymond* and *Do Thoughts Perish?* must also have been in the press together, but the scheme of things is exactly the same. Surely the agreement of witnesses must here, as in all cases, be accounted as a test of truth. They differ mainly, as it seems to me, when they deal with their own future including speculations as to reincarnation, etc., which may well be as foggy to them as it is to us, or systems of philosophy where again individual opinion is apparent.

Of all these accounts the one which is most deserving of study is *Raymond*. This is so because it has been compiled from several famous mediums working independently of each other, and has been checked and chronicled by a man who is not only one of the foremost scientists of the world, and probably the leading intellectual force in Europe, but one who has also had a unique experience of the precautions necessary for the observation of psychic phenomena. The bright and sweet nature of the young soldier upon the other side, and his eagerness to tell of his experience is also a factor which will appeal to those who are already satisfied as to the truth of the communications. For all these reasons it is a most important document – indeed it would be no exaggeration to say that it is one of the most important in recent literature. It is, as I believe, an authentic account of the life in the beyond, and it is often more interesting from its sidelights and reservations than for its actual assertions, though the latter bear the stamp of absolute frankness and sincerity. The compilation is in some ways faulty. Sir Oliver has not always the art of writing so as to be understood of the people, and his deeper and more weighty thoughts get in the way of the clear utterances of his son. Then again, in his anxiety to be absolutely accurate, Sir Oliver has reproduced the fact that sometimes Raymond is speaking direct, and sometimes the control is reporting what Raymond is saying, so that the same paragraph may turn several times from the first person to the third in a manner which must be utterly unintelligible to those who are not versed in the subject. Sir Oliver will, I am sure, not be offended if I say that, having satisfied his conscience by the present edition, he should now leave it for reference, and put forth a new one which should contain nothing but the words of Raymond and his spirit friends. Such a book, published at a low price, would, I think, have an amazing effect, and get all this new teaching to the

spot that God has marked for it – the minds and hearts of the people.

So much has been said here about mediumship that perhaps it would be well to consider this curious condition a little more closely. The question of mediumship, what it is and how it acts, is one of the most mysterious in the whole range of science. It is a common objection to say if our dead are there why should we only hear of them through people by no means remarkable for moral or mental gifts, who are often paid for their ministration. It is a plausible argument, and yet when we receive a telegram from a brother in Australia we do not say: "It is strange that Tom should not communicate with me direct, but that the presence of that half-educated fellow in the telegraph office should be necessary." The medium is in truth a mere passive machine, clerk and telegraph in one. Nothing comes *from* him. Every message is *through* him. Why he or she should have the power more than anyone else is a very interesting problem. This power may best be defined as the capacity for allowing the bodily powers, physical or mental, to be used by an outside influence. In its higher forms there is temporary extinction of personality and the substitution of some other controlling spirit. At such times the medium may entirely lose consciousness, or he may retain it and be aware of some external experience which has been enjoyed by his own entity while his bodily house has been filled by the temporary tenant. Or the medium may retain consciousness, and with eyes and ears attuned to a higher key than the normal man can attain, he may see and hear what is beyond our senses.¹² Or in writing mediumship, a motor centre of the brain regulating the nerves and muscles of the arm may be controlled while all else seems to be normal. Or it may take the more material form of the exudation of a strange white evanescent dough-like substance called the ectoplasm, which has been frequently photographed by scientific enquirers in different stages of its evolution, and which seems to possess an inherent quality of shaping itself into parts or the whole of a body, beginning in a putty-like mould and ending in a resemblance to perfect human members. Or the ectoplasm, which seems to be an emanation of the medium to the extent that whatever it may weigh is so much subtracted from his substance, may be used as projections or rods which can convey objects or lift weights. A friend, in whose judgment and veracity I have absolute confidence, was present at one of Dr. Crawford's experiments with Kathleen Goligher, who is, it may be remarked, an unpaid medium. My friend touched the column of force, and found it could be felt by the hand though invisible to the eye. It is clear that we are in touch with some entirely new form both of matter and of energy. We know little of the properties of this extraordinary substance save that in its materializing form it seems extremely sensitive to the action of light. A figure built up

in it and detached from the medium dissolves in light quicker than a snow image under a tropical sun, so that two successive flash-light photographs would show the one a perfect figure, and the next an amorphous mass. When still attached to the medium the ectoplasm flies back with great force on exposure to light, and, in spite of the laughter of the scoffers, there is none the less good evidence that several mediums have been badly injured by the recoil after a light has suddenly been struck by some amateur detective. Professor Geley has, in his recent experiments, described the ectoplasm as appearing outside the black dress of his medium as if a hoar frost had descended upon her, then coalescing into a continuous sheet of white substance, and oozing down until it formed a sort of apron in front of her.* This process he has illustrated by a very complete series of photographs.

These are a few of the properties of mediumship. There are also the beautiful phenomena of the production of lights, and the rarer, but for evidential purposes even more valuable, manifestations of spirit photography. The fact that the photograph does not correspond in many cases with any which existed in life, must surely silence the scoffer, though there is a class of bigoted sceptic who would still be sneering if an Archangel alighted in Trafalgar Square. Mr.Hope and Mrs.Buxton, of Crewe, have brought this phase of mediumship to great perfection, though others have powers in that direction. Indeed, in some cases it is difficult to say who the medium may have been, for in one collective family group which was taken in the ordinary way, and was sent me by a master in a well known public school, the young son who died has appeared in the plate seated between his two little brothers.

As to the personality of mediums, they have seemed to me to be very average specimens of the community, neither markedly better nor markedly worse. I know many, and I have never met anything in the least like "Sludge," a poem which Browning might be excused for writing in some crisis of domestic disagreement, but which it was inexcusable to republish since it is admitted to be a concoction, and the exposure described to have been imaginary. The critic often uses the term medium as if it necessarily meant a professional, whereas every investigator has found some of his best results among amateurs. In the two finest séances I ever attended, the psychic, in each case a man of moderate means, was resolutely determined never directly or indirectly to profit by his gift, though it entailed very exhausting physical conditions. I have not heard of a clergyman of any denomination who has attained such a pitch of altruism – nor is it reasonable to expect it. As to professional mediums, Mr.Vout Peters, one of the most famous, is a diligent collector of old books and an authority upon the Elizabethan drama; while Mr.Dickinson,

another very remarkable discerner of spirits, who named twenty-four correctly during two meetings held on the same day, is employed in loading canal barges. This man is one of the most gifted clairvoyants in England, though Tom Tyrrell the weaver, Aaron Wilkinson, and others are very marvellous. Tyrrell, who is a man of the Anthony of Padua type, a walking saint, beloved of animals and children, is a figure who might have stepped out of some legend of the Church. Thomas, the powerful physical medium, is a working coal miner. Most mediums take their responsibilities very seriously and view their work in a religious light. There is no denying that they are exposed to very particular temptations, for the gift is, as I have explained elsewhere, an intermittent one, and to admit its temporary absence, and so discourage one's clients, needs greater moral principle than all men possess. Another temptation to which several great mediums have succumbed is that of drink. This comes about in a very natural way, for overworking the power leaves them in a state of physical prostration, and the stimulus of alcohol affords a welcome relief, and may tend at last to become a custom and finally a curse. Alcoholism always weakens the moral sense, so that these degenerate mediums yield themselves more readily to fraud, with the result that several who had deservedly won honoured names and met all hostile criticism have, in their later years, been detected in the most contemptible tricks.¹³ It is a thousand pities that it should be so, but if the Court of Archives were to give up its secrets, it would be found that tipping and moral degeneration were by no means confined to psychics. At the same time, a psychic is so peculiarly sensitive that I think he or she would always be well advised to be a life long abstainer – as many actually are.

As to the method by which they attain their results they have, when in the trance state, no recollection. In the case of normal clairvoyants and clairaudients, the information comes in different ways. Sometimes it is no more than a strong mental impression which gives a name or an address. Sometimes they say that they see it written up before them. Sometimes the spirit figures seem to call it to them. "They yell it at me," said one. We need more first-hand accounts of these matters before we can formulate laws.

It has been stated in a previous book by the author,¹⁴ but it will bear repetition, that the use of the séance should, in his opinion, be carefully regulated as well as reverently conducted. Having once satisfied himself of the absolute existence of the unseen world, and of its proximity to our own, the inquirer has got the great gift which psychical investigation can give him, and thenceforth he can regulate his life upon the lines which the teaching from beyond has shown to be the best. There is much force in the criticism that too constant intercourse with the affairs

of another world may distract our attention and weaken our powers in dealing with our obvious duties in this one. A séance, with the object of satisfying curiosity or of rousing interest, cannot be an elevating influence, and the mere sensation-monger can make this holy and wonderful thing as base as the over-indulgence in a stimulant. On the other hand, where the séance is used for the purpose of satisfying ourselves as to the condition of those whom we have lost, or of giving comfort to others who crave for a word from beyond, then it is, indeed, a blessed gift from God to be used with moderation and with thankfulness. Our loved ones have their own pleasant tasks in their new surroundings, and though they assure us that they love to clasp the hands which we stretch out to them, we should still have some hesitation in intruding to an unreasonable extent upon the routine of their lives.

A word should be said as to that fear of fiends and evil spirits which appears to have so much weight with some of the critics of this subject. When one looks more closely at this emotion it seems somewhat selfish and cowardly. These creatures are in truth our own backward brothers, bound for the same ultimate destination as ourselves, but retarded by causes for which our earth conditions may have been partly responsible. Our pity and sympathy should go out to them, and if they do indeed manifest at a séance, the proper Christian attitude is, as it seems to me, that we should reason with them and pray for them in order to help them upon their difficult way. Those who have treated them in this way have found a very marked difference in the subsequent communications. In Admiral Usborne Moore's *Glimpses of the Next State* there will be found some records of an American circle which devoted itself entirely to missionary work of this sort. There is some reason to believe that there are forms of imperfect development which can be helped more by earthly than by purely spiritual influences, for the reason, perhaps, that they are closer to the material.

In a recent case I was called in to endeavour to check a very noisy entity which frequented an old house in which there were strong reasons to believe that crime had been committed, and also that the criminal was earth-bound. Names were given by the unhappy spirit which proved to be correct, and a cupboard was described, which was duly found, though it had never before been suspected. On getting into touch with the spirit I endeavoured to reason with it and to explain how selfish it was to cause misery to others in order to satisfy any feelings of revenge which it might have carried over from earth life. We then prayed for its welfare, exhorted it to rise higher, and received a very solemn assurance, tilted out at the table, that it would mend its ways. I have very gratifying reports that it has done so, and that all is now quiet in the old house.

Let us now consider the life in the Beyond as it is shown to us by the new revelation.

* * *

Chapter IV

THE COMING WORLD

We come first to the messages which tell us of the life beyond the grave, sent by those who are actually living it. I have already insisted upon the fact that they have three weighty claims to our belief. The one is, that they are accompanied by “signs,” in the Biblical sense, in the shape of “miracles” or phenomena. The second is, that in many cases they are accompanied by assertions about this life of ours which prove to be correct, and which are beyond the possible knowledge of the medium after every deduction has been made for telepathy or for unconscious memory. The third is, that they have a remarkable, though not a complete, similarity from whatever source they come. It may be noted that the differences of opinion become most marked when they deal with their own future, which may well be a matter of speculation to them as to us. Thus, upon the question of reincarnation there is a distinct cleavage, and though I am myself of opinion that the general evidence is against this oriental doctrine, it is none the less an undeniable fact that it has been maintained by some messages which appear in other ways to be authentic, and, therefore, it is necessary to keep one’s mind open on the subject.¹⁵

Before entering upon the substance of the messages I should wish to emphasize the second of these three points, so as to reinforce the reader’s confidence in the authenticity of these assertions. To this end I will give a detailed example, with names almost exact. The medium was Mr. Phoenix, of Glasgow, with whom I have myself had some remarkable experiences. The sitter was Mr. Ernest Oaten, the President of the Northern Spiritual Union, a man of the utmost veracity and precision of statement. The dialogue, which came by the direct voice, a trumpet acting as megaphone, ran like this:

The Voice: Good evening, Mr. Oaten.

Mr. O.: Good evening. Who are you?

The Voice: My name is Mill. You know my father.

Mr. O.: No, I don’t remember anyone of the name.

The Voice: Yes, you were speaking to him the other day.

Mr. O.: To be sure. I remember now. I only met him casually.

The Voice: I want you to give him a message from me.

Mr. O.: What is it?

The Voice: Tell him that he was not mistaken at midnight on Tuesday last.

Mr.O.: Very good. I will say so. Have you passed long?
 The Voice: Some time. But our time is different from yours.
 Mr.O.: What were you?
 The Voice: A Surgeon.
 Mr.O.: How did you pass?
 The Voice: Blown up in a battleship during the war.
 Mr.O.: Anything more?

The answer was the Gipsy song from *Il Trovatore*, very accurately whistled, and then a quick-step. After the latter, the voice said: "That is a test for father."

This reproduction of conversation is not quite verbatim, but gives the condensed essence. Mr.Oaten at once visited Mr.Mill, who was not a Spiritualist, and found that every detail was correct. Young Mill had lost his life as narrated. Mr.Mill, senior, explained that while sitting in his study at midnight on the date named he had heard the Gipsy song from *Il Trovatore*, which had been a favourite of his boy's, and being unable to trace the origin of the music, had finally thought that it was a freak of his imagination. The test connected with the quick-step had reference to a tune which the young man used to play upon the piccolo, but which was so rapid that he never could get it right, for which he was chaffed by the family.

I tell this story at length to make the reader realise that when young Mill, and others like him, give such proofs of accuracy, which we can test for ourselves, we are bound to take their assertions very seriously when they deal with the life they are actually leading, though in their very nature we can only check their accounts by comparison with others.

Now let me epitomize what these assertions are. They say that they are exceedingly happy, and that they do not wish to return. They are among the friends whom they had loved and lost, who meet them when they die and continue their careers together. They are very busy on all forms of congenial work. The world in which they find themselves is very much like that which they have quitted, but everything keyed to a higher octave. As in a higher octave the rhythm is the same, and the relation of notes to each other the same, but the total effect different, so it is here. Every earthly thing has its equivalent. Scoffers have guffawed over alcohol and tobacco, but if all things are reproduced it would be a flaw if these were not reproduced also. That they should be abused, as they are here, would, indeed, be evil tidings, but nothing of the sort has been said, and in the much discussed passage in *Raymond*, their production was alluded to as though it were an unusual, and in a way a humorous, instance of the resources of the beyond. I wonder how many of the preachers, who

have taken advantage of this passage in order to attack the whole new revelation, have remembered that the only other message which ever associated alcohol with the life beyond is that of Christ Himself, when He said: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

This matter is a detail, however, and it is always dangerous to discuss details in a subject which is so enormous, so dimly seen. As the wisest woman I have known remarked to me: "Things may well be surprising over there, for if we had been told the facts of this life before we entered it, we should never have believed it." In its larger issues this happy life to come consists in the development of those gifts which we possess. There is action for the man of action, intellectual work for the thinker, artistic, literary, dramatic and religious for those whose God-given power lie that way. What we have both in brain and character we carry over with us. No man is too old to learn, for what he learns he keeps. There is no physical side to love and no child-birth, though there is close union between those married people who really love each other, and, generally, there is deep sympathetic friendship and comradeship between the sexes. Every man or woman finds a soul mate sooner or later. The child grows up to the normal, so that the mother who lost a babe of two years old, and dies herself twenty years later finds a grown-up daughter of twenty-two awaiting her coming. Age, which is produced chiefly by the mechanical presence of lime in our arteries, disappears, and the individual reverts to the full normal growth and appearance of completed man- or womanhood. Let no woman mourn her lost beauty, and no man his lost strength or weakening brain. It all awaits them once more upon the other side. Nor is any deformity or bodily weakness there, for all is normal and at its best.

Before leaving this section of the subject, I should say a few more words upon the evidence as it affects the etheric body. This body is a perfect thing. This is a matter of consequence in these days when so many of our heroes have been mutilated in the wars. One cannot mutilate the etheric body, and it remains always intact. The first words uttered by a returning spirit in the recent experience of Dr. Abraham Wallace were "I have got my left arm again." The same applies to all birth marks, deformities, blindness, and other imperfections. None of them are permanent, and all will vanish in that happier life that awaits us. Such is the teaching from the beyond - that a perfect body waits for each.

"But," says the critic, "what then of the clairvoyant descriptions, or the visions where the aged father is seen, clad in the old-fashioned garments of another age, or the grandmother with crinoline and chignon? Are these the habiliments of heaven?" Such visions are not spirits, but they

are pictures which are built up before us or shot by spirits into our brains or those of the seer for the purposes of recognition. Hence the grey hair and hence the ancient garb. When a real spirit is indeed seen it comes in another form to this, where the flowing robe, such as has always been traditionally ascribed to the angels, is a vital thing which, by its very colour and texture, proclaims the spiritual condition of the wearer, and is probably a condensation of that aura which surrounds us upon earth.

It is a world of sympathy. Only those who have this tie foregather. The sullen husband, the flighty wife, is no longer there to plague the innocent spouse. All is sweet and peaceful. It is the long rest cure after the nerve strain of life, and before new experiences in the future. The circumstances are homely and familiar. Happy circles live in pleasant homesteads with every amenity of beauty and of music. Beautiful gardens, lovely flowers, green woods, pleasant lakes, domestic pets – all of these things are fully described in the messages of the pioneer travellers who have at last got news back to those who loiter in the old dingy home. There are no poor and no rich. The craftsman may still pursue his craft, but he does it for the joy of his work. Each serves the community as best he can, while from above come higher ministers of grace, the “Angels” of holy writ, to direct and help. Above all, shedding down His atmosphere upon all, broods that great Christ spirit, the very soul of reason, of justice, and of sympathetic understanding, who has the earth sphere, with all its circles, under His very special care. It is a place of joy and laughter. There are games and sports of all sorts, though none which cause pain to lower life. Food and drink in the grosser sense do not exist, but there seem to be pleasures of taste, and this distinction causes some confusion in the messages upon the point. But above all, brain, energy, character, driving power, if exerted for good, makes a man a leader there as here, while unselfishness, patience and spirituality there, as here, qualify the soul for the higher places, which have often been won by those very tribulations down here which seem so purposeless and so cruel, and are in truth our chances of spiritual quickening and promotion, without which life would have been barren and without profit.

The revelation abolishes the idea of a grotesque hell and of a fantastic heaven, while it substitutes the conception of a gradual rise in the scale of existence without any monstrous change which would turn us in an instant from man to angel or devil. The system, though different from previous ideas, does not, as it seems to me, run counter in any radical fashion to the old beliefs. In ancient maps it was usual for the cartographer to mark blank spaces for the unexplored regions with some such legend as “here are anthropophagi,” or “here are mandrakes,” scrawled across them. So in our theology there have been ill-defined areas which have admittedly

been left unfilled, for what sane man has ever believed in such a heaven as is depicted in our hymn books, a land of musical idleness and barren monotonous adoration! Thus in furnishing a clearer conception this new system has nothing to supplant. It paints upon a blank sheet.

One may well ask, however, granting that there is evidence for such a life and such a world as has been described, what about those who have not merited such a destination? What do the messages from beyond say about these? And here one cannot be too definite, for there is no use exchanging one dogma for another. One can but give the general purport of such information as has been vouchsafed to us. It is natural that, those with whom we come in contact are those whom we may truly call the blessed, for if the thing be approached in a reverent and religious spirit it is those whom we should naturally attract. That there are many less fortunate than themselves is evident from their own constant allusions to that regenerating and elevating missionary work which is among their own functions. They descend apparently and help others to gain that degree of spirituality which fits them for this upper sphere, as a higher student might descend to a lower class in order to bring forward a backward pupil. Such a conception gives point to Christ's remark that there was more joy in heaven over saving one sinner than over ninety-nine just, for if He had spoken of an earthly sinner he would surely have had to become just in this life and so ceased to be a sinner before he had reached Paradise. It would apply very exactly, however, to a sinner rescued from a lower sphere and brought to a higher one.

When we view sin in the light of modern science, with the tenderness of the modern conscience and with a sense of justice and proportion, it ceases to be that monstrous cloud which darkened the whole vision of the mediaeval theologian. Man has been more harsh with himself than an all-merciful God will ever be. It is true that with all deductions there remains a great residuum which means want of individual effort, conscious weakness of will, and culpable failure of character when the sinner, like Horace, sees and applauds the higher while he follows the lower. But when, on the other hand, one has made allowances – and can our human allowance be as generous as God's? – for the sins which are the inevitable product of early environment, for the sins which are due to hereditary and inborn taint, and to the sins which are due to clear physical causes, then the total of active sin is greatly reduced. Could one, for example, imagine that Providence, all-wise and all-merciful, as every creed proclaims, could punish the unfortunate wretch who hatches criminal thoughts behind the slanting brows of a criminal head? A doctor has but to glance at the cranium to predicate the crime. In its worst forms all crime, from Nero to Jack the Ripper, is the product of absolute lunacy,

and those gross national sins to which allusion has been made seem to point to collective national insanity. Surely, then, there is hope that no very terrible inferno is needed to further punish those who have been so afflicted upon earth. Some of our dead have remarked that nothing has surprised them so much as to find who have been chosen for honour, and certainly, without in any way condoning sin, one could well imagine that the man whose organic makeup predisposed him with irresistible force in that direction should, in justice, receive condolence and sympathy. Possibly such a sinner, if he had not sinned so deeply as he might have done, stands higher than the man who was born good, and remained so, but was no better at the end of his life. The one has made some progress and the other has not. But the commonest failing, the one which fills the spiritual hospitals of the other world, and is a temporary bar to the normal happiness of the after-life, is the sin of Tomlinson in Kipling's poem, the commonest of all sins in respectable British circles, the sin of conventionality, of want of conscious effort and development, of a sluggish spirituality, fatted over by a complacent mind and by the comforts of life. It is the man who is satisfied, the man who refers his salvation to some church or higher power without steady travail of his own soul, who is in deadly danger. All Churches are good, Christian or non-Christian, so long as they promote the actual spirit life of the individual, but all are noxious the instant that they allow him to think that by any form of ceremony, or by any fashion of creed, he obtains the least advantage over his neighbour, or can in any way dispense with that personal effort which is the only road to the higher places.

This is, of course, as applicable to believers in Spiritualism as to any other belief. If it does not show in practice then it is vain. One can get through this life very comfortably following without question in some procession with a venerable leader. But one does not die in a procession. One dies alone. And it is then that one has alone to accept the level gained by the work of life.

And what is the punishment of the undeveloped soul? It is that it should be placed where it *will* develop, and sorrow would seem always to be the forcing ground of souls. That surely is our own experience in life where the insufferably complacent and unsympathetic person softens and mellows into beauty of character and charity of thought, when tried long enough and high enough in the fires of life. The Bible has talked about the "Outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." The influence of the Bible has sometimes been an evil one through our own habit of reading a book of Oriental poetry and treating it as literally as if it were Occidental prose. When an Eastern describes a herd of a thousand camels he talks of camels which are more numerous than the hairs of your

head or the stars in the sky. In this spirit of allowance for Eastern expression, one must approach those lurid and terrible descriptions which have darkened the lives of so many imaginative children and sent so many earnest adults into asylums. From all that we learn there are indeed places of outer darkness, but dim as these uncomfortable waiting-rooms may be, they all admit to heaven in the end. That is the final destination of the human race, and it would indeed be a reproach to the Almighty if it were not so. We cannot dogmatize upon this subject of the penal spheres, and yet we have very clear teaching that they are there and that the no-man's-land which separates us from the normal heaven, that third heaven to which St. Paul seems to have been wafted in one short strange experience of his lifetime, is a place which corresponds with the Astral plane of the mystics and with the "outer darkness" of the Bible. Here linger those earth-bound spirits whose worldly interests have clogged them and weighed them down, until every spiritual impulse had vanished; the man whose life has been centred on money, on worldly ambition, or on sensual indulgence. The one-idea'd man will surely be there, if his one idea was not a spiritual one. Nor is it necessary that he should be an evil man, if dear old brother John of Glastonbury, who loved the great Abbey so that he could never detach himself from it, is to be classed among earth-bound spirits. In the most material and pronounced classes of these are the ghosts who impinge very closely upon matter and have been seen so often by those who have no strong psychic sense. It is probable, from what we know of the material laws which govern such matter, that a ghost could never manifest itself if it were alone, that the substance for the manifestation is drawn from the spectator, and that the coldness, raising of hair, and other symptoms of which he complains are caused largely by the sudden drain upon his own vitality. This, however, is to wander into speculation, and far from that correlation of psychic knowledge with religion, which has been the aim of these chapters.

By one of those strange coincidences, which seem to me sometimes to be more than coincidences, I had reached this point in my explanation of the difficult question of the intermediate state, and was myself desiring further enlightenment, when an old book reached me through the post, sent by someone whom I have never met, and in it is the following passage, written by an automatic writer, and in existence since 1880. It makes the matter plain, endorsing what has been said and adding new points.

"Some cannot advance further than the borderland – such as never thought of spirit life and have lived entirely for the earth, its cares and pleasures – even clever men and women, who have lived simply intellectual lives without spirituality. There are many who have misused their opportunities, and are now longing for the time misspent and wishing

to recall the earth-life. They will learn that on this side the time can be redeemed, though at much cost. The borderland has many among the restless money-getters of earth, who still haunt the places where they had their hopes and joys. These are often the longest to remain... many are not unhappy. They feel the relief to be sufficient to be without their earth bodies. All pass through the borderland, but some hardly perceive it. It is so immediate, and there is no resting there for them. They pass on at once to the refreshment place of which we tell you." The anonymous author, after recording this spirit message, mentions the interesting fact that there is a Christian inscription in the Catacombs¹⁶ which runs: NICEFORUS ANIMA DULCIS IN REFRIGERIO, "Nicephorus, a sweet soul in the refreshment place." One more scrap of evidence that the early Christian scheme of things was very like that of the modern psychic.

So much for the borderland, the intermediate condition. The present Christian dogma has no name for it, unless it be that nebulous limbo which is occasionally mentioned, and is usually defined as the place where the souls of the just who died before Christ were detained. The idea of crossing a space before reaching a permanent state on the other side is common to many religions, and took the allegorical form of a river with a ferry-boat among the Romans and Greeks. Continually, one comes on points which make one realise that far back in the world's history there has been a true revelation, which has been blurred and twisted in time. Thus in Dr. Muir's summary of the *Rigveda*, he says, epitomizing the beliefs of the first Aryan conquerors of India: "Before, however, the unborn part" (that is, the etheric body) "can complete its course to the third heaven it has to traverse a vast gulf of darkness, leaving behind on earth all that is evil, and proceeding by the paths the fathers trod, the spirit soars to the realms of eternal light, recovers there his body in a glorified form, and obtains from God a delectable abode and enters upon a more perfect life, which is crowned with the fulfilment of all desires, is passed in the presence of the Gods and employed in the fulfilment of their pleasure." If we substitute "angels" for "Gods" we must admit that the new revelation from modern spirit sources has much in common with the belief of our Aryan fathers.

Such, in very condensed form, is the world which is revealed to us by these wonderful messages from the beyond. Is it an unreasonable vision? Is it in any way opposed to just principles? Is it not rather so reasonable that having got the clue we could now see that, given any life at all, this is exactly the line upon which we should expect to move? Nature and evolution are averse from sudden disconnected developments. If human being has technical, literary, musical, or other tendencies, they are an essential part of his character, and to survive without them would be to lose his identity and to become an entirely different man. They must

therefore survive death if personality is to be maintained. But it is no use their surviving unless they can find means of expression, and means of expression seem to require certain material agents, and also a discriminating audience. So also the sense of modesty among civilised races has become part of our very selves, and implies some covering of our forms if personality is to continue. Our desires and sympathies would prompt us to live with those we love, which implies something in the nature of a house, while the human need for mental rest and privacy would predicate the existence of separate rooms. Thus, merely starting from the basis of the continuity of personality one might, even without the revelation from the beyond, have built up some such system by the use of pure reason and deduction.

So far as the existence of this land of happiness goes, it would seem to have been more fully proved than any other religious conception within our knowledge.

It may very reasonably be asked, how far this precise description of life beyond the grave is my own conception, and how far it has been accepted by the greater minds who have studied this subject? I would answer, that it is my own conclusion as gathered from a very large amount of existing testimony, and that in its main lines it has for many years been accepted by those great numbers of silent active workers all over the world, who look upon this matter from a strictly religious point of view. I think that the evidence amply justifies us in this belief. On the other hand, those who have approached this subject with cold and cautious scientific brains, endowed, in many cases, with the strongest prejudices against dogmatic creeds and with very natural fears about the possible re-growth of theological quarrels, have in most cases stopped short of a complete acceptance, declaring that there can be no positive proof upon such matters, and that we may deceive ourselves either by a reflection of our own thoughts or by receiving the impressions of the medium. Professor Zöllner, for example, says:

“Science can make no use of the substance of intellectual revelations, but must be guided by observed facts and by the conclusions logically and mathematically uniting them” – a passage which is quoted with approval by Professor Reichel, and would seem to be endorsed by the silence concerning the religious side of the question which is observed by most of our great scientific supporters. It is a point of view which can well be understood, and yet, closely examined, it would appear to be a species of enlarged materialism. To admit, as these observers do, that spirits do return, that they give every proof of being the actual friends whom we have lost, and yet to turn a deaf ear to the messages which they send would seem to be pushing caution to the verge of unreason. To get so far,

and yet not to go further, is impossible as a permanent position. If, for example, in Raymond's case we find so many allusions to the small details of his home upon earth, which prove to be surprisingly correct, is it reasonable to put a blue pencil through all he says of the home which he actually inhabits? Long before I had convinced my mind of the truth of things which appeared so grotesque and incredible, I had a long account sent by table tilting about the conditions of life beyond. The details seemed to me impossible and I set them aside, and yet they harmonize, as I now discover, with other revelations. So, too, with the automatic script of Mr. Hubert Wales, which has been described in my previous book. He had tossed it aside into a drawer as being unworthy of serious consideration, and yet it also proved to be in harmony. In neither of these cases was telepathy or the prepossession of the medium a possible explanation. On the whole, I am inclined to think that these doubtful or dissentient scientific men, having their own weighty studies to attend to, have confined their reading and thought to the more objective side of the question, and are not aware of the vast amount of concurrent evidence which appears to give us an exact picture of the life beyond. They despise documents which cannot be proved, and they do not, in my opinion, sufficiently realise that a general agreement of testimony, and the already established character of a witness, are themselves arguments for truth. Some complicate the question by predicating the existence of a fourth dimension in that world, but the term is an absurdity, as are all terms which find no corresponding impression in the human brain. We have mysteries enough to solve without gratuitously introducing fresh ones. When solid passes through solid, it is, surely, simpler to assume that it is done by a dematerialisation, and subsequent reassembly – a process which can, at least, be imagined by the human mind – than to invoke an explanation which itself needs to be explained.

In the next and final chapter I will ask the reader to accompany me in an examination of the New Testament by the light of this psychic knowledge, and to judge how far it makes clear and reasonable much which was obscure and confused.

* * *

Chapter V

IS IT THE SECOND DAWN?

There are many incidents in the New Testament which might be taken as starting points in tracing a close analogy between the phenomenal events which are associated with the early days of Christianity, and those which have perplexed the world in connection with modern Spiritualism. Most of us are prepared to admit that the lasting claims of Christianity upon the human race are due to its own intrinsic teachings, which are quite independent of those wonders which can only have had a use in startling the solid complacency of an unspiritual race, and so directing their attention violently to this new system of thought. Exactly the same may be said of the new revelation. The exhibitions of a force which is beyond human experience and human guidance is but a method of calling attention. To repeat a simile which has been used elsewhere, it is the humble telephone bell which heralds the all-important message. In the case of Christ, the Sermon on the Mount was more than many miracles. In the case of this new development, the messages from beyond are more than any phenomena. A vulgar mind might make Christ's story seem vulgar, if it insisted upon loaves of bread and the bodies of fish. So, also, a vulgar mind may make psychic religion vulgar by insisting upon moving furniture or tambourines in the air. In each case they are crude signs of power, and the essence of the matter lies upon higher planes.

It is stated in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that they, the Christian leaders, were all "with one accord" in one place. "With one accord" expresses admirably those sympathetic conditions which have always been found, in psychic circles, to be conducive of the best results, and which are so persistently ignored by a certain class of investigators. Then there came "a mighty rushing wind," and afterwards "there appeared cloven tongues like unto fire and it sat upon each of them." Here is a very definite and clear account of a remarkable sequence of phenomena. Now, let us compare with this the result which were obtained by Professor Crookes in his investigation in 1873, after he had taken every possible precaution against fraud which his experience, as an accurate observer and experimenter, could suggest. He says in his published notes: "I have seen luminous points of light darting about, sitting on the heads of different persons" and then again: "These movements, and, indeed, I may say the same of every class of phenomena, are generally preceded by a peculiar cold air, sometimes amounting to a decided wind. I have had sheets of paper blown about by it..."

Now, is it not singular, not merely that the phenomena should be of the same order, but that they should come in exactly the same sequence, the wind first and the lights afterwards? In our ignorance of etheric physics, an ignorance which is now slowly clearing, one can only say that there is some indication here of a general law which links those two episodes together in spite of the nineteen centuries which divide them. A little later, it is stated that "the place was shaken where they were assembled together." Many modern observers of psychic phenomena have testified to vibration of the walls of an apartment, as if a heavy lorry were passing. It is, evidently, to such experiences that Paul alludes when he says: "Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power." The preacher of the New Revelation can most truly say the same words. In connection with the signs of the pentecost, I can most truly say that I have myself experienced them all, the cold sudden wind, the lambent misty flames, all under the mediumship of Mr. Phoenix, an amateur psychic of Glasgow. The fifteen sitters were of one accord upon that occasion, and, by a coincidence, it was in an upper room, at the very top of the house.

In a previous section of this essay, I have remarked that no philosophical explanation of these phenomena, known as spiritual, could be conceived which did not show that all, however different in their working, came from the same central source. St. Paul seems to state this in so many words when he says: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Could our modern speculation, forced upon us by the facts, be more tersely stated? He has just enumerated the various gifts, and we find them very close to those of which we have experience. There is first "the word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge" and "faith." All these taken in connection with the Spirit would seem to mean the higher communications from the other side. Then comes healing, which is still practised in certain conditions by a highly virile medium, who has the power of discharging strength, losing just as much as the weakling gains, as instanced by Christ when He said: "Who has touched me? Much virtue" (or power) "has gone out of me." Then we come upon the working at miracles, which we should call the production of phenomena, and which would cover many different types, such as apports, where objects are brought from a distance, levitation of objects or of the human frame into the air, the production of lights and other wonders. Then comes prophecy, which is a real and yet a fitful and often delusive form of mediumship – never so delusive as among the early Christians, who seem all to have mistaken the approaching fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, which they could dimly see, as being the end of the world. This mistake is repeated so often and so clearly that it is really not honest to ignore or deny it. Then we come to the

power of “discerning the spirits,” which corresponds to our clairvoyance, and finally that curious and usually useless gift of tongues, which is also a modern phenomenon. I can remember that some time ago I read the book, *I Heard a Voice*, by an eminent barrister, in which he describes how his young daughter began to write Greek fluently with all the complex accents in their correct places. Just after I read it I received a letter from a no less famous physician, who asked my opinion about one of his children who had written a considerable amount of script in mediaeval French. These two recent cases are beyond all doubt, but I have not had convincing evidence of the case where some unintelligible signs drawn by an unlettered man were pronounced by an expert to be in the Ogham or early Celtic character. As the Ogham script is really a combination of straight lines, the latter case may be taken with considerable reserve.

Thus the phenomena associated with the rise of Christianity and those which have appeared during the present spiritual ferment are very analogous. In examining the gift of the disciples, as mentioned by Matthew and Mark, the only additional point is the raising of the dead. If any of them besides their great leader did in truth rise to this height of power, where life was actually extinct, then he, undoubtedly, far transcended anything which is recorded of modern mediumship. It is clear, however, that such a power must have been very rare, since it would otherwise have been used to revive the bodies of their own martyrs, which does not seem to have been attempted. For Christ the power is clearly admitted, and there are little touches in the description of how it was exercised by Him which are extremely convincing to a psychic student. In the account of how He raised Lazarus from the grave after he had been four days dead – far the most wonderful of all Christ’s miracles – it is recorded that as He went down to the graveside. He was “groaning.” Why was He groaning? No Biblical student seems to have given a satisfactory reason. But anyone who has heard a medium groaning before any great manifestation of power will read into this passage just that touch of practical knowledge, which will convince him of its truth. The miracle, I may add, is none the less wonderful or beyond our human powers, because it was wrought by an extension of natural law, differing only in degree with that which we can ourselves test and even do.

Although our modern manifestations have never attained the power mentioned in the Biblical records, they present some features which are not related in the New Testament. Clairaudience, that is the hearing of a spirit voice, is common to both, but the direct voice, that is the hearing of a voice which all can discern with their material ears, is a well-authenticated phenomenon now which is more rarely mentioned of old. So, too, Spirit-photography, where the camera records what the human eye

cannot see, is necessarily a new testimony. Nothing is evidence to those who do not examine evidence, but I can attest most solemnly that I personally know of several cases where the image upon the plate after death has not only been unmistakable, but also has differed entirely from any preexisting photograph.

As to the methods by which the early Christians communicated with the spirits, or with the "Saints" as they called their dead brethren, we have, so far as I know, no record, though the words of John: "Brothers, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God," show very clearly that spirit communion was a familiar idea, and also that they were plagued, as we are, by the intrusion of unwelcome spiritual elements in their intercourse. Some have conjectured that the "Angel of the Church," who is alluded to in terms which suggest that he was a human being, was really a medium sanctified to the use of that particular congregation. As we have early indications of bishops, deacons and other officials, it is difficult to say what else the "angel" could have been. This, however, must remain a pure speculation.

Another speculation which is, perhaps, rather more fruitful is upon what principle did Christ select his twelve chief followers. Out of all the multitudes He chose twelve men. Why these particular ones? It was not for their intelligence or learning, for Peter and John, who were among the most prominent, are expressly described as "unlearned and ignorant men." It was not for their virtue, for one of them proved to be a great villain, and all of them deserted their Master in His need. It was not for their belief, for there were great numbers of believers. And yet it is clear that they were chosen on some principle of selection since they were called in ones and in twos. In at least two cases they were pairs of brothers, as though some family gift or peculiarity, might underlie the choice.

Is it not at least possible that this gift was psychic power, and that Christ, as the greatest exponent who has ever appeared upon earth of that power, desired to surround Himself with others who possessed it to a lesser degree? This He would do for two reasons. The first is that a psychic circle is a great source of strength to one who is himself psychic, as is shown continually in our own experience, where, with a sympathetic and helpful surrounding, an atmosphere is created where all the powers are drawn out. How sensitive Christ was to such an atmosphere is shown by the remark of the Evangelist, that when He visited His own native town, where the townspeople could not take Him seriously, He was unable to do any wonders. The second reason may have been that He desired them to act as His deputies, either during his lifetime or after His death, and that for this reason some natural psychic powers were necessary.

The close connection which appears to exist between the Apostles

and the miracles, has been worked out in an interesting fashion by Dr. Abraham Wallace, in his little pamphlet *Jesus of Nazareth*.^{*} Certainly, no miracle or wonder working, save that of exorcism, is recorded in any of the Evangelists until after the time when Christ began to assemble His circle. Of this circle the three who would appear to have been the most psychic were Peter and the two fellow-fishermen, sons of Zebedee, John and James. These were the three who were summoned when an ideal atmosphere was needed. It will be remembered that when the daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead it was in the presence, and possibly, with the co-operation, of these three assistants. Again, in the case of the Transfiguration, it is impossible to read the account of that wonderful manifestation without being reminded at every turn of one's own spiritual experiences. Here, again, the points are admirably made in *Jesus of Nazareth*, and it would be well if that little book, with its scholarly tone, its breadth of treatment and its psychic knowledge, was in the hands of every Biblical student. Dr. Wallace points out that the place, the summit of a hill, was the ideal one for such a manifestation, in its pure air and freedom from interruption; that the drowsy state of the Apostles is paralleled by the members of any circle who are contributing psychic power; that the transfiguring of the face and the shining raiment are known phenomena; above all, that the erection of three altars is meaningless, but that the alternate reading, the erection of three booths or cabinets, one for the medium and one for each materialized form, would absolutely fulfil the most perfect conditions for getting results. This explanation of Wallace's is a remarkable example of a modern brain, with modern knowledge, throwing a clear searchlight across all the centuries and illuminating an incident which has always been obscure.

When we translate Bible language into the terms of modern psychic religion the correspondence becomes evident. It does not take much alteration. Thus for "Lo, a miracle!" we say "This is a manifestation." "The angel of the Lord" becomes "a high spirit." Where we talked of "a voice from heaven," we say "the direct voice." "His eyes were opened and he saw a vision" means "he became clairvoyant." It is only the occultist who can possibly understand the Scriptures as being a real exact record of events.

There are many other small points which seem to bring the story of Christ and of the Apostles into very close touch with modern psychic research, and greatly support the close accuracy of some of the New Testament narrative. One which appeals to me greatly is the action of Christ when He was asked a question which called for a sudden decision, namely the fate of the woman who had been taken in sin. What did He do? The very last thing that one would have expected or invented. He stooped

down before answering and wrote with his finger in the sand. This he did a second time upon a second catch-question being addressed to Him. Can any theologian give a reason for such an action? I hazard the opinion that among the many forms of mediumship which were possessed in the highest form by Christ, was the power of automatic writing, by which He summoned those great forces which were under His control to supply Him with the answer. Granting, as I freely do, that Christ was preternatural, in the sense that He was above and beyond ordinary humanity in His attributes, one may still inquire how far these powers were contained always within His human body, or how far He referred back to spiritual reserves beyond it. When He spoke merely from His human body He was certainly open to error, like the rest of us, for it is recorded how He questioned the woman of Samaria about her husband, to which she replied that she had no husband. In the case of the woman taken in sin, one can only explain His action by the supposition that He opened a channel instantly for the knowledge and wisdom which was preter-human, and which at once gave a decision in favour of large-minded charity.

It is interesting to observe the effect which these phenomena, or the report of them, produced upon the orthodox Jews of those days. The greater part obviously discredited them, otherwise they could not have failed to become followers, or at the least to have regarded such a wonder-worker with respect and admiration. One can well imagine how they shook their bearded head, declared that such occurrences were outside their own experience, and possibly pointed to the local conjuror who earned a few not over-clean denarii by imitating the phenomena. There were others, however, who could not possibly deny, because they either saw or met with witnesses who had seen. These declared roundly that the whole thing was of the devil, drawing from Christ one of those pithy, common-sense arguments in which He excelled. The same two classes of opponents, the scoffers and the diabolists, face us today. Verily the old world goes round and so do the events upon its surface.

There is one line of thought which may be indicated in the hope that it will find development from the minds and pens of those who have studied most deeply the possibilities of psychic power. It is at least possible, though I admit that under modern conditions it has not been clearly proved, that a medium of great power can charge another with his own force, just as a magnet when rubbed upon a piece of inert steel can turn it also into a magnet. One of the best attested powers of D.D.Home was that he could take burning coals from the fire with impunity and carry them in his hand. He could then – and this comes nearer to the point at issue – place them on the head of anyone who was fearless without their being burned. Spectators have described how the silver filigree of the hair

of Mr. Carter Hall used to be gathered over the glowing ember, and Mrs. Hall has mentioned how she combed out the ashes afterwards. Now, in this case, Home was clearly, able to convey, a power to another person, just as Christ, when He was levitated over the lake, was able to convey the same power to Peter, so long as Peter's faith held firm. The question then arises if Home concentrated all his force upon transferring such a power how long would that power last? The experiment was never tried, but it would have borne very directly upon this argument. For, granting that the power can be transferred, then it is very clear how the Christ circle was able to send forth seventy disciples who were endowed with miraculous functions. It is clear also why new disciples had to return to Jerusalem to be "baptised of the spirit," to use their phrase, before setting forth upon their wanderings. And when in turn they desired to send forth representatives would not they lay hands upon them, make passes over them and endeavour to magnetize them in the same way – if that word may express the process? Have we here the meaning of the laying on of hands by the bishop at ordination, a ceremony to which vast importance is still attached, but which may well be the survival of something really vital, the bestowal of the thaumaturgic power? When, at last, through lapse of time or neglect of fresh cultivation, the power ran out, the empty formula may have been carried on, without either the blessing or the blessed understanding what it was that the hands of the bishop, and the force which streamed from them, were meant to bestow. The very words "laying on of hands" would seem to suggest something different from a mere benediction.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to show the reader that it is possible to put forward a view of Christ's life which would be in strict accord with the most modern psychic knowledge, and which, far from supplanting Christianity, would show the surprising accuracy of some of the details handed down to us, and would support the novel conclusion that those very miracles, which have been the stumbling block to so many truthful, earnest minds, may finally offer some very cogent arguments for the truth of the whole narrative. Is this then a line of thought which merits the wholesale condemnations and anathemas hurled at it by those who profess to speak in the name of religion? At the same time, though we bring support to the New Testament, it would, indeed, be a misconception if these, or any such remarks, were quoted as sustaining its literal accuracy – an idea from which so much harm has come in the past. It would, indeed, be a good, though an unattainable thing, that a really honest and open-minded attempt should be made to weed out from that record the obvious forgeries and interpolations which disfigure it, and lessen the value of those parts which are really above suspicion.

Is it necessary, for example, to be told, as an inspired fact from Christ's own lips, that Zacharias, the son of Barachias,* was struck dead within the precincts of the Temple in the time of Christ, when, by a curious chance, Josephus has independently narrated the incident as having occurred during the siege of Jerusalem, thirty-seven years later?¹⁷ This makes it very clear that this particular Gospel, in its present form, was written after that event, and that the writer fitted into it at least one other incident which had struck his imagination. Unfortunately, a revision by general agreement would be the greatest of all miracles, for two of the very first texts to go would be those which refer to the "Church," an institution and an idea utterly unfamiliar in the days of Christ. Since the object of the insertion of these texts is perfectly clear, there can be no doubt that they are forgeries, but as the whole system of the Papacy rests upon one of them, they are likely to survive for a long time to come. The text alluded to is made further impossible because it is based upon the supposition that Christ and His fishermen conversed together in Latin or Greek, even to the extent of making puns in that language. Surely the want of moral courage and intellectual honesty among Christians will seem as strange to our descendants as it appears marvellous to us that the great thinkers of old could have believed, or at least have pretended to believe, in the fighting sexual deities of Mount Olympus.

Revision is, indeed, needed, and as I have already pleaded, a change of emphasis is also needed, in order to get the grand Christian conception back into the current of reason and progress. The orthodox who, whether from humble faith or some other cause, do not look deeply into such matters, can hardly conceive the stumbling-blocks which are littered about before the feet of their more critical brethren. What is easy, for faith is impossible for reflection. Such expression as "saved by the blood of the Lamb" or "baptized by His precious blood" fill their souls with a gentle and sweet emotion, while upon a more thoughtful mind they have a very different effect.

Apart from the apparent injustice of vicarious atonement, the student is well aware that the whole of this sanguinary metaphor is drawn really from the Pagan rites of Mithra, where the neophyte was actually placed under a bull at the ceremony of the *taurobolium*, and was drenched, through a grating, with the blood of the slaughtered animal. Such reminiscences of the more brutal side of Paganism are not helpful to the thoughtful and sensitive modern mind. But what is always fresh and always useful and always beautiful, is the memory of the sweet Spirit who wandered on the hillsides at Galilee; who gathered the children around him; who met his friends in innocent good-fellowship; who shrank from forms and ceremonies, craving always for the inner meaning; who forgave

the sinner; who championed the poor, and who in every decision threw his weight upon the side of charity and breadth of view. When to this character you add those wondrous psychic powers already analyzed, you do, indeed, find a supreme character in the world's history who obviously stands nearer to the Highest than any other. When one compares the general effect of His teaching with that of the more rigid Churches, one marvels how in their dogmatism, their insistence upon forms, their exclusiveness, their pomp and their intolerance, they could have got so far away from the example of their Master, so that as one looks upon Him and them, one feels that there is absolute deep antagonism and that one cannot speak of the Church and Christ, but only of the Church or Christ.

And yet every Church produces beautiful souls, though it may be debated whether "produces" or "contains" is the truthful word. We have but to fall back upon our own personal experience if we have lived long and mixed much with our fellow-men. I have myself lived during the seven most impressionable years of my life among Jesuits, the most maligned of all ecclesiastical orders, and I have found them honourable and good men, in all ways estimable outside the narrowness which limits the world to Mother Church. They were athletes, scholars, and gentlemen, nor can I ever remember any examples of that casuistry with which they are reproached. Some of my best friends have been among the parochial clergy of the Church of England, men of sweet and saintly character, whose pecuniary straits were often a scandal and a reproach to the half-hearted folk who accepted their spiritual guidance. I have known, also, splendid men among the Nonconformist clergy, who have often been the champions of liberty, though their views upon that subject have sometimes seemed to contract when one ventured upon their own domain of thought. Each creed has brought out men who were an honour to the human race, and Manning or Shrewsbury, Gordon or Dolling, Booth or Stopford Brooke, are all equally admirable, however diverse the roots from which they grow. Among the great mass of the people, too, there are very many thousands of beautiful souls who have been brought up on the old-fashioned lines, and who never heard of spiritual communion or any other of those matters which have been discussed in these essays, and yet have reached a condition of pure spirituality such as all of us may envy. Who does not know the maiden aunt, the widowed mother, the mellowed elderly man, who live upon the hilltops of unselfishness, shedding kindly thoughts and deeds around them, but with their simple faith deeply rooted in anything or everything which has come to them in a hereditary fashion with the sanction of some particular authority? I had an aunt who was such an one, and can see her now, worn with austerity and charity, a small, humble figure, creeping to church at all hours from a house which was to

her but a waiting-room between services, while she looked at me with sad, wondering, grey eyes. Such people have often reached by instinct, and in spite of dogma, heights, to which no system of philosophy can ever raise us.

But making full allowance for the high products of every creed, which may be only a proof of the innate goodness of civilised humanity, it is still beyond all doubt that Christianity has broken down, and that this breakdown has been brought home to everyone by the terrible catastrophe which has befallen the world.¹⁸ Can the most optimistic apologist contend that this is a satisfactory outcome from a religion which has had the unopposed run of Europe for so many centuries? Which has come out of it worst, the Lutheran Prussian, the Catholic Bavarian, or the peoples who have been nurtured by the Greek Church? If we, of the West, have done better, is it not rather an older and higher civilization and freer political institution that have held us back from all the cruelties, excesses and immoralities which have taken the world back to the dark ages? It will not do to say that they have occurred in spite of Christianity, and that Christianity is, therefore, not to blame. It is true that Christ's teaching is not to blame, for it is often spoiled in the transmission. But Christianity has taken over control of the morals of Europe, and should have the compelling force which would ensure that those morals would not go to pieces upon the first strain. It is on this point that Christianity must be judged, and the judgment can only be that it has failed. It has not been an active controlling force upon the minds of men. And why? It can only be because there is something essential which is wanting. Men do not take it seriously. Men do not believe in it. Lip service is the only service in innumerable cases, and even lip service grows fainter.

Men, as distinct from women, have, both in the higher and lower classes of life, ceased, in the greater number of cases, to show a living interest in religion. The Churches lose their grip upon the people – and lose it rapidly. Small inner circles, convocations, committees, assemblies, meet and debate and pass resolutions of an ever narrower character. But the people go their way and religion is dead, save in so far as intellectual culture and good taste can take its place. But when religion is dead, materialism becomes active, and what active materialism may produce has been seen in Germany.

Is it not time, then, for the religious bodies to discourage their own bigots and sectarians, and to seriously consider, if only for self-preservation, how they can get into line once more with that general level of human thought which is now so far in front of them? I say that they can do more than get level – they can lead. But to do so they must, on the one hand, have the firm courage to cut away from their own bodies all that

dead tissue which is but a disfigurement and an encumbrance. They must face difficulties of reason, and adapt themselves to the demands of the human intelligence which rejects, and is right in rejecting, much which they offer. Finally, they must gather fresh strength by drawing in all the new truth and all the new power which are afforded by this new wave of inspiration which has been sent into the world by God, and which the human race, deluded and bemused by the would-be clever, has received with such perverse and obstinate incredulity. When they have done all this, they will find not only that they are leading the world with an obvious right to the leadership, but, in addition, that they have come round once more to the very teaching of that Master whom they have so long misrepresented.

* * *

APPENDICES

A

DOCTOR GELEY'S EXPERIMENTS

Nothing could be imagined more fantastic and grotesque than the results of the recent experiments of Professor Geley, in France. Before such results the brain, even of the trained psychical student, is dazed, while that of the orthodox man of science, who has given no heed to these developments, is absolutely helpless. In the account of the proceedings which he read lately before the Institut General Psychologique in Paris, on January of last year, Dr. Geley says: "I do not merely say that there has been no fraud; I say, 'there has been no possibility of fraud.' In nearly every case the materialisations were done under my eyes, and I have observed their whole genesis and development." He adds that, in the course of the experiments, more than a hundred experts, mostly doctors, checked the results.

These results may be briefly stated thus. A peculiar whitish matter exuded from the subject, a girl named Eva, coming partly through her skin, partly from her hands, partly from the orifices of her face, especially her mouth. This was photographed repeatedly at every stage of its production, these photographs being appended to the printed treatise. This stuff, solid enough to enable one to touch and to photograph, has been called the ectoplasm. It is a new order of matter, and it is clearly derived from the subject herself, absorbing into her system once more at the end of the experiment. It exudes in such quantities as to entirely cover her sometimes as with an apron. It is soft and glutinous to the touch, but varies in form and even in colour. Its production causes pain and groans from the subject, and any violence towards it would appear also to affect her. A sudden flash of light, as in a flash-photograph, may or may not cause a retraction of the ectoplasm, but always causes a spasm of the subject. When re-absorbed, it leaves no trace upon the garments through which it has passed.

This is wonderful enough, but far more fantastic is what has still to be told. The most marked property of this ectoplasm, very fully illustrated in the photographs, is that it sets or curdles into the shapes of human members – of fingers, of hands, of faces, which are at first quite sketchy and rudimentary, but rapidly coalesce and develop until they are undistinguishable from those of living beings. Is not this the very strangest and most inexplicable thing that has ever yet been observed by human eyes? These faces or limbs are usually the size of life, but they frequently

are quite miniatures. Occasionally they begin by being miniatures, and grow into full size. On their first appearance in the ectoplasm the limb is only on one plane of matter, a mere flat appearance, which rapidly rounds itself off, until it has assumed all three planes and is complete. It may be a mere simulacrum, like a wax hand, or it may be endowed with full power of grasping another hand, with every articulation in perfect working order.

The faces which are produced in this amazing way are worthy of study. They do not appear to have represented anyone who has ever been known in life by Doctor Geley.* My impression after examining them is that they are much more likely to be within the knowledge of the subject, being girls of the French lower middle class type, such as Eva was, I should imagine, in the habit of meeting. It should be added that Eva herself appears in the photograph as well as the simulacra of humanity. The faces are, on the whole, both pretty and piquant, though of a rather worldly and unrefined type. The latter adjective would not apply to the larger and most elaborate photograph, which represents a very beautiful young woman of a truly spiritual cast of face. Some of the faces are but partially formed, which gives them a grotesque or repellant appearance. What are we to make of such phenomena? There is no use deluding ourselves by the idea that there may be some mistake or some deception. There is neither one nor the other. Apart from the elaborate checks upon these particular results, they correspond closely with those got by Lombroso in Italy, by Schrenck-Notzing in Germany, and by other careful observers. One thing we must bear in mind constantly in considering them, and that is their abnormality. At a liberal estimate, it is not one person in a million who possesses such powers – if a thing which is outside our volition can be described as a power. It is the mechanism of the materialisation medium which has been explored by the acute brain and untiring industry of Doctor Geley, and even presuming, as one may fairly presume, that every materializing medium goes through the same process in order to produce results, still such mediums are exceedingly rare. Dr. Geley mentions, as an analogous phenomenon on the material side, the presence of dermoid cysts, those mysterious formations, which rise as small tumors in any part of the body, particularly above the eyebrow, and which when opened by the surgeon are found to contain hair, teeth or embryonic bones. There is no doubt, as he claims, some rough analogy, but the dermoid cyst is, at least, in the same flesh and blood plane of nature as the foetus inside it, while in the ectoplasm we are dealing with an entirely new and strange development.

It is not possible to define exactly what occurs in the case of the ectoplasm, nor, on account of its vital connection with the medium and its evanescent nature, has it been separated and subjected to even the roughest

chemical analysis which might show whether it is composed of those earthly elements with which we are familiar. Is it rather some coagulation of ether which introduces an absolutely new substance into our world? Such a supposition seems most probable, for a comparison with the analogous substance examined at Dr.Crawford's séances at Belfast, which is at the same time hardly visible to the eye and yet capable of handling a weight of 150 pounds, suggests something entirely new in the way of matter.

But setting aside, as beyond the present speculation, what the exact origin and nature of the ectoplasm may be, it seems to me that there is room for a very suggestive line of thought if we make Geley's experiments the starting point, and lead it in the direction of other manifestations of psychomaterial activity. First of all, let us take Crookes' classic experiments with Katie King, a result which for a long time stood alone and isolated but now can be approached by intermittent but definite stages. Thus we can well suppose that during those long periods when Florrie Cook lay in the laboratory in the dark, periods which lasted an hour or more upon some occasions, the ectoplasm was flowing from her as from Eva. Then it was gathering itself into a viscous cloud or pillar close to her frame; then the form of Katie King was evolved from this cloud, in the manner already described, and finally the nexus was broken and the completed body advanced to present itself at the door of communication, showing a person different in every possible attribute save that of sex from the medium, and yet composed wholly or in part from elements extracted from her senseless body. So far, Geley's experiments throw a strong explanatory light upon those of Crookes. And here the Spiritualist must, as it seems to me, be prepared to meet an objection more formidable than the absurd ones of fraud or optical delusion. It is this. If the body of Katie King the spirit is derived from the body of Florrie Cook the psychic, then what assurance have we that the life therein is not really one of the personalities out of which the complex being named Florrie Cook is constructed? It is a thesis which require careful handling. It is not enough to say that the nature is manifestly superior, for supposing that Florrie Cook represented the average of a number of conflicting personalities, then a single one of these personalities might be far higher than the total effect. Without going deeply into this problem, one can but say that the spirit's own account of its own personality must count for something, and also that an isolated phenomenon must be taken in conjunction with all other psychic phenomena when we are seeking for a correct explanation.

But now let us take this idea of a human being who has the power of emitting a visible substance in which are formed faces which appear to represent distinct individualities, and in extreme cases develop into

complete independent human forms. Take this extraordinary fact, and let us see whether, by an extension or modification of this demonstrated process, we may not get some sort of clue as to the *modus operandi*¹⁹ in other psychic phenomena. It seems to me that we may, at least, obtain indications which amount to a probability, though not to a certainty, as to how some results, hitherto inexplicable, are attained. It is at any rate a provisional speculation, which may suggest a hypothesis for future observers to destroy, modify, or confirm.

The argument which I would advance is this. If a strong materialisation medium can throw out a cloud of stuff which is actually visible, may not a medium of a less pronounced type throw out a similar cloud with analogous properties which is not opaque enough to be seen by the average eye, but can make an impression both on the dry plate in the camera and on the clairvoyant faculty? If that be so – and it would not seem to be a very far-fetched proposition – we have at once an explanation both of psychic photographs and of the visions of the clairvoyant seer. When I say an explanation, I mean of its superficial method of formation, and not of the forces at work behind, which remain no less a mystery even when we accept Dr. Geley's statement that they are "ideoplastic."

Here we have, I think, some attempt at a generalisation, which might, perhaps, be useful in evolving some first signs of order out of this chaos. It is conceivable that the thinner emanation of the clairvoyant would extend far further than the thick material ectoplasm, but have the same property of moulding itself into life, though the life forms would only be visible to the clairvoyant eye. Thus, when Mr. Tom Tyrrell, or any other competent exponent, stands upon the platform his emanation fills the hall. Into this emanation, as into the visible ectoplasm in Geley's experiments, break the faces and forms of those from the other side who are attracted to the scene by their sympathy with various members of the audience. They are seen and described by Mr. Tyrrell, who with his finely attuned senses, carefully conserved (he hardly eats or drinks upon a day when he demonstrates), can hear that thinner higher voice that calls their names, their old addresses and their messages. So, too, when Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton stand with their hands joined over the cap of the camera, they are really throwing out a misty ectoplasm from which the forms loom up which appear upon the photographic plate. It may be that. I mistake an analogy for an explanation, but I put the theory on record for what it is worth.

B

A PARTICULAR INSTANCE

I have been in touch with a series of events in America lately, and can vouch for the facts as much as any man can vouch for facts which did not occur to himself. I have not the least doubt in my own mind that they are true, and a more remarkable double proof of the continuity of life has, I should think, seldom been published. A book has recently been issued by Harpers, of New York, called *The Seven Purposes*. In this book the authoress, Miss Margaret Cameron, describes how she suddenly developed the power of automatic writing. She was not a Spiritualist at the time. Her hand was controlled and she wrote a quantity of matter which was entirely outside her own knowledge or character. Upon her doubting whether her sub-conscious self might in some way be producing the writing, which was partly done by planchette, the script was written upside down and from right to left, as though the writer was seated opposite. Such script could not possibly be written by the lady herself. Upon making enquiry as to who was using her hand, the answer came in writing that it was a certain Fred Gaylord, and that his object was to get a message to his mother. The youth was unknown to Miss Cameron, but she knew the family and forwarded the message, with the result that the mother came to see her, examined the evidence, communicated with the son, and finally, returning home, buried all her evidences of mourning, feeling that the boy was no more dead in the old sense than if he were alive in a foreign country.

There is the first proof of preternatural agency, since Miss Cameron developed so much knowledge which she could not have normally acquired, using many phrases and ideas which were characteristic of the deceased. But mark the sequel. Gaylord was merely a pseudonym, as the matter was so private that the real name, which we will put as Bridger, was not disclosed. A few months after the book was published Miss Cameron received a letter from a stranger living a thousand miles away. This letter and the whole correspondence I have seen. The stranger, Mrs. Nicol, says that as a test she would like to ask whether the real name given as Fred Gaylord in the book is not Fred Bridger, as she had psychic reasons for believing so. Miss Cameron replied that it was so, and expressed her great surprise that so secret and private a matter should have been correctly stated. Mrs. Nicol then explained that she and her husband, both connected with journalism and both absolutely agnostic, had discovered that she had the power of automatic writing. That while, using this power she had received communications purporting to come from Fred Bridger whom they had known in life, and that upon reading Miss Cameron's book they had received from Fred Bridger the assurance that

he was the same person as the Fred Gaylord of Miss Cameron.

Now, arguing upon these facts, and they would appear most undoubtedly to be facts, what possible answer can the materialist or the sceptic give to the assertion that they are a double proof of the continuity of personality and the possibility of communication? Can any reasonable system of telepathy explain how Miss Cameron discovered the intimate points characteristic of young Gaylord? And then, how are we afterwards, by any possible telepathy, to explain the revelation to Mrs. Nicol of the identity of her communicant, Fred Bridger, with the Fred Gaylord who had been written of by Miss Cameron. The case for return seems to me a very convincing one, though I contend now, as ever, that it is not the return of the lost ones which is of such cogent interest as the message from the beyond which they bear with them.

C

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

On this subject I should recommend the reader to consult Coates' *Photographing the Invisible*, which states, in a thoughtful and moderate way, the evidence for this most remarkable phase, and illustrates it with many examples. It is pointed out that here, as always, fraud must be carefully guarded against, having been admitted in the case of the French spirit photographer, Buguet.

There are, however, a large number of cases where the photograph, under rigid test conditions in which fraud has been absolutely barred, has reproduced the features of the dead. Here there are limitations and restrictions which call for careful study and observation. These faces of the dead are in some cases as contoured and as recognisable as they were in life, and correspond with no pre-existing picture or photograph. One such case absolutely critic-proof is enough, one would think, to establish survival, and these valid cases are to be counted not in ones, but in hundreds. On the other hand, many of the likenesses, obtained under the same test conditions, are obviously simulacra or pictures built up by some psychic force, not necessarily by the individual spirits themselves, to represent the dead. In some undoubtedly genuine cases it is an exact, or almost exact, reproduction of an existing picture, as if the conscious intelligent force, whatever it might be, had consulted it as to the former appearance of the deceased, and had then built it up in exact accordance with the original. In such cases the spirit face may show as a flat surface instead of a contour. Rigid examination has shown that the existing model

was usually outside the ken of the photographer.

Two of the bravest champions whom Spiritualism has ever produced, the late W.T. Stead and the late Archdeacon Colley – names which will bulk large in days to come – attached great importance to spirit photography as a final and incontestable proof of survival. In his recent work, *Proofs of the Truth of Spiritualism* (Kegan Paul), the eminent botanist, Professor Henslow, has given one case which would really appear to be above criticism. He narrates how the inquirer subjected a sealed packet of plates to the Crewe circle without exposure, endeavoring to get a psychograph. Upon being asked on which plate he desired it, he said “the fifth.” Upon this plate being developed, there was found on it a copy of a passage from the Codex Alexandrinus of the New Testament in the British Museum. Reproductions, both of the original and of the copy, will be found in Professor Henslow’s book.

I have myself been to Crewe and have had results which would be amazing were it not that familiarity blunts the mind to miracles. Three marked plates brought by myself, and handled, developed and fixed by no hand but mine, gave psychic extras. In each case I saw the extra in the negative when it was still wet in the dark room. I reproduce in Plate I a specimen of the results, which is enough in itself to prove the whole case of survival to any reasonable mind. The three sitters are Mr. Oaten, Mr. Walker, and myself, I being obscured by the psychic cloud. In this cloud appears a message of welcome to me from the late Archdeacon Colley. A specimen of the Archdeacon’s own handwriting is reproduced in Plate II for the purpose of comparison. Behind, there is an attempt at materialisation obscured by the cloud. The mark on the side of the plate is my identification mark. I trust that I make it clear that no hand but mine ever touched this plate, nor did I ever lose sight of it for a second save when it was in the carrier, which was conveyed straight back to the dark room and there opened. What has any critic to say to that?

By the kindness of those fearless pioneers of the movement, Mr. and Mrs. Hewat MacKenzie, I am allowed to publish another example of spirit photography. The circumstances were very remarkable. The visit of the parents to Crewe was unproductive and their plate a blank save for their own presentment. Returning disappointed to London, they managed, through the mediumship of Mrs. Leonard, to get into touch with their boy, and asked him why they had failed. He replied that the conditions had been bad, but that he had actually succeeded some days later in getting on to the plate of lady Glenconnor, who had been to Crewe upon a similar errand. The parents communicated with this lady, who replied saying that she had found the image of a stranger upon her plate. On receiving a print they at once recognised their son, and could even see that, as a proof of

identity, he had reproduced the bullet wound on his left temple. No.3 is their gallant son as he appeared in the flesh, No.4 is his reappearance after death. The opinion of a miniature painter who had done a picture of the young soldier is worth recording as evidence of identity. The artist says: "After painting the miniature of your son Will, I feel I know every turn of his face, and am quite convinced of the likeness of the psychic photograph. All the modelling of the brow, nose and eyes is marked by illness – especially is the mouth slightly contracted – but this does not interfere with the real form. The way the hair grows on the brow and temple is noticeably like the photograph taken before he was wounded."

D

THE CLAIRVOYANCE OF MRS.B.

At the time of this volume going to press the results obtained by clients of this medium have been forty-two successes out of fifty attempts, checked and docketed by the author. This series forms a most conclusive proof of spirit clairvoyance. An attempt has been made by Mr.E.F.Benson, who examined some of the letters, to explain the results upon the grounds of telepathy. He admits that "the tastes, appearance and character of the deceased are often given, and many names are introduced by the medium, some not traceable, but most of them identical with relations or friends." Such an admission would alone banish thought-reading as an explanation, for there is no evidence in existence to show that this power ever reaches such perfection that one who possesses it could draw the image of a dead man from your brain, fit a correct name to him, and then associate him with all sorts of definite and detailed actions in which he was engaged. Such an explanation is not an explanation but a pretence. But even if one were to allow such a theory to pass, there are numerous incidents in these accounts which could not be explained in such a fashion, where unknown details have been given which were afterwards verified, and even where mistakes in thought upon the part of the sitter were corrected by the medium under spirit guidance. Personally I believe that the medium's own account of how she gets her remarkable results is the absolute truth, and I can imagine no other fashion in which they can be explained. She has, of course, her bad days, and the conditions are always worst when there is an inquisitorial rather than a religious atmosphere in the interview. This intermittent character of the results is, according to my experience, characteristic of spirit clairvoyance as compared with thought-reading, which can, in its more perfect form, become almost automatic within

certain marked limits. I may add that the constant practice of some psychical researchers to take no notice at all of the medium's own account of how he or she attains results, but to substitute some complicated and unproved explanation of their own, is as insulting as it is unreasonable. It has been alleged as a slur upon Mrs.B's results and character that she has been twice prosecuted by the police. This is, in fact, not a slur upon the medium but rather upon the law, which is in so barbarous a condition that the true seer fares no better than the impostor, and that no definite psychic principles are recognised. A medium may under such circumstances be a martyr rather than a criminal, and a conviction ceases to be a stain upon the character.

1919

The Writings about the Spiritualism

Light
2 July 1887

A TEST MESSAGE

Sir, – I believe that it has been found a useful practice among revivalists and other excitable religionists of all types, for each member to give the assembled congregation a description of the manner in which they attained the somewhat vague result known as “finding salvation.” Now among Spiritualists there is really a good deal to be said for such a practice, for the first steps of the inquirer after truth are along such a lonely and treacherous path that it must always be of interest to him to hear how some other wanderer has stumbled along it, uncertain whether he was following a fixed star or a will-o’-the-wisp, until at last his feet came upon firmer ground and he knew that all was well. To the humble inquirer, distrustful of self and fettered with the prejudices of early education, it is of no avail to speak of psychography, materialisation, or advanced phenomena. He yearns for some proof which shall be more within the range of his own personal experience and which shall be decided enough to convince his reason without being so overwhelming as to stagger and confuse it. This must be my apology, therefore, for dwelling upon the incident which, after many months of inquiry, showed me at last that it was absolutely certain that intelligence could exist apart from the body.

Some months ago I read Judge Edmonds’ *Memoirs*, and I have since read Alfred Russel Wallace’s book, Major-General Drayson’s tract, and other writings on the subject. After weighing the evidence, I could no more doubt the existence of the phenomena than I could doubt the existence of lions in Africa, though I have been to that continent and have never chanced to see one. I felt that if human evidence – regarding both the quantity and the quality of the witnesses – can prove anything, it has proved this. I then set to work to organise a circle of six, which met nine or ten times at my house. We had phenomena such as messages delivered by tilts, and even some writing under control, but there was never anything which could be said to be absolutely conclusive. That complicated machine, the human body, is capable of playing strange tricks, and what was the possibility of unconscious cerebration, of involuntary muscular action, and of the effect of a dozen heavy hands on one light table, I was never entirely satisfied. I was convinced that others had obtained the phenomena, but not that I had done so myself.

Last week I was invited by two friends to join them in a sitting with an old gentleman who was reputed to have considerable mediumistic power. It was the first time that I had ever had the opportunity of sitting

with anyone who was not a novice and inquirer like myself. I may remark here that for some days I had been debating in my mind whether I should get a copy of Leigh Hunt's *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration* – the question being whether the mental pollution arising from Messrs. Congreve, Wycherley, and Co. would be compensated for by the picture of the manners and customs of those days to be gathered from their pages, and which I had particular reasons for wishing to be well up in. I had thought the matter over, but had dismissed it from my mind a day or two before the séance. On sitting, our medium came quickly under control, and delivered a trance address, containing much interesting and elevating matter. He then became clairvoyant, describing one or two scenes which we had no opportunity of testing. So far, the meeting had been very interesting, but not above the possibility of deception. We then proposed writing. The medium took up a pencil, and after a few convulsive movements, he wrote a message to each of us. Mine ran: "This gentleman is a healer. Tell him from me not to read Leigh Hunt's book." Now, sir, I can swear that no one knew I had contemplated reading that book, and, moreover, it was no case of thought-reading, for I had never referred to the matter all day. I can only say that if I had had to devise a test message I could not have hit upon one which was so absolutely inexplicable on any hypothesis except that held by Spiritualists. The message of one of my friends, referring to his own private affairs, was as startlingly correct as mine.

Let me conclude by exhorting any other searcher never to despair of receiving personal testimony, but to persevere through any number of failures until at last conviction comes to him, as come it will. Let him deserve success by his patience and earnestness, and he will gain it. Above all, let every inquirer bear in mind that phenomena are only a means to an end, of no value at all of themselves, and simply useful as giving us assurance of an after existence for which we are to prepare by refining away our grosser animal feelings and cultivating our higher, nobler impulses. Unless a man starts with that idea the séance-room sinks to the level of the theatre or the opera – a mere idle resort for the indulgence of a foolish, purposeless curiosity. Let a man realise that the human soul, as it emerges from its bodily cocoon, shapes its destiny in exact accordance with its condition; that that condition depends upon the sum result of his actions and thoughts in this life; that every evil deed stamps itself upon the spirit and entails its own punishment with the same certainty that a man stepping out of a second floor window falls to the ground; that there is no room for deathbed repentances or other nebulous conditions which might screen the evil doer from the consequence of his own deeds, but that the law is self-acting and inexorable.¹ This, I take it, is the lesson which

Spiritualism enforces, and all phenomena are only witnesses to the truth of this central all-important fact.

Pray excuse my encroachment upon your space.

Yours faithfully,

A. Conan Doyle, M.D.

Southsea

**The Evening News, Portsmouth
20 November 1889**

MR. SHUTTE'S CRITIC

Sir, – I have read with much interest the very moderate letter of “Broad Churchman,” and the answers which it has called forth. From my own point of view he errs rather in the direction of narrowness than of breadth, but it is well that every phase of religious thought should have its champions. From the friction of many views a spark of truth may be elicited.

“A Southsea Curate’s” position appears to me to be a very untenable one. He upholds the absolute and entire inspiration of the Bible. But does he not know that there are in the Bible statements which we *know* to be untrue? Are these untruths to be put down to the Deity? The supposition is absurd. Was it He, the possessor of all knowledge, who fell into errors that a modern school child would smile at? Was it He who was the author of the statement that the world was created in six days, that the creation was some five thousand years ago, or that Joshua commanded the sun, which was never moving, to stand still?² If it was, then alas for our conceptions of the Deity. If it was not, then what becomes of the absolute inspiration of Scripture?

Winwood Reade in his *Martyrdom of Man* remarks that at the time of the Reformation men pulled down idols of stone and wax, in order to put up in their place an idol of paper and printer’s ink. Let us take the good of the Bible and make the most of it, but let us, in the name of reverence and reason, forbear from ascribing to the All-wise that which would represent Him as a magnified man, full of the petty angers, jealousies, and revenges, which we condemn in our fellow mortals. We need no book and no inspiration to tell us of His wisdom and His power. The starry heavens, where a hundred million worlds are circling above us, are enough to bring it home to us far more closely than the words of any Jewish prophet, and there is a moral sense within us which guides the agnostic as well as the Christian. The broader our views the better, for the broadest that human mind can attain to must yet be infinitely narrow when compared to that final truth which must embrace the universe, and all that dwells upon it. In

the meanwhile our best aspiration must be,

“That *nothing* walks with aimless feet,
That not *one* life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void
When God has made the pile complete.”

*Yours faithfully,
A Southsea Physician.*

P.S. – One gentleman, I observe, wants to know how modern thought is superior to that of the 16th century. One sign of progress is that a discussion of this sort may be courteously carried on without any of the disputants having the power, or, I hope, the desire, to make a bonfire of their opponents.

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

Do the dead ever revisit this earth?

On this subject even the ponderous and unsentimental Dr. Johnson was of opinion that to maintain they did not, was to oppose the concurrent and unvarying testimony of all ages and nations, as there was no people so barbarous, and none so civilized, but among whom apparitions of the dead were related and believed in. “That which is doubted by single cavillers,” he adds, “can very little weaken the general evidence, and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their *fears*.”

1895

**The Daily Express
7 August 1906**

ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (1) Sir A. Conan Doyle's Views

Sir, – It appears to me that one fallacy runs through a great deal of the correspondence about religion in your columns, and that is the postulate that any form of ritual, including the ritual of going to a large stone building for the purpose of communion with the great Unseen, has any bearing upon true religion.

The lesson which life has taught me is that it has none.

I have known most admirable people who did these practices, and I have known most wicked ones. I have known most admirable people who

did not do such things, and I have known most wicked ones. Never yet have I known a person who was good because he went to church, or evil because he did not. And yet in most of your letters such practices are taken as a test whether religion is waning or increasing. There is no relation between them.³

The true tests of progress in true religion are (1) Is there a kinder and broader view of such subjects, enabling all men of all creeds to live in amity and charity? (2) Are the criminal statistics better? (3) Are the drink returns better, showing that man is acquiring greater animal self-control (4) Are the illegitimacy returns better, showing the same thing? (5) Is there more reading, more demand for lectures, more interest in science, showing that the mind is gaining upon the body? (6) Are the savings bank returns better, showing thrift and self-denial? (7) Are the trade returns better, showing greater industry and efficiency? (8) Are there more charitable institutions, and does man show more clearly his sense of duty towards the lower animals?

Such practical tests as these, which do actually for the most part show progress, are worth more than the ritual observances which may or may not go with a good life.

There is an aggressive form of religion, calling itself Dogmatic Faith, which has done far more harm to the human race than pestilence or famine. Directly to its door must be laid, not only all the bloodstained history of Mahometanism, but all the murderous doings which have in turn disgraced every sect of Christianity.

In the name of Christ, the Apostle of Peace, this dreadful school of thought, within a few centuries of His death, brought about such quarrels and such murders as had never been heard of in pagan days. Over the Homoiousian question, a theological point depending upon a diphthong, it has been reckoned that a hundred thousand people lost their lives, champions and victims of Faith.⁴ The Crusades, the murders of the Albigenses and of the Cevennes, the Thirty Years' War, the Inquisition, the outrages of Catholics on Protestants, the no less detestable outrages of Protestants on Catholics, the persecutions of Nonconformists by the Church, the persecutions of Quakers by the Nonconformists, the manifold domestic tragedies and tyrannies, embittering the lives of countless numbers – surely when all these are considered, the reader must admit that Faith in the positive aggressive sense, has wrought more mischief than famine or pestilence.

All sects have been misled by men of the same acrid frame of mind, and have incurred the same blood-guiltiness. I only know four cults – the original Buddhists, the Quakers, the Unitarians, and the Agnostics – who can, I think, say that they have no blood on their hands. Certainly the

Atheists cannot, for their excesses in France – in the Revolution, and also in 1870⁵ – have been as bad as those of the Churches.⁶

And what has been the root cause of it all? Saying you believe what your mind cannot grasp, and what your free reason would frequently reject. *A* makes his proofless assertion and calls it his faith. *B* has the right to do the same. Then *A* and *B* hate each other with a holy hatred, and there is the epitome of the blackest chapter in the history of the world. We, who are like ship-wrecked mariners upon this little raft of a world, moving upon the face of the infinite ocean, have enough to do to live kindly among ourselves without quarrelling bitterly about that which is beyond the horizon.

Perhaps you say that even in these very words I myself show religious want of charity. But surely it is not so. If the Catholic finds the Pope, or the Anglican the bishop, or the Nonconformist the minister a help upon his path, then in every case it is a good thing – a splendid thing – if it causes that man to be a better, more noble, human creature. Every form of belief is admirable so far as it does that. But when, as in the letters of some of your correspondents, it turns to want of charity, and the reviling of those who have other methods, then it is a petty twentieth-century exhibition of that which ranks in history among the gravest and most bloodthirsty of human crimes.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Ashdown Forest Hotel, Aug. 3

**The Daily Express
11 August 1906**

**ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (2)
A Reply from Sir A. Conan Doyle**

Sir, – I had no desire to be led into the morass of a theological discussion; but in answer to Mr. Pollock's categorical question as to my view upon a series of texts, I would answer by reminding him of the words of the Founder of the Christian Faith, that it is the letter which kills, and the virtue lies in the spirit.

This insistence upon the literal meaning of texts is, in the words of Winwood Reade, "to pull down idols of wood only to replace them with idols of paper and printer's ink." They are the weapons by which theologians from the earliest days of Christianity have spread disunion and strife. Every creed can found its position upon a text, and every other

creed can find some other to controvert it.

When, for example, the Catholic founds his doctrine of transubstantiation upon the plain text, "This is my body and this is my blood," it seems that nothing could be worded more clearly. And yet the Protestant stoutly denies its validity, and insists upon a metaphorical meaning. To the Unitarian there are many texts which make it appear to him that Christ did not claim the attributes of Deity.

When we consider the origin of the gospels, their translation from language to language, and the fact that every revision has shown the text to be faulty, it is inconceivable that any absolutely hard-and-fast incontrovertible system of theology can be built from them.

But the spirit of the New Testament is clear enough, and there lies the justification of Christianity.

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Daily Express
31 August 1906**

ARE WE BECOMING LESS RELIGIOUS? (3) **Summing Up**

Sir, – I had not intended to intervene again in the interesting controversy which has occupied your columns, but so many of the controversialists have alluded to my original letter that it might seem discourteous if I took no notice of their objections.

These objections have come for the most part from clerical correspondents. In all ages any attempt at breadth of thought and at wide charity in the interpretation of the relations between man and his Maker have always met with the same clerical opposition; but history records that, though it has often retarded, it has never checked the gradual emancipation of the human reason from iron-bound ritual and dogma. We are fortunate in the present age in having, on the other hand, many clergy of all denominations who recognise that their creeds must grow more tolerant and more comprehensive lest they be left behind entirely by civilisation.

Those who know how large a proportion of the most earnest-minded and thoughtful men in this country are already outside all dogmatic creeds will admit that the contingency is not a fanciful one.

Throughout this controversy the term "religion" has been continually used where, as it seems to me, "ritual" was a more appropriate expression. Religion is the relation between any human soul and the

Creator, and is shown outwardly by the actions of the individual. All canonical observances, rituals, and dogmas are aids to the soul in its developments. So far as they do aid it they are justified. So far as they do not, but become petrified forms which prevent life and growth, they stand condemned. But always "by their fruit shall you know them," and by that standard England has enormously improved, and is, therefore, more truly religious.

What are these pious days to which so many of your correspondents allude? Are they the days drawn by Hogarth and described by Fielding? When was England ever so sober, so intelligent, so well educated, so thrifty, and so industrious as at present. As to this decay of forms and ceremonies, while some deplore it others may regard it as the sunrise of saner, better, and more charitable days. I believe that our descendants, looking back at this age, will regard it as one of darkness and superstition, but will admit that it is an advance upon the even darker ages which preceded it.

Insistence upon dogma and ritual, or "religion" in the sense in which your correspondents have misused it, must infallibly result in the human race being eternally divided into rival factions, since it is impossible to conceive that any sect will absorb all the others. It is all very well for one of your correspondents to talk about our little earthly raft having a compass given it. We know by experience that no two people can see alike how the compass is pointing. The Divine Creator has indeed given us one compass, and that is reason, the noblest of all faculties. It is reason which tells us that if each sect would abate something of its rigid doctrine, and insist upon the points which unite it with its neighbours instead of accentuating those which divide it there would be some hope for the gradual extinction of those theological differences, which have, as I hold, nothing to do with true religion, and have been the source of more bloodshed and misery than any other single cause in the world's history.

Several of your clerical correspondents term me an Agnostic. What my individual faith may be is a matter of microscopic interest to others, but since the term has been used I may say that I am not an Agnostic though I extend to that body the respect which I feel for all earnest-minded men. I am a believer in the Christian system in its simplest and least dogmatic form as being on the whole the noblest which the world has evolved, though it has been so overlaid by the bigots and the formalists that it is difficult sometimes to see the original outlines at all. It is not a shaven head, but it is wide charity in the heart which is the essence of that creed. I am a convinced Theist also, and a profound believer in the direct action of a guiding force in the affairs of this world.

Finally, I may say that I do not believe that the Divine Message to

the human race was delivered once for all two thousand years ago, but I hold that every piece of prose and verse which has in it anything which is helpful to the individual soul is in some sense a message from Beyond – a message which grows and expands as all vital things must do.

Let me end this letter by a quotation from verse of this character:

“Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee;
For Thou, oh Lord, art more than they.”

Arthur Conan Doyle

Crowborough

**The Scotsman
16 October 1900**

**DR. CONAN DOYLE AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Sir, – I have waited for the rush of the elections to pass before addressing a letter to you, and through you to the electors of the Central Division, upon the subject of the recent contest there.

It will be within the memory of those who have followed the events in that Division that upon the morning of the election three hundred posters were exhibited upon the walls, in which I was stated to be a Papist conspirator, a Jesuit emissary, and a Subverter of the Protestant Faith. These posters confronted the workmen as they went to their work in the morning, and there is no doubt that they did me considerable harm at the polls. When I say that there is not one truthful statement in the whole placard, and when I report that it vitally affected the election, it is evident that the incident was a very grave public scandal. At the last instant, when no time was left for contradiction, the electors were influenced in their voting by a statement which was both false and malicious.

My own religious beliefs are things which I should not have obtruded upon the public, but the issue has been so directly raised that I cannot avoid it. Let me state my position once for all. I am not, and never have been since my school days, a Roman Catholic. For more than twenty years my strongest convictions have been in favour of complete liberty of conscience, and I regard hard-and-fast dogma of every kind as an unjustifiable and essentially irreligious thing putting assertion in the place of reason, and giving rise to more contention, bitterness, and want of charity than any other influence in human affairs. I have hardly ever

written a book in which I have not indicated this view, and in one work, *The Stark Munro Letters* it is the main thesis of the book. When I add that the church which I attend in London is that of Mr. Voysey, in Swallow Street, it will be obvious that my religious views are broadly tolerant, founded upon a Reverent Theism, rather than upon the special teaching of any particular sect. The process of religious thought in the future, and the best one for the happiness of the human race, lies, in my opinion, in the various creeds directing their attention to those things which they have in common instead of eternally accentuating the things which hold them apart – matters of dogma and ritual which are not the essentials of Christianity.

So much about a subject to which I shall not recur. My early association with the Catholic Church leaves me with no bitterness toward that venerable institution, which contains many of the most saintly men and women whom I have ever known. My own recent experience is enough to show me the vile slanders to which they are subjected. But a man's soul and reason are his own and he must go whither they beckon. That path has in my case been an open and a straight one since I emerged from boyhood.

This being my religious position, I leave it to the judgment of your readers how unjust were the terms applied in this unscrupulous placard. I am advised by the highest authorities that under the recent Illegal Practices Prevention Act of '95, a legal remedy is within my reach. No punishment, however, which could be inflicted upon the person who is responsible for the bill could undo the harm which has been done. I prefer, therefore, to leave the facts upon record and to trust that the publicity which I give to them may prevent the recurrence of so gross a scandal.

As a last word may I once again thank my friends of the Central Division for the loyalty and energy with which they stood by me in the contest.

I am, &c.

A. Conan Doyle

Reform Club, London,
October 13, 1900

Light
11 March 1916

**WHERE IS THE SOUL
DURING UNCONSCIOUSNESS? (1)**

Sir, – I have had my attention drawn rather strongly to this point by

two instances of recent occurrence, one personal and the other in my family.

The first and slighter of the two occurred to myself. A fortnight ago I had laughing gas at the dentist's. I was taken there inside a cab, my wife and two little boys being with me. The cab drove on while I was being operated upon. While under the gas I was intensely conscious that I had returned to the moving cab, and that I could very vividly see the occupants, while well aware that they could not see me. This, of course, might be subjective entirely, but the impression was very clear.

The second incident is more convincing. My son Adrian, aged five, was grievously ill of pneumonia, and was lying half comatose with a temperature of 105°. My wife, who was nursing him, left him for a moment and went to fetch something from the nursery, two rooms away. The elder boy, Denis, was standing on a chair, and on getting down he trod upon some tin soldiers on the ground. My wife, anxious not to leave the invalid too long, hurried into the sick room. The child opened his eyes and said, "Naughty Denis, breaking my soldiers!"

He had never spoken of soldiers during five days of illness, so that the remark was beyond the reach of coincidence. Nor was it thought-transference from my wife's brain, as she is clear that she was thinking only of the invalid. I can only explain it by the supposition, which can be supported by a volume of evidence, that the soul can be, and probably is always, out of the body at such times, and that occasionally under rare conditions which we have not yet been able to define, it can convey to the body the observations which it has made during its independent flight.

Such conditions must have existed in the classic case of Sir Rider Haggard. It will be remembered that he wrote a letter to *The Times* some years ago giving the circumstances in detail. He had lost a favourite dog. In his sleep he saw it lying near a certain point of the railway. Upon searching it was actually found there. There was no particular reason why this point should have suggested itself to him, more than any other in the neighbourhood.

Another classic case is that of the Red Barn murder in the eighteenth century. In this case the mother dreamed three times that she saw the corpse of her daughter hidden in a certain loft. The loft was examined and the corpse was found. There are a great number of such cases on record. They are all readily explained on the supposition that the soul drifts out like a captive balloon, attached always by some filament which draws it back in an instant to its body. There is nothing supernatural in such a supposition. It is only the unfolding of a fresh law in a region which is still but little known. There is apparently a "switch-off" between the body life and the extra-body life. Should the switch for any reason

hang fire, then we have memory of one carried into the other.

The matter is of profound religious significance. There is, as it seems to me, something very surprising in the limited interest which the churches take in psychical research. It is a subject which cuts at the very root of their existence. It is the one way of demonstrating the independent action of soul, and therefore, to put it at the lowest, the *possibility* of its existence apart from bodily organs. If the balloon can really drift forth upon a filament and retain its own individuality, then it is no great further step to say that when the filament snaps the balloon is still self-sufficient. A fresh unfolding of knowledge – and each such unfolding is in truth a renewed divine revelation – has given us reassurances. Myers, Gurney and Hodgson are messengers of truth from the Beyond as surely as Isaiah or Amos, but, British fashion, they speak coldly and clearly with none of the passion and declamation of the East. Their message has fallen on many ears and strengthened many spirits, but it has never, as it seems to me, had the direct religious effect which one might have expected. Personally I know no single argument which is not in favour of the extinction of our individuality at death, save only the facts of psychic research. But these are so strong that they must outweigh all others, as the positive must always outweigh the negative. A hundred who have examined and tested and seen must always be more convincing than a million who disagree without investigation.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
February 28th, 1916

Light
13 May 1916

**WHERE IS THE SOUL
DURING UNCONSCIOUSNESS? (2)**

Sir, – I must write again under the above heading in order to thank the numerous correspondents who have thrown various lights upon the question which I raised. Besides the letters in *Light* I have received many private instances, and another correspondence has treated the matter in a well-known London weekly paper (*T.P.'s Weekly*). The result is a mass of definite testimony which I may elaborate into a longer article where I might have space to dissect the evidence and draw some general conclusions.

Miss Lilian Whiting and one or two other correspondents dissent from my view that the soul or spirit at such a time is floating from the body like a captive balloon on a psychic rope by which it can be drawn

instantaneously back. They prefer the view that we have a natural spirit vision which is all-embracing and is only clogged by the body. Since, however, in all the cases cited the result is definite in time and place, and since it does not include a general view of everything but only of one particular thing, I still hold that the floating forth of a sensitive organism which is limited in its perception is the presumption which comes nearest to an explanation of the facts.

The instances are so numerous, so well attested, and so utterly beyond the reach of coincidence that one marvels that any man calling himself a scientist could dismiss them as unworthy of scientific consideration. Such scientists, having formed an *a priori* conception of the universe, simply ignore the plain facts which stand in the way of their hypothesis. One marvels that minds so acute within their own limitations should be so slovenly and illogical outside of them. One cannot forget the famous dictum of Huxley after hearing or reading some inanities of a séance room. "If they are true," said he, "they interest me no more than the gossip of curates in a cathedral city." This was a man who had made his name by a careful classification of crayfish and jellies. Yet he dismissed a whole new order of beings because the particular mental phenomena which he first encountered were not up to his preconceived ideas of what they should be. It would be as reasonable for a recluse coming out into the world to abjure the whole human race because the first gutter-snipe whom he encountered made a bad impression on him. Science (so-called) denied mesmerism for a century. Then it renamed it "hypnotism" and adopted it. Some day, no doubt, it will find a new name for the various psychic phenomena which are now under discussion, and will then find itself in complete agreement.⁷

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough,
April 30th, 1916

The Daily Mail
7 February 1917

"SPOOKERY"

Sir, – Does Mr. Kipling Common show either wit or reason in heading his comments upon spiritualism in a letter to the *Daily Mail* as above?

Whatever his personal opinion may be he must be aware, if he has made the most superficial examination of the subject, that the conviction of the continuity of the individual and of the possibility of communication

has been forced upon a great many minds of the first order by a careful and prolonged study of the evidence.

Men of the highest character not only in this country but in America, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy have confirmed each other's observations, and many a materialist has for the first time received a broader philosophy of the universe by way of psychical research. Some arrive at such results by faith, but as there are many faiths summoning one in various directions, one finds it hard to know which to follow, unless one is self-complacent enough to believe that one chanced to be born in the right one.

Personally I know of no valid argument for life beyond the grave the whole analogy of Nature seems against it – save only in the experiences attained by psychical study. The calling of such study by foolish or vulgar means is not really helpful.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

**The Pall Mall Gazette
11 June 1917**

FATHER VAUGHAN AND SPIRITUALISM

Sir, – Father Vaughan should learn by the history of his own order, which has often been unjustly attacked, to be more moderate in his censures upon others.

His article in your columns upon Spiritism displays all the intolerance and the persecuting spirit of the Inquisition. "So it is that I declare we must sweep the country clear of these charlatans." In using these words he is evidently not referring to fraudulent mediums, especially as the sentence continues with a thinly veiled allusion to Sir Oliver Lodge. If Father Vaughan confined himself to fraudulent mediums he would have both the existing laws of England and all decent spiritualists upon his side, for they have always been the curse of the movement.

The whole context shows, however, that what he desires to forcibly attack is everyone who believes what few who have really studied the evidence have failed to believe – first, that the dead survive even as we knew them; secondly, that reverent communication with them is not absolutely impossible; and, thirdly, that many people have been confirmed in or converted to the belief in a future life by such experience, and have thus attained great spiritual good from it. Indeed, it may be said that the only valid answer to materialism lies in the phenomena of spiritualism.

I can assure Father Vaughan that the people who believe this are as good and earnest as he is himself, and very much more open-minded and charitable. When he talks of persecuting them for their beliefs and spring-cleaning them out of England he is using language which was sinister in the fifteenth century, but is out of place in the twentieth.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

The Daily Express
2 November 1917

THE NAKED TRUTH

Sir, – In reply to your correspondent's question, the reason why spirits wear robes is that modesty does not cease with this life. Has it ever been the custom for any of the Churches to describe the angels as nude?

Arthur Conan Doyle

Crowborough, Sussex, Oct. 31

Light
26 January 1918

THE MAINTENANCE OF *LIGHT*

Sir, – I beg to subscribe my annual donation of £10 to *Light*. Should there be a deficit I should always be ready to join with others in defraying it. Riches are no doubt enervating either for an individual or for a cause, but you are in a position, I consider, not to beg for but to demand a sufficiency, in the spirit in which St. Paul demanded the needful money for himself and his propaganda from the early Churches. You represent the most living religious cause now existing upon earth, the only conclusive answer against materialism, and to let your work languish for want of funds is unthinkable.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
January 16th, 1918

The Daily Chronicle
11 February 1918

THE CHERITON DUT-OUT

Sir, – Under the heading "Two Wartime Ghosts become Casualties" you state on the authority of Mr. Cunningham Craig that the

curious phenomena at Cheriton were due to the “emission of natural gas.” May I say that such an explanation is the height of absurdity to anyone who has weighed the evidence? We have at least seven witnesses to the levitation of heavy objects, including brick bats, chairs and crowbars, while I have myself seen the chunks which were hit out of the new brickwork by the impact of heavy missiles. It takes credulity, indeed, to believe that all this is due to the emission of natural gas.

There have been many instances recorded of the appearance of Poltergeists or mischievous spirits, the instances being in close agreement as to phenomena, so that the Cheriton occurrence is not to be looked upon as an entirely isolated fact, but rather as a confirmation of many previous instances.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex, Feb. 8

**The Journal of
the Society for Psychical Research
January 1919**

A PROPHECY

Madam, – On the morning of April 4th, 1917, I woke up with a strong feeling that information of importance had been conveyed to me in my sleep. I had a feeling also that it was of a consoling nature. I could only remember one word, however, Piave. It rang in my head. Piave! Piave! It was as though it were some keyword, and if I could retain that, I should have the essence of the message.

No doubt in my reading I must have seen the word, and on my visit to the Italian front I had actually passed over the river, but I had retained the names of none of the many streams, save only the Isonzo, upon which the war was at that time being waged. Thus Piave conveyed nothing to my mind. I was so impressed, however, that I went at once into my study and looked up the index of my Atlas. By this reference I discovered that the name was that of a river about fifty miles in the rear of the Italian front, which was at that time victoriously advancing. I could imagine few more unlikely things than that the war would be transferred to the Piave. None the less I was so impressed by my dream that I drew up a paper at once, under the date April 4, 1917, in which I stated that I knew some great event of the war would centre on the Piave. This was witnessed that morning by two witnesses. In view of my feeling of elation on waking I took it that this event would be favourable, though how a favourable event could occur fifty miles in the rear was more than I could understand.

It is a matter of history how six months later the Italian army was driven from its positions. Whilst it was in retreat I sent a sealed envelope to the S.P.R. with an account of my dream. The army crossed several points, such as the Tagliamento, where a stand seemed probable, and halted eventually upon the line of the Piave, which had been said to be untenable, since it was commanded from the left rear. They were still there in February, 1918, when I was writing my *New Revelation*. In describing the incident I said, "If nothing more should occur the reference to the name has been fully justified, presuming that some friend in the beyond was forecasting the coming events of the war. I have still a hope, however, that more was meant, and that some crowning victory of the Allies at this spot may justify still further the strange way in which the name was conveyed to my mind." This sentence appeared in print in April, 1918.

It will be recalled that it was on June 17th, 1918, that the first battle of the Piave was fought. It was not a great victory, but it was a victory, and it is noteworthy that this date marked the whole turning point of the war. Up to then the Allies had in this year sustained three severe defeats, that of the second Somme battle, the battle of the Lys, and the second Aisne battle. On June 17th their prospects were very black. From the day of the Piave battle they never looked back again, and on every front they had an uninterrupted record of victory, culminating, in the case of the Italians, in the second Piave battle, which was the most decisive in the war. Thus in conveying the name "Piave" my comforter had given me the keyname which would unlock the whole situation.

Now how could this be accounted for by coincidence? That is unthinkable. Even if my subconscious self had known there was a river called the Piave, that would not have shifted the Italian army back to it. Was it then telepathy? But no one in the world could have conjectured such a series of events. What then was it? I claim that the only possible explanation is that my friends on the other side, knowing how much I worried over the situation, were giving me comfort and knowledge. The ordinary spirit has, so far as my reading and experience taught me, only a very limited and uncertain gift of prophecy. Therefore I have some reason to hope that my information came from a high source. Why I should have been so privileged above others is the one point which is beyond my conjecture.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
November, 1918.

[The sealed letter to which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle refers above
was received by the Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research on

November 7, 1917, with a covering note asking that it should be opened only at the writer's request. This letter was opened and read on November 20, 1918. It ran as follows:

WINDLESHAM, CROWBOROUGH,
Sussex, November 4, 1917.

In the early summer of 1917 I woke from sleep with the word Piave in my head, as the culmination of some dream of which I could remember nothing. I had no remembrance of the word, but thought vaguely it was a place. The index of an atlas showed me that it was a river some distance behind the Italian front. I drew the attention of my wife and brother-in-law to it that morning, and said something would surely occur there. Afterwards the Italians advanced and Piave seemed far in the rear. Now the tide has turned, tho' I have not yet seen the line of the Piave mentioned. It is always the Tagliamento. Still it is worth chronicling and putting into neutral hands.

A. Conan Doyle

The Nation
8 February 1919

THE NEW SPIRITUALISM

Sir, – I notice that Mr.Clodd laments my inability to grasp the principles of scientific investigation. It is very deplorable, but since I err with Lodge and Wallace, Flammarion and Lombroso, Richet and James, Meyers and Crookes, I am still unabashed, even before the censure of Mr.Clodd.

As to Colonel Warren's rather crude tests, he knows perfectly well that if a script purporting to be the end of *Edwin Drood* was to appear he would be the first to reject it as spurious. As to messages from ships, if he were better read on the subject, he would know that such details have been recorded. To take the most obvious example, there is a whole book called *Has W.T.Stead returned?* by James Coates, published in 1913 by Fowler and Co., which gives various accounts of the sinking of the "Titanic" and his death by drowning. The evidence is enormous and convincing, as I can say after thirty-two years of study. What is lacking is earnestness and industry on the part of inquirers, who expect everything to be brought to them, instead of going forth to seek it.

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

Common Sense
12 July 1919

**MODERN MIRACLES – REPLY TO
JEROME K. JEROME**

Sir, – Mr. Jerome K. Jerome appeals to me to answer some questions about spiritualism, propounded in your columns. This I am happy to do, although I am bound to say that if he had read, even superficially, upon the subject he would not have needed to ask them.

1. Why is a medium bound in a physical phenomenon séance?

Because otherwise the sceptics would declare that he himself produced the results. In some cases he has been put in a locked cage for the same reason.

2. Why in the dark?

Because experience has shown that the results are better in the dark. It would be more convenient if this were not so. It would also be more convenient if photographs could be developed outside a dark room. In each case physical law is the obstacle.

3. Why a tambourine?

It is the only instrument which shows by its rattle where it is in a dark room. A luminous cross is equally good and is now occasionally used.

4. Why such puerile messages?

Death alters nothing, and we find every grade of intelligence upon the further side from a sprite to an archangel. We get what we deserve. If Mr. Jerome would come to me and examine the 120 books upon this subject which form my reference library he would find that the tone of the communications is by no means so low as he thinks. Some of them are as high as mortal brain can follow.

Mr. Jerome complains that the raps at Hydesville did not disclose something wonderful. I think that when they disclosed intelligence separated from ordinary matter they did disclose something wonderful – the most wonderful thing that our age has known. I agree that many of the manifestations seem puerile, but if one looks behind them at the force which produces them they cease to be puerile, but form the starting point of a chain of thought and experiment which is all-important. The appeal was made to a coarse-minded and materialistic generation, and it was just such crude phenomena that were needed to shake them out of their complacency. It would have seemed better to us if an archangel had appeared in Trafalgar Square, but I suppose the problem was made more

obscure so that we should have the merit of using our wits and our patience.

Mr. Jerome compares the modern miracles with those of the New Testament. They are, I think, the same. Save for the raising of the dead I cannot recall any miracle in the New Testament which has not been claimed, upon good authority, as having occurred in the experience of spiritualists.

I have myself experienced the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, and the direct voice. As to our modern miracles being funny and those of the Testament free from this taint, it all depends upon the spirit in which an incident is described. I have no doubt that if a cynical press man had told the story of the loaves and fishes or of the Gadarene swine he could have made it very funny, but that does not really dispose of the matter.⁸

I cannot cover all the ground here, but I have done so in my *New Revelation*, and would be glad to send Mr. Jerome a copy. I care nothing about proselytising, but if I could give so old a friend the joy which this knowledge brings with it I should spare no pains to do so.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Common Sense
16 August 1919

MR. JEROME AND SPIRITS

Sir, – As Mr. Jerome K. Jerome has had his second innings, perhaps you will kindly allow me to be upon equal terms with him. I note from his remarks that he is sceptical about the facts of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. But from every word of his article it is evident that he has never examined these alleged facts, and that apart from my own short epitome of the subject, which he has read in the interval between articles, he has no acquaintance with the evidence. Under these circumstances, what is his dissent worth? Clever man as he is, it is not the same weight as the opinion of the first man you meet in the street, if that man has chanced to have real knowledge of what has occurred. To put it in a definite form, has he carefully read Sir William Crookes' laboratory experiments as described by himself from 1871 to 1873? Has he read the researches of Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, set forth in two books between 1915 and 1919? Has he read Professor Geley's recent experiments, which were checked by

a hundred French scientists of various types? Has he read the work of Professor Schrenck-Notzing, the German inquirer? Has he seen the books of the famous Professor Lombroso and the record of his twenty years' work? All these works have been accompanied by photographs. Does he accuse all these distinguished scientists of faking these photographs, without the faintest personal object, and indeed with risk of incurring professional ruin? If he has not consulted these authorities then he has no right to assume so intolerant an attitude, and to jeer at those who have. If, on the other hand, he has consulted those authorities, and is still a sceptic, then his mental attitude is beyond my comprehension. It seems to me that the maddest theory ever invented by the human brain is that for seventy years a great number of people in many varying countries have all been claiming to have certain personal experiences, often seen by many at one time, and that the whole thing originates in colossal stupidity or impish mischief. Can anyone really continue to hold such a theory as that? I notice that opponents of the movement are more and more being pushed away from it, and are adopting the alternative, but contradictory ground, that such knowledge is illicit.

In quoting some small instances of abnormal happenings given in my book, Mr. Jerome entirely misrepresents them, and shows that extraordinary inaccuracy which seems inseparable from every controversialist who attacks Spiritualism. For example, in the case of the lady who wrote automatically about the terrible nature of the *Lusitania* disaster, Mr. Jerome suppresses the fact that it was at a time when we had every reason to believe that there was no loss of life. That is, of course, the whole point of the story. Again, in describing my Piave dream, he does not mention that I had never at that time consciously heard of the Piave, and that it was not within the war zone when I recorded the dream. This, again, is the whole point of the anecdote. As to the argument that three cool-headed and responsible men of the world like Lord Adair, Lord Seaton and Captain Wynne are to be disbelieved as witnesses to a fact which all three have seen – namely, the levitation of Mr. Home – because false witnesses swore away the lives of witches in the Middle Ages, I can hardly believe that Mr. Jerome would seriously uphold it. I am fairly well acquainted with the history of witchcraft, and the main characteristics of the old trials were the illiteracy and general independability of the witnesses.

Mr. Jerome is very anxious to know what is our “new religion.” I think he will find something very like it if he goes back nineteen hundred years and studies the Christianity of Christ. There he will read of those same signs and wonders which we call “phenomena,” there he will read of the discerning of spirits which we call “clairvoyance,” and there also he will read of a good deal of ridicule and misrepresentation which did not

prevent the new movement from conquering the world, even as this, its successor, is bound to do. This time, however, we must see to it that the sacred fire is not smothered by formalism and the intrusion of materialism. I agree with Mr. Jerome that we have lived to see some very terrible phases of human history. At the same time, I am convinced that anything more unselfish and noble than the conduct of the British Empire as a whole, and of Britons as individuals, during the last five years, has never been known.⁹ It is true that the present and future may not be at so high a level, but at least in the wartime the nation has risen with hardly an exception to an extraordinary point of moral grandeur. Personally, I do not at all take the view that Christ was one who would stand by and see cruelty or oppression without interference; but I prefer to believe that had He been amongst us, He would have been the first to risk a second martyrdom in the cause of justice and freedom. He would have done His part in the scourging of the Germans out of Belgium as whole-heartedly as He scourged the tradespeople out of the Temple. I cannot accept the watery, cold-blooded, unpractical reading which some have given to His character. However, I have said enough, and must not lay any greater burden upon your hospitable columns.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Evening Standard
6 November 1919**

SPIRITUALISM'S PERIL

Sir, – I understand from your columns that Mr. Magee has challenged me to produce Mr. Forbes Winslow's letter in which he disclaimed his previous views upon spiritualism, especially as regards lunacy.

I therefore enclose the essential part of the letter, written in 1912. The allegations quoted by Mr. Magee were made in 1877. The original can be seen at the office of *Two Worlds*, 18, Corporation-street, Manchester. It was written in answer to a direct question on the subject from the late J.J. Morse.

I trust that Mr. Magee will apologise, and that he will forward the address of the priest who is alleged to have offered £50 for the production of this document. We may hope that we have now heard the last of the mythical 10,000 lunatics.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

The Daily Mail
16 December 1919

WOMAN "SPIRIT" PAINTER
Sir A. Conan Doyle and Mrs. Spencer

Sir, – In the early days of this movement it was foretold by Mrs. de Morgan and others that the line of advance would be from the crude material phenomena, common in these days to the finer and more intellectual proofs which the human race would become more fitted to receive. This prophecy has, in the course of the last fifty years, been amply justified. The spirit rap, levitations, and even materialisations have become far less common. The evidence in these directions has been given, and this stage appears to be closing down. On the other hand, we have never before had such an outburst of the finer phases of spirit intervention, of spirit photography, of inspirational addresses, writings, and paintings, and very especially of that clairvoyance or "discerning of spirits" which Saint Paul counted among the most valuable of spiritual gifts.

In writing this letter my object was, however, to point out some of the more intellectual proofs of spirit intervention which may appeal to those minds which recoil from grosser manifestations, only justified by the necessities of the material age in which we live. Of written inspiration much might be said, for no philosophy that has appeared has such a literature as has grown round spiritualism. To those who imagine that the inspirational messages are of small intellectual value I would name only two recent books: *Claude's Second Book* (Methuen) and *Letters from the Other Side* (Watkins), which contain the very essence of spiritual knowledge, and, incidentally, a good deal of prophecy, in the case of the latter book, which has been literally fulfilled since the time the messages were taken. If those two books are not indeed inspired, then what are we to think of the transcendent intellectual qualities of those two ladies whose hands were used to produce the script?

It is, however, to inspirational painting which I would especially refer, because when a masterpiece is produced by one who has no technical skill, and when it is exposed for all to behold, the most sceptical must admit that there is something there beyond their ken. Some publicity has been given recently to the symbolic drawings of Mr. Charles Horsfall, and after inspecting them I am certainly of opinion that they are indeed truly inspirational in their origin and profound in their meaning.

I could, however, appreciate the position of those who have no turn for mysticism and who do not understand that there are some subjects so complex that they cannot be treated in a pictorial but only in a diagrammatic fashion.

To these people I would recommend an inspection of the head of Christ now exhibited at the Walker Gallery in New Bond street. This picture is, in my opinion, the very finest head of the Founder of Christianity that has ever been conceived, and I can well understand the action of a great painter in Paris who, when he saw the companion full-face drawing, fell instantly upon his knees.

It is, indeed, a most marvellous production, with all that inner soul which is so lacking in the old masters, whose Christs and Virgins appear to me to be very often the quaintessence of materialism and vulgarity.

Yet this wonderful work was done in a few hours by a lady who, as I am assured by her family, has no power of artistic expression when in her normal condition. It is a supreme example of the working of spiritual intelligence through a material mortal frame.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough,
Sussex, Dec. 13

The Times
30 December 1919

"A DISCLAIMER"

Sir, – In answer to the Hon. Major Victor Spencer's letter in your columns, may I disclaim having ever mentioned Mrs. Spencer's name at any time in connexion with psychic phenomena. A reference to the original published correspondence will show that it was her own family who mentioned her name, and that it was a close relation who said, "Mrs. Spencer has strong psychic power," and also asserted in one picture that it was done upside down. "When she had finished she wondered what on earth she had done. It was only on turning it upside down that a perfect head of Christ appeared." I enclose the cutting with marked passages to prove my assertion.

Major Spencer is, of course, entitled to have his own views upon psychic matters and their value, but the tide of events is, I think, against him.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough,
Sussex, Dec. 29

The Southport Visitor
22 January 1920

SPIRITUALISM AND THE CHURCH

Sir, – I observe that one of my reverend critics, who seem certainly to have inherited the spiritual gift of prophecy, since they attacked me before knowing what I would say, has repeated the ancient discredited story about American lunacy asylums being filled by Spiritualists. There is not a word of truth in this. The only statistics which I have been able to find are collected by a Dr.Eugene Crowell, who examined the asylums of New England, where Spiritualism is very common, and who found, out of 16,000 lunatics, four Spiritualists – and, I regret to say, 222 clergymen. The myth began with a statement in 1876 by the late Dr.Forbes Winslow, which he retracted in after life, when he was himself a Spiritualist. I have a copy of this retraction in my possession. As to the statements of the other clerics that irreverence is shown to God or Christ by Spiritualists, it is typical of the ignorance of the subject shown by so many of these gentlemen, whose job it is, as the Rev.Vale Owen said, to be well informed about it. True Spiritualism belongs to no creed, but it is the root fact of all religion, and can be equally professed by an Anglican, a Roman Catholic, a Nonconformist, or even a Unitarian. It is only with the materialist that no compromise can be made, for our views are diametrically opposed.

Yours etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Hotel Metropole, Blackpool,
January 20th

The Southport Visitor
12 February 1920

SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY (1)

Sir, – I must apologise for leaving Father Thurston's letter unanswered. When I wrote before, I was far from home, and had to trust to my memory. This has not entirely betrayed me, but it has confused two sets of figures, each of which is excellent for my purpose. The first set is that of Dr.Crowell, correctly quoted by Father Thurston, showing that out of 32,313 male patients 215 were clergymen, while the total male and female Spiritualists under treatment were 45. There is no reason at all to think that the word Spiritualists was confined only to mediums. This is shown by the result obtained by the *British Medical Journal* Inquiry, as

stated on February 13th, 1879. It stated "We have been at the pains to turn over a file of last year's reports of American State Asylums. In these reports appear the tables of assigned causes of insanity among the inmates, 14,550 in number. The only cases attributed to Spiritualism are four." The journal adds "We have before us the 62nd report of last year of the Commissioners of Lunacy, and not one single case due to Spiritualism is there recorded."

It should be added that there has notoriously been a great increase of Spiritualism in this country since the war began, and yet there has been a considerable drop in the lunacy statistics. The report of January 1st, 1919, showed a decrease of nearly 10 per cent. over the similar report of 1918.

Those facts have been frequently pointed out, and the excuse of ignorance when these misrepresentations are made, can not be much longer maintained.

Yours, etc.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
February 10th

**The Southport Visiter
2 March 1920**

SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY (2)

Sir, – I willingly acknowledge the moderation of Father Thurston's letter. The fact is that when the strong wine of religious emotion comes to a neurotic it matters little what sect he or she may belong to, and we may all live in glass houses in this respect. The Catholic neurotic expecting stigmata, the Puritan brooding over predestination or, if you will, the Spiritualist indulging in an excess of occult investigation, are all in that unhealthy condition which over-indulgence in any line of thought may induce. I have, however, quoted figures and authorities which have, I hope, convinced your readers that Spiritualism can stand an investigation of this sort as well, to put it at the lowest, as any other cult.¹⁰

Yours, etc.,

A. Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

**John O'London's Weekly
27 March 1920**

MRS. PIPER'S CREDIBILITY

Sir, – It is amusing to notice that so mild a phrase as “specious misrepresentation” arouses Mr.Clodd’s anger. He is himself the most ill-mannered of controversialists. Everyone opposed to him becomes at once a “hussy,” an “impostor,” or a purveyor of “nauseous drivel.” He has been known to put Dr.Crawford’s D.Sc. in quotation marks, and to add, after an allusion to Sir Oliver Lodge and myself, “Knighthoods are cheap.”¹¹ And now he squeals at a very mild rap. It is truly comic.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Two Worlds
1 October 1920**

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE’S TOUR

MY DEAR EDITOR, – Just reaching Bombay. We have had the hottest voyage on record – so I am told. It certainly was very warm in the Red Sea. I gave a lecture on our truths to the first-class passengers south of Crete, and another to the second-class in the Red Sea, and there has been, as you may think, much discussion, mostly good-humoured and intelligent. I don’t suppose there have ever been so many Spiritualists on one ship before, for the number convinced is many and the earnest enquirers even more. If I had no further experience, my journey is amply justified, for a big ship is like a seed pod, and the seeds scatter over all the world; also they are a picked lot of people. There is no lantern, but I show psychic photos at ten each morning, explaining the philosophy of it, and I generally have as many auditors as I can handle. The Parsees are particularly interested, and a good deal more intelligent than some of our home critics. I understand that they have all accepted our position. I have also Buddhists and Mahomedans in my little class. They have the phenomena as we have, but they are done as wonders by the fakirs, and have not been worked out scientifically or in a philosophical way.

Yours always,

A. Conan Doyle

September 1st

**The Daily Telegraph, Sydney
16 November 1920**

THE CHARACTER OF D.D. HOME

Sir, – My attention has only just been called to an anonymous attack (for I presume that “John Doe” is a nom-de-plume) upon the character of Mr.D.D.Home. As Home is not in this world to answer posthumous slanders, and as I happen to know something of the facts,

perhaps you will allow me the right of reply. The reason that I know something about it is that I have recently edited a new edition of Home's life, and while doing so perused all the papers I could get connected with the Lyons case. An account of it, with all the prosecutor's statement of claim and the letters of Mrs. Lyons, were published by Home himself in the second volume of his experiences, which would be a remarkable thing for a guilty man to do.

One single test will show how completely his character survived this attack upon it. Home was a man of much charm of manner. The result was that he had many friends among men of unquestionable honour and probity. Among these were Bulwer Lytton, Lord Dunraven, his son, Lord Adair, Lord Lindsay, Robert Chambers, (the publisher), Samuel Carter Bull (editor of the *Art Journal*), and so many others that I could fill a column with them. I defy your correspondent to show that one of these friends, who knew the whole facts, deserted Mr. Home after this trial. On the contrary, their intimacy seems to have grown, and in 1868, two years later, Home was on Christian name terms with the noblemen I have named. How could this be, if he had, as Mrs. Lyons contended and Judge Gifford alleged, done a dishonourable fraud? This particular judge was a materialistic philosopher of pronounced views, and his opinion upon mediumship, of which he knew nothing, is no more unfavourable than his opinion upon orthodox divinity would have been. To quote him against Home is like quoting a Roman tribune's opinion of an early Christian. In each case the defendant was likely to get little sympathy.

Your correspondent weights the scale against Home by simply taking as true all that Mrs. Lyons said, and ignoring all that Home said in refutation. He has omitted the fact that the judge decreed that Mrs. Lyons was guilty of gross perjury. This declaration he made when Mrs. Lyons attempted to drag Mr. Wilkinson, Home's lawyer, into the case. As a matter of fact, it was shown perfectly clearly that both Carter Hall, representing Home, as a friend, and Wilkinson, representing him as a solicitor, had implored Mrs. Lyons not to make such provisions, and to bear in mind the claims of her own family. To this she had answered that she had no near relatives, and that her mind was made up. She was a half-mad woman, who had a craze for making wills and then revoking them. In this case she had tied herself up so in the original deed that she could not revoke it, and the only possible way in which she could get out of it was by pretending that it was caused by undue influence. There was not a title of evidence for this beyond her own word, and as £35,000 was at stake, and she was pronounced to be a perjurer by the judge, it is not a very solid thing upon which to defame the character of a man who had never in his life taken money from anyone for spiritual services. Why should he begin

to do so with this woman? Is it not evident that she was lying. That was certainly the view taken by Home's friends, and I cordially endorse it. I think that he acted with propriety and delicacy in very difficult circumstances, and if Mr.Doe, in attacking spiritualism, has to go back to the year 1868 for so weak a case as this, then his supply of situations is not a very formidable one.

Apart from the case of Mr.Home, your anonymous correspondent begins his letter by the statement that "most of the mediums upon whom my belief and proofs depend have either done time or admittedly should have been convicted of fraud quite frequently." It would take Mr.Hughes to furnish an adequate denial of so false a statement as that. The mediums upon whom I have most depended have been amateurs, who have never taken a shilling in their lives, men like Evan Powell, Sloane, Phoenix, and others. It is an example of the reckless slanders and falsehoods with which our cause is assailed.

Arthur Conan Doyle

The International Psychic Gazette
January 1921

WAKE UP, AUSTRALIA!

To the Editor of the *International Psychic Gazette*

MY DEAR LEWIS, – Just a line to show you that I am not done for, in spite of some ups and downs over here! The ups are permanent and the downs temporary, so all is well. Amid the former are my full audiences, their sympathy and acquiescence, and the large amount of interest and consolation which has come with my mission. Of that I have ample proofs. Amid the downs are a Press boycott here, caused partly by ignorant want of proportion, and partly by moral cowardice and fear of finding later that they have backed the wrong horse, or even given the wrong horse fair-play. They are very backward and far behind countries, like Iceland or Denmark, in the knowledge of what has been done. They are still in the stage when folk imagine it's all a sort of three-card trick, and that a clever conjurer could suddenly cry "Hey, Presto!" and in a moment put Crookes and Lombroso and Lodge and all the poor simpletons into their places! It would be comic if it were not so sad. They are dear folk, these Australians – kind, hospitable, straight – but Lord! they do want spirituality and dynamiting out of their grooves of thought. They are where England was before the war. But the tidal wave will strike them – perhaps is striking them. They are actually in the stage when meetings of business men are held at lunch hour to pray that I may be confounded! They prayed when I was on the seas – the Presbyterians did – that I might not reach the country! It was rather near murder, if they really thought their rotten

prayers would avail. The result was that we had an excellent voyage!

Well, goodbye. I open in Sydney presently and will have a very lively time by all account. I hope so. It's the unliveliness, the spiritual deadness of this place, which gets on my nerves. It's a great country and worth helping.

Yours very sincerely,

A. Conan Doyle

The Grand Hotel, Melbourne,
November 3, 1920

Light
18 June 1921

FAIRY PHOTOGRAPHS

Sir, – In a recent article Mr. Patrick declares that the photographs of fairies, published in the *Strand*, are clumsy fakes. These photos have been enlarged and also examined in the negatives by some of the most competent professional photographers in England, who could find no flaw. Mr. Patrick has not even asked to see the negatives, although Mr. Gardner has held them at the disposal of any inquirer. His criticism is therefore worthless save as a monumental example of the irresponsibility and slovenly looseness with which he and his colleague Mr. Whately Smith have approached an important subject.

Yours &c.,

A. Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Growborough

The Evening Standard
14 September 1921

SIR CONAN DOYLE'S BOOK*

Sir, – I do not complain of Mr. McCabe's inaccuracies, because it is understood beforehand that whatever conflicts with his conviction that we wind up in the dustbin is not likely to receive much toleration at his hands.

But I would implore him to be more careful with Mark Twain. Mark Twain's remark was that instead of turning the other cheek he returned the other's cheek. This is witty, but Mr. McCabe reproduces it "When a man hits you on one cheek your return his cheek," which is senseless. He should not tamper with the classics.

As to the rest of Mr. McCabe's slashing review, I will favour him with one more instance of my mental degeneration by quoting the comment of a wise old Chinese control in a similar muse: "He good man but foolish man. Plenty time. He learn better."¹²

Arthur Conan Doyle

The Times Literary Supplement
29 September 1921

DARKEY OF CHRISTCHURCH**

Sir, – Without entering into the polemics of spiritualism – a subject upon which no conclusions can be reached save by personal experiment – I would wish to say a word about Darkey, the Christchurch Terrier, which barks out the answer to questions. Hundreds of people have tested this dog's powers and a considerable sum was raised for war charities by their exhibition. A committee of three, Mr. Poynton a well-known magistrate being one, investigated and reported, declaring that they could find no evidence of a trick and that 90 per cent. of the questions were correctly answered. I was unable to get equally good results myself, though what I did get was remarkable so far as it went. As to alleged clairvoyant powers I preferred to think, as stated in my book,¹³ that thought transference was a more normal explanation. Your critic quotes this as an example of my "strange credulity". I should say it was "strange incredulity," which in this, as in other cases, refused to face well-attested facts.

Yours faithfully,

A. Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

The Yorkshire Weekly Post
8 October 1921

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPH

Sir, – In your courteous review of my book *Wanderings of a Spiritualist* – which by the way costs 12s 6d. not 18s. as marked in your paper – your reviewer comments upon my refusal to produce negatives for the Auckland photographers and adds "Is it to be assumed that this is the end of the matter?"

It is evident that I could not carry negatives which did not belong to me all round the world, but the objection is removed now that I am home again, and I will gladly assist your critic or any other competent observer to apply in the proper quarter for a sight of any of these negatives.

The fairy negatives are kept by Mr. E. L. Gardner, 5, Craven Road, Harlesden, N.W., who has had them inspected by several of the first authorities in England, who have found no flaw in them. When one considers that these are the first photographs which these children ever took in their lives it is impossible to conceive that they are capable of technical manipulation which would deceive experts.

As regards purely psychic or spirit pictures a large selection some

of which I hope to exhibit shortly in Leeds – are in the hands of Mr.F.Barlow, Bryntirion, Springfield Road, Moseley, Birmingham, who would also, I am sure, assist any honest critic by allowing him access to negatives.

The matter is complicated by the absolute ignorance of the average photographer as to psychic science, or the results of the accumulated experience since the historic day in 1861, when Mumler of Boston received the first extra upon a plate. What can you do with men who have never heard of psychographs, and do not know what you mean when you talk about matters which are at the very root of the subject? A psychograph¹⁴ is a picture which produces a photographic effect without having been exposed to light at all, the image being impressed in some way which is unknown to our present science, but possibly vaguely analogous to the present long distance wireless reproductions of faces. I have myself at Crewe received the impression upon a plate which I brought myself and handled myself, of the face of a sister who died 30 years ago, in a dark slide which was held between our hands and never put into the camera or opened. Such a psychograph – and I believe the normal psychic photograph is such – is independent of the laws of light, so that one can imagine how utterly at sea a photographic critic would be who judged its authenticity by shadows or any such tests. Mr.Traill Taylor made an exhaustive study of these psychic photos, using his own apparatus and chemicals. He was Editor of the *Journal of British Photography* and a non-Spiritualist. He received many extras under test conditions, but he observed that when he used a stereoscopic camera all else came out rounded, but the psychic face came out flat – showing that they were direct impressions upon the plate and not objective. I hope to show some of Traill Taylor's results in Leeds.

The photographic phenomena are only a small branch of a great subject, but they are important because they are the only proofs which can be shown to a large audience. It is difficult and unseemly to produce actual mediumistic results upon a public platform. In considering this particular pathway which leads to the central knowledge, I would implore your readers to put aside for ever those explanations of “fake” with which the public has so long been gulled. They are inexpressibly absurd to anyone who has actually worked upon the subject, and who is acquainted with those men of sanity and honour who testify to the facts. On the other hand there is a broad margin of thought form production which does afford reasonable ground for debate, especially when taken in conjunction with ectoplasmic moulds. Making every possible allowance for thought forms – as every cautious investigator has done – you come at last to the question whose thought, and the answer to that is the real crux of the question.

Most of us, like Dr.Crawford, are forced to the absolute acceptance of the independent intelligent unseen co-operator, even when he produces, as he sometimes does, pictures which are reminiscent of, or facsimiles of, models which already exist. The problems are many, but mere stupid negation will not help us forward.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex, Sept. 30, 1921

**The Daily Express
4 November 1921**

STREATHAM TRAGEDY

Sir, – In your account of the youth who murdered two children you omitted to mention what religion he professed. That is reasonable enough, since no religion can always qualify an evil nature. But why, in the case of the Coates family do you mention in large headlines that they were Spiritualists?

As many hundreds of thousands in this country profess that belief there must be a weakling among them. This particular case showed no connection between their belief and the deed, which was pathetic rather than wicked.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Grosvenor Hotel, London, S.W.1

**The International Psychic Gazette
July 1922**

THE BIRTHPLACE OF SPIRITUALISM

To the Editor of the *International Psychic Gazette*

MY DEAR LEWIS, – Our tour has been unprecedented in success, and all New York records were broken when for the seventh time I filled the Carnegie Hall, which is as big as the Queen's Hall. When we passed Rochester it occurred to me that it is no credit to us that we have no monument there to celebrate an event which has meant so much.¹⁵ My idea is an international subscription from all who have had benefit from it, so as to put up a fine inscribed obelisk. If we don't take ourselves seriously no one else will. I wonder if you would ventilate it in the *Gazette* and see how people take it. I would lead with fifty pounds. I thought of

proposing it at Chicago where the Spiritualists have a big reception in our honour, but it will not be any use unless it is international. I know how badly we need money in every direction but really we should tap some of those wealthy people who have had good from this sacred knowledge.

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Evening Standard
9 August 1922**

TAKING OF SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS

Sir, – Some little time ago you challenged me as to what I had to say upon this subject. I answered that I would write to you when fuller information was available. The case is not yet complete. When it is a pamphlet will appear covering all the facts. This should be ready in the course of the autumn.¹⁶

In the meantime I take advantage of your having broached the subject in order to ask the public not to form premature conclusions about a man whom I believe to be grievously wronged, and who has no access to those legal means of redress which every Briton should command. These attacks would be much more circumspect if it was not understood that a medium in the present state of public knowledge enters a court with a crushing disadvantage.

While preparing a fuller statement, it is only fair to Mr.Hope to say at once that all the investigation which has been undertaken by his friends tends to show that the pamphlet issued with such indecent haste before he had any opportunity of furnishing a defence, is a document which will not for a moment stand impartial scrutiny.

The accusation, it will be remembered, was that the psychic photograph should have appeared upon a marked plate, since all the plates in the packet had been exposed to an X-ray process, without undoing the wrapper, which would leave certain marks upon them. The psychic photograph did finally appear upon an unmarked plate, and this was taken to be an absolute proof that the plates had been changed by Hope. There were several minor points, but this was predominant, and if this be eliminated the rest of the case becomes trivial.

We can claim now that this point has been eliminated. The investigators, Mr.Price and Mr.Seymour, acting as the agents of Mr.Dingwall of the Psychical Research Society, neglected to test the fact whether the X-ray markings were permanent or not.

One can excuse the others, but it really seems incredible that Mr.Dingwall, a so-called research officer, could have endorsed work

which was done in so slovenly and unscientific a fashion.

Every effort was made to blast a man's good name and undo the effects of fifteen years of psychic demonstration upon the strength of an allegation which could easily have been tested, and which, when tested, has proved to be a complete fallacy.

Experiments made in several quarters by similar plates marked in the same fashion by the same firm, have shown that an exposure up to 15-seconds in a good photographic light leaves the marks intact. Beyond that point the marks fade and disappear, so that the plate becomes quite blank, though with a still longer exposure, say 25 seconds, the marks return in an inverted form.

Now, Mr.Price has left it on record that though the period of exposure was not taken (imagine this in a scientific experiment!) he counted slowly up to 19, so that by his own showing the exposure was just long enough to reach the point where the marks would disappear – and with them disappears all the main evidence, so far as at present revealed, upon which the case rests.

I will not encroach upon your space at present with the smaller points, as they are trivial in themselves, and will be fully dealt with in the pamphlet. It was felt, however, by Mr.Hope's friends that this interim statement should be issued, lest judgment should go by default. The matter will not be avoided, but will be thoroughly thrashed out in the most public way that can be found. Meanwhile, it is to be remembered that against the mere assertion of his enemies, Mr.Hope has sworn his affidavit as to his complete innocence of the alleged fraud.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Light
18 November 1922

SPIRITUALISM AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

Sir, – Without presuming to interfere with the political convictions of my fellow Spiritualists, I would remind them that the present interpretation of the Witchcraft Act, as given by the Lord Chief Justice, is an intolerable one, since it makes the exercise of psychic gifts which are well attested as criminal as the fraudulent imitation of such gifts. Personally I will vote for no candidate who does not pledge himself to vote for the abolition of so reactionary a law. Those who are interested in psychic matters are now a very numerous body, and if they all take a determined line they may, even at this last hour, exert considerable influence.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
November 13th, 1922

The Two Worlds
19 January 1923

THE HYDESVILLE MEMORIAL (1)

Sir, – When I was in America it was suggested that a memorial should be raised by the subscriptions of Spiritualists all the world over to the great occurrence at Hydesville in 1848 which has modified and glorified the lives of so many. A subsequent resolution of the National Association of America decreed (wisely, I think) that a memorial in Washington would be of more service to the Cause than one in a place so difficult of access as Hydesville. I was asked to be Secretary and Treasurer for the movement in Great Britain, and it is my ambition when I return to America at the end of March to take with me a handsome sum as our contribution to the undertaking.

I have in hand at present £100 subscribed by my wife and myself. If any of your readers would send me sums, however small, they would be gratefully received. I will keep the addresses of the donors and retain the money in my own hands until I have absolute assurance that the scheme is going through. Our help would be particularly appreciated at present, as the Americans realise how great the pressure is upon us, and the self-sacrifice which is involved in a subscription towards a monument which so many of us will never see. It will, however, dignify the Cause, which means so much more than money. Private gifts or church collections are equally welcome.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex.

Light
8 February 1923

THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL (1)

Sir, – When I returned from the United States in June I brought with me some £2,000 of American money, nearly all of which has now been expended upon the Spiritualist cause. I am asking those who believe in that cause, and who approve of my work, to show that approval in a practical way by sending me subscriptions which I can take with me, when I return to America in March, as a British donation towards the

International Washington Memorial, which is to be erected in honour of the piercing of the barrier which occurred at Hydesville upon March 31st, 1848. Swedenborg¹⁷ and Davis¹⁸ had of course paved the way, but it is beyond question that the first of those direct communications, which have since then been of such priceless comfort to so many of us, was made upon that occasion, and that it is in truth the greatest date in human history since the great revelation of two thousand years ago. Let us show by our actions that we realise and appreciate it.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

Light

10 March 1923

THE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL (2)

Sir, – The response to my appeal for some central memorial of our Cause has been so scanty that I cannot bring myself to present it. I am, therefore, returning the money to the various subscribers, whom I hereby thank.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
March 6th, 1923

The New York Times
2 September 1923

**OSCAR WILDE'S COMMUNICATION
ACCEPTED AS GENUINE**

Sir, – You have occasionally allowed me to use your columns in order to keep the American public informed as to the progress which is being made in Europe upon the all-important subject of psychic evidence. Upon the last occasion I gave some description of Dr. Schrenck-Notzing's experiments with Willy at Munich, and I told how he had demonstrated that mysterious substance ectoplasm to 100 incredulous men of science, including twenty-six professors of universities, and that all without exception had been compelled to accept the evidence of their own senses.

A second similar mass demonstration has just been concluded at Paris and has received far less public attention than it deserves. Indeed, it is one of the curiosities of this controversy that when a negative result is obtained, which means, of course, nothing at all, it goes like wildfire

through the press, while the positive results, which mean everything, are received with apathy. One is forced to the conclusion that the human instinct really shrinks from the idea that we do most certainly continue our existence, and do most certainly answer for our action, whether private or public.

The new demonstration has been carried out by Dr. Geley of the Metapsychique Institute of Paris. He assembled thirty-four men of distinction and in successive sittings demonstrated the usual physical phenomena of spiritualism, using as a medium one Jean Gusik, a Pole. The results were perfectly conclusive, and all the observers signed their acquiescence. The signatures include those of Dr. Rehm, scientific editor of the *Matin*; Cinisty, editor of the *Petit Parisien*; Huc, editor of the *Dépeche de Toulouse*; a dozen leading doctors from the Parisian hospitals; Marcel Prévost of the French Academy; Bayle of the Prefecture of Police; several men of letters, and finally, three great men of science – Richet, Flammarion and Sir Oliver Lodge.

The phenomena to which these gentlemen subscribe are movements of objects without touch at a distance from the medium and taps received when out of reach of the medium. There were, however, many other phenomena. Their confession of faith ends with the words: "We simply affirm our conviction that the phenomena are not to be explained by illusions and that there was no possible cheating."

They certify to the fact that these various phenomena showed every sign of having an intelligence at the back of them. In fact, they answered requests and obeyed orders. Since these facts are surely indisputable, we are faced by the question, Whose intelligence is it? Is it that of the unconscious medium acting independently? Is it the collective consciousness of the company? Or is it an outside independent intelligence which is directing the experiment?

It is only fair to say that even among the most experienced psychic researchers the answer to their question is a varied one. We have to remember that many of the best Continental minds start from a position of extreme materialism. Sir David Brewster said: "Spirit is the last thing which I would give in to," and though he said it sixty years ago, it still represents a common phase of thought. Such men as Richet or Notzing have been converted from materialism to a sort of super-materialism, which needs one more step, but a very vital one, to elevate them into spiritualism. To get that step they would need, I think, to turn from those physical phases where they have done such splendid work and to examine more carefully the mental and religious sides of the question, without neglecting those methods of analysis and exact thought which they have applied to the lower phenomena. No faith is needed, but simply an

extension of their present experimental methods to another class of evidence. As they are already prepared to admit that an ectoplasmic figure can move about a room, can talk and can claim an individuality, it would not seem a great gulf which they have to cross in admitting that claim to be true, and that the discarnate soul can indeed find means to manifest itself in this lower world of matter.

An interesting mental and literary problem has presented itself lately in England by the appearance of a script which claims to be from Oscar Wilde. Wilde was a man with a very peculiar quality of thought and of expression. The latter may be parodied, but the former can hardly be copied in its fullness, for to do so would imply that the copyist had as great a brain as the original. Yet both in thought and in expression this script rings true. There are passages in it which Wilde in his best movements has never bettered. He had in life a very fine cue for colours which often manifested itself in his writings gave them a peculiarly vivid touch. Thus, in a private letter to me he spoke of the "honey coloured harvest moon." The script shows this rare quality to a remarkable degree. "In eternal twilight I move, but I know that in the world... red sunset must follow apple-green dawn." Then again, "The rose-flushed anemones that star the woodland ways," or again, "Already the May is creeping like a white mist over lane and hedgerow, and year after year, the hawthorn bears blood-red fruit after the white death of its May."

The other characteristic of Wilde was his freakish, paradoxical humour. This also is much in evidence in the script. "Being dead is the most boring experience in life, that is if one excepts being married or dining with a school-master!" Those last four words are Wilde all over. "My life was like a candle that had guttered at the end."¹⁹

I defy any man of real critical instinct to read that script and doubt that it emanates from Wilde. One may imitate a man's features, one may forge his name, but it is impossible to sustain a deception in a prolonged communication from a great writer. Verily, there is no sort of proof under Heaven which has not been accorded to us, and those beyond must despair sometimes of ever penetrating our obtuse intelligence.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Light

10 November 1923

"OUTWARD BOUND"

Sir, – It is so seldom that even an approximation to our psychic views is shown upon the stage that I think we should support it. Those who see "Outward Bound" at the Garrick Theatre will, I am sure, thank

me for calling their attention to it, for it is the most daring, original and arresting play which has been seen in my time upon the London boards.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
November 4th, 1923

**The Advertiser and Echo, Thanet
16 February 1924**

A LETTER TO “PSYCHONO”

Sir, – Congratulations on the good work you are doing in Kent.

I was deeply interested in the “Second Coming” script, because I have had the same through the hand of my wife. The year 1925 is given, and even the day of the angelic demonstration – harvest festival of that year.

I must get the continuation.

Yours sincerely,

A. Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,

**Occult Review
April 1924**

OSCAR WILDE

Sir, – I should wish with all courtesy, but also with all decision, to express my dissent from Mr.C.W.Soal in what he says concerning the style of Oscar Wilde. He had, as has frequently been pointed out, two separate styles, each very marked and individual, and each quite different from the other. The one is poetic, ornamental and artificial, with lovely word effects and a profuse use of colour. It is shown in the script by such phrases as “from russet eve to apple-green dawn” or “the rose-flushed anemones that star the dark woodland ways” or “the May is creeping like a white mist over lane and hedgerow.” The second style is epigrammatic, witty, cynical and full of paradox. Here we have it in “Death is the most boring experience in life – if one excepts being married or dining with a school-master.” “It is always bad advice that is given away.” “Even God does not know what to do with the industrious.” “The woman who was content merely to be was always charming.” It is difficult to note these close analogies of style and to doubt that an Oscar Wilde brain is at the back of them.

The idea that a weekly prize competition could produce a flood of Barries²⁰ and Stevensons²¹, with all the marks of the original, is surely untenable and could hardly have been meant to be taken seriously. It is

easy to produce a short comic parody, by exaggerating the features of a style, but to write or talk in exactly the same style and with equally good matter, argues an equal brain, which would certainly exhibit itself in something more ambitious than parody.

Mr. Soal claims that he has traced all the allusions to their “probable sources.” In the case of a man whose life was so public and who has been the centre of a whole literature, it is difficult to imagine that there is anything of any importance in his life – anything which would now emerge from his own memory – which was not directly or indirectly alluded to in some quarter or another. But such an explanation would mean that the automatists had ransacked all the Wilde literature. We have their assurance that this is not so, and that their acquaintance with it was very limited. As to the suggestion, put into the mouth of a suppositious critic, that the writers memorise great sections of script, that would of course be a direct accusation of deliberate fraud which is not justified by the character and position of the writers. Such suggestions are made far too readily and should be banished from the controversy.

When I consider the various corroborations in this case of Oscar Wilde:

1. The reproduction of his heavy style.
2. The reproduction of his light style.
3. The reproduction of character.
4. The recollection of incidents, some of them quite obscure, in his own life.
5. The reproduction of his handwriting.
6. And (not least in my eyes) the similarity of the conditions which he describes upon the other side with those which our psychic knowledge would assign to such a man I consider that the case is a very powerful one indeed. I quite agree that *George Pelham* and *The Ear of Dionysius*²² are very convincing, but to me the Wilde case is even more so.

Yours faithfully,

*A. Conan Doyle*²³

**The Morning Post
26 September 1924**

MR. MASKELYNE AND THE SLADE CASE

Sir, – I observe in your columns the statement that Mr. Nevil Maskelyne’s father, together with Professor Ray Lankester, exposed Mr. Slade in 1876. I will say nothing as to the alleged exposure save to remark that Mr. Slade went straight to Leipzig, where he gave before

Professor Zöllner and three colleagues one of the fullest demonstrations of psychic power ever recorded by a scientific observer. It seems improbable – though not impossible – that he was a counterfeit in London, but the real thing in Germany. His performance was checked by Bellachini, the Court Conjuror, who declared that it was far beyond the reach of art.

The point, however, on which I wished to comment was that the accusers were Dr. Bryan Donkin and Professor Lankester, and that Maskelyne's evidence was indirect. In the course of it he deposed that the table used by the medium was a "trick" table. This no doubt affected the verdict. As a matter of fact, this table is now to be inspected at No. 5, Queen's-square, the Headquarters of the London Spiritualist Alliance. It will be found to be quite an ordinary table with no trick whatever.

Those thousand pound challenges from conjurers to which your contributor alludes are mere advertisements, without any real meaning whatever. When I was in America last year the famous Houdini proclaimed in similar fashion that he could do anything which a medium had ever done. I at once accepted the challenge and stipulated that he should show me the presentment of a near relative who had passed out of life, and that it should be so clear relative that I and others who sat beside me could recognise it. I need not say that I heard no more of the challenge.

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

15, Buckingham Palace-mansions,
Sept. 25

The Times
17 December, 1924

THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

Sir, – Dr. Haldane claims that telepathy is really the result of subtle sound waves. In very many cases which have been recorded the phenomenon consisted of the reproduction of drawn diagrams. Does Dr. Haldane really consider that the sound of the pencil can indicate the shape of the figure?

Arthur Conan Doyle

15, Buckingham Palace-mansions,
S.W.1, Dec. 16

Light
24 January 1925

THE PSYCHIC BOOKSHOP AND LIBRARY

Sir, – It has long seemed to me that one of the weak points in our psychic movement is the complete disconnection between our splendid literature and the man in the street. He is as a rule absolutely unaware of its existence. In an endeavour to get past this difficulty I am engaged in starting a psychic bookshop and library in one of the most central positions in London. It is in Abbey House in Victoria-street, opposite to Dean's Yard, and within a stone's throw of Westminster Abbey. I would ask the support of all psychic students for this venture, so far as it can be given without encroaching upon the trade in psychic books already done by the London Spiritualist Alliance, or by the office of the *Two Worlds*. I wish to open up new fields, not to encroach upon the old ones. Nothing but psychic books will be sold, and a large stock kept in hand, while every effort will be made to meet the wants of customers. Should any reader have duplicates which he could spare for the library he would do me a service if, after the beginning of February, he would send them to the manager at the address given.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

January 16th

**The Northern Whig and Belfast Post
12 May 1925**

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE AND THE "FAIRY PHOTOGRAPHS"

Sir, – In your issue of today I notice some allusion to the "Fairy Photographs" as if they had been in some way explained or discredited. This is not so. A number of inquiries both as to the girls and as to the negatives, the latter conducted by some of the best experts in Great Britain, have failed to shake the evidence in any particular, while fresh facts have appeared which strengthen the case. Prominent among these is a letter written by one of the children, aged 10, to a friend in South Africa, telling the story at the time – though it only leaked out to the public some years later. What these little figures are, and how far they may be thought forms is, as I state in my book,²⁴ an open question, but the honesty of the girls is assured, and the evidence has never been in any way shaken. Of course the matter has nothing to do with spiritualism, which is concerned only with the destiny of the human soul.

Yours &c.,

A. Conan Doyle

Midland Station Hotel,
May 10, 1925

Light
4 July 1925

A PROPOSED PSYCHIC MUSEUM

Sir, – I am establishing a small museum of psychic objects under the Psychic Bookshop, Abbey House, Victoria Street. The situation is so central that such a collection cannot fail to attract attention and to form a powerful propaganda centre. I should be greatly obliged if any of your readers will either give, lend or sell suitable objects. I have at present the two wax gloves lent me by the Psychic College and I have the Garscadden collection of photographs with some other pictures. With such a nucleus I should have no difficulty in getting together a worthy collection. Perhaps those who wish to help me will send me a line first so that I may tell them how far, with our limited space, their kind offers can be taken advantage of.

Arthur Conan Doyle

THE SPIRITUALISM AND THE PROGRESS OF OUR RACE

Spiritualism is infinitely the most important thing in the world, so it is worth taking time over. Folk can be blamed for neglecting it, but no one can be blamed for being cautious in examination. I would repeat in my own person the words of Thackeray. He said to some objector: "What you say is natural, but if you had seen what I have seen you might alter your opinion." We must fit our theories to the facts. Up to now we have fitted the facts to our theories. If you are not yet among our adherents, you are quite right. You should take your time over it. I took many years myself. Now I am all out for it, because I *know* it is true. There is such a difference between believing and knowing. It is only when these things come to one's own address that one understands their full force.

I lecture a good deal. But I never want to convert my audience. I don't believe in sudden conversions. They are shallow, superficial things. All I want is to put the thing before the people as clearly as I can. I just tell them the truth and why we know it is the truth. Then my job is done. They can take it or leave it. If they are wise they will explore along the paths that I indicate. If they are unwise they miss their chance. I don't want to press them or to proselytise. It's their affair, not mine. As La Bruyère very finely said: "Il faut chercher seulement à penser et à parler juste, sans vouloir amener les autres à notre goût et à nos sentiments: c'est une trop

grande entreprise.”²⁵

Science is gradually sweeping the world clear of all old cobwebs of superstition. The world was like some old, dusty attic, and the sun of science is bursting in, flooding it with light, while the dust settles gradually to the floor. And yet, as regards science and scientists, I can say only one thing: it is this scientific world which is at the bottom of much of our materialism. What a grand world it would be if it would only realise its own limitations! It is an extraordinary fact that many scientific men, when their passions and prejudices are excited, show a ludicrous disregard for all their own tenets. Of these tenets there are none more rigid than that a subject should be examined before it was condemned. We have seen of late years, in such matters as wireless or heavier-than-air machines, that the most unlikely things may come to pass. It is most dangerous to say *a priori*²⁶ that a thing is impossible. Yet this is the error into which either scientific critic has fallen. They have used the fame which they have rightly won in subjects which they have mastered in order to cast discredit upon a subject which they have not mastered. The fact that a man was a great physiologist and physicist did not in itself make him an authority upon psychic science.

In this world of science there are many fools and dolts which are holding back the world's progress. They admit that they have read nothing of the psychic subject, and I'll swear they have seen nothing. Yet they use the position and the name which they have won in other matters in order to discredit a number of people who, whatever they may be, are certainly very earnest and very thoughtful.

Science has helped us in comfort – if comfort is any use to us. Otherwise it has usually been a curse to us, for it has called itself “progress” and given us a false impression that we are making progress, whereas we are really drifting very steadily backwards.

One can object to this: “Look at wireless. Look at the S.O.S. call at sea. Is that not a benefit to mankind?”. I quite agree, it works out all right sometimes. I value my electric reading-lamp, and that is a product of science. It gives us, as I said before, comfort and occasionally safety. And nevertheless I depreciate it, because it obscures the vital thing – the object of life. We were not put into this planet in order that we should go fifty miles an hour in a motor-car, or cross the Atlantic in an airship, or send messages either with or without wires. These are the mere trimmings and fringes of life. But those men of science have so riveted our attention on these fringes that we forget the central object.

It is not how fast you go that matters, it is the object of your journey. It is not how you send a message, it is what the value of the message may be. At every stage this so-called progress may be a curse,

and yet as long as we use the word we confuse it with real progress and imagine that we are doing that for which God sent us into the world, which is to prepare ourselves for the next phase of life. There is mental preparation and spiritual preparation, and we are neglecting both. To be in an old age better men and women, more unselfish, more broadminded, more genial and tolerant, that is what we are for. It is a soul factory, and it is turning out a bad article.

Surely the world has been worse before now, but never with the same advantages – never with the education and knowledge and so-called civilisation, which has been turned to evil. We got the knowledge of airships. We bomb cities with them. We learn how to steam under the sea. We murder seamen with our new knowledge. We gain command over chemicals. We turn them into explosives or poison gases. It goes from worse to worse. At the present moment every nation upon earth is plotting secretly how it can best poison the others. Did God create the planet for this end, and is it likely than He will allow it to go on from bad to worse?

The most dangerous condition for a man or a nation is when his intellectual side is more developed than his spiritual. Is that not exactly the condition of the world today? Our spiritual guides speak of a breaking of all the phials. There is war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, tidal waves – all ending in peace and glory unutterable.

I have been ordered to give the message wherever I think that there are ears to hear it. Our guides wish that the human race should gradually understand the situation so that there shall be the less shock or panic. I am one of several who are chosen to carry the news.

Things have now reached a climax. The very idea of progress has been made material. It is progress to go swiftly, to send swift messages, to build new machinery. All this is a diversion of real ambition. There is only one real progress – spiritual progress. Mankind gives it a lip tribute but presses on upon its false road of material science. Even in psychic matters, there is a certain class of psychic researcher who is absolutely incapable of receiving evidence. They misuse their brains by straining them to find a way round when the road is quite clear before them. When the human race advances into its new kingdom,²⁷ these intellectual men will form the absolute rear.

The Central Intelligence recognised that amid all the apathy there was also much honest doubt which had out-grown old creeds and had a right to fresh evidence. Therefore fresh evidence was sent – evidence which made the life after death as clear as the sun in the heavens. It was laughed at by scientists, condemned by the churches, become the butt of the newspapers, and was discarded with contempt. That was the last and greatest blunder of humanity.

The thing was now hopeless. It had got beyond all control. Therefore something sterner was needed since Heaven's gift had been disregarded. The blow fell. Ten million young men were laid dead upon the ground. Twice as many were mutilated. That was God's first warning to mankind.²⁸ But it was vain. The same dull materialism prevailed as before. Years of grace were given, and no change was anywhere to be seen. The nations heaped up fresh loads of sin, and sin must ever be atoned for. Russia became a cesspool.²⁹ Germany was unrepentant of her terrible materialism which had been the prime cause of the war. Spain and Italy were sunk in alternate atheism and superstition. France had no religious ideal. Britain was confused and distracted, full of wooden sects which had nothing of life in them. America had abused her glorious opportunities and, instead of being the loving younger sister to a stricken Europe, she held up all economic reconstruction by her money claims; she dishonoured the signature of her own president, and she refused to join that League of Peace which was the one hope of the future. All have sinned, but some more than others, and their punishment will be in exact proportion.

And that punishment soon comes. Under the guidance of materialism the wrong path has been followed, and it becomes increasingly clear that the people must return or perish.

These are the exact words I have been asked to give you:

"What we want is, not that folk should be frightened, but that they should begin to change themselves – to develop themselves on more spiritual lines. We are not trying to make people nervous, but to prepare while there is yet time. The world cannot go on as it has done. It would destroy itself if it did. Above all we must sweep away the dark cloud of theology which has come between mankind and God.

The day is coming soon when all truth will be manifest and all these corrupt Churches will be swept off the earth with their cruel doctrines and their caricatures of God. Love! That is all that counts. What matter what you believe if you are sweet and kind and unselfish as the Christ was of old?

Teach the folk what death is. God wants them to know. That is why He lets us come back. It is nothing. You are no more changed than if you went into the next room. You can't believe you are dead. We didn't. Teach them the truth! Oh, it is so much more important than all the things men talk about. If your papers for one week only gave as much attention to psychic things as they do to football, it would be known to all.

There is so much false progress of material mechanical kind. That is not progress. If you build a car to go one thousand miles this year, then you build one to go two thousand miles next year. No one is the better for

that. We want real progress – to understand the power of mind and spirit and to realise the fact that there is a spirit world.

So much help could be given from our side if only people on the earth would fit themselves to take it, but we cannot force our help on those who are not prepared for it. That is your work, to prepare people for us. Some of them are so hopelessly ignorant, but sow the seed, even if you do not see it coming up.

The clergy are so limited in their ideas and so bound by a system which should be an obsolete one. It is like serving up last week's dinner instead of having a new one. We want fresh spiritual food, not a hash of the old food. We know how wonderful Christ is. We realise His love and His power. He can help both us and you. But He will do so by kindling fresh fires, not by raking always in the old ashes.

That is what we want – the fire of enthusiasm on the two altars of imagination and knowledge. Some people would do away with the imagination, but it is often the gateway to knowledge. The Churches have had the right teaching, but they have not put it to practical use.

One must be able to demonstrate one's spiritual knowledge in a practical form. The plane on which you live is a practical one in which you are expected to put your knowledge and belief into action. On our plane knowledge and faith are action – one thinks a thing and at once puts it into practice, but on earth there are so many who say a thing is right, but never do it. The Church teaches, but does not demonstrate its own teaching. The blackboard is useful at times, you know. That is what you need. You should teach, and then demonstrate upon the blackboard. Thus physical phenomena are really most important. There will be some in this upheaval. It is difficult for us to manifest physically now because the greater bulk of collective thought is against and not for us. But when the upheaval comes, people will be shaken out of their pig-headed, ignorant, antagonistic attitude to us, which will immediately open the way to a fuller demonstration than we have hitherto been able to give.

It is like a wall now that we have to batter against, and we lose ninety per cent of our power in the battering and trying to find a weak spot in this wall of ignorance through which we can creep to you. But many of you are chiselling and hammering from your side to let us through. You have not built the wall, and you are helping us to penetrate it. In a little while you will have so weakened it that it will crumble, and instead of creeping through with difficulty we shall all emerge together in a glorious band. That will be the climax – the meeting of spirit and matter."

That is what I have been asked to tell you. Spread the news where there seems to be a window in the soul. Say to them: "Repent! Reform! the Time is at hand."

Arthur Conan Doyle

**MEDIUMSHIP, EVIL FORCES
AND RESCUE CIRCLES**

Psychic power in its varied manifestations is found in humble quarters, but surely that has been its main characteristic from the beginning – fishermen, carpenters, tent-makers, camel drivers, these were the prophets of old. At this moment some of the highest psychic gifts in England lie in a miner, a cotton operative, a railway-porter, a bargeman and a charwoman. Thus does history repeat itself, thus does the old wheel go round.

Mediumship can be developed. One might almost say it was catching. That was what the laying-on of hands meant in the early Church. It was the conferring of thaumaturgic powers. We can't do it now as rapidly as that. But if a man or woman sits with the desire of development, and especially if that sitting is in the presence of a real medium, the chance is that powers will come.

But in some circumstances this coming would be worse even than false mediumship, because it could be used for evil. I assure you that the talk of black magic and of evil entities is not an invention of the superstition. Such things do happen and centre round the wicked medium. You can get down into a region which is akin to the popular idea of witchcraft. Like attracts like, and you get what you deserve. It is usually an axiom among Spiritualists that the spirit visitors to a circle represent in some way the mental and spiritual tendency of the circle. If you sit with wicked people you get wicked visitors. Then there is a dangerous side to it.

But do you know anything on earth which has not a dangerous side if it is mishandled and exaggerated? This dangerous side exists quite apart from orthodox Spiritualism, and our knowledge is the surest way to counteract it. I believe that the witchcraft of the Middle Ages was a very real thing, and that the best way to meet such practices is to cultivate the higher powers of the spirit. To leave the thing entirely alone is to abandon the field to the forces of evil.

It might be argued that a subject with such possibilities had better be left alone. The answer seems to be that these manifestations are, fortunately, very rare, whereas the daily comfort of spirit intercourse illumines thousands of lives. We do not abandon exploration because the land explored contains some noxious creatures. To abandon the subject would be to hand it over to such forces of evil as chose to explore it while depriving ourselves of that knowledge which would aid us in

understanding and counteracting their results.

I speak of these evil forces, because we continually come in contact with them. And when there is an intrusion of that kind we do not necessarily drive it away. It is part of our job, we specialise on it. If we can help any lower spirit we do so, and we can only do it by encouraging it to tell us its troubles. Most of them are not wicked. They are poor, ignorant, stunted creatures who are suffering the effects of the narrow and false views which they have learned in this world. We try to help them – and we do. In the extremely interesting case very carefully observed by the Psychic Research Society of Reykjavik in Iceland, the formidable earthbound creature proclaimed how it got its vitality. The man was in life a fisherman of rough and violent character who had committed suicide. He attached himself to the medium, followed him to the séances of the Society, and caused indescribable confusion and alarm, until he was exorcised by some such means as described in my story.³⁰ A long account appeared in the *Proceedings of the American Society of Psychic Research* and also in the organ of the Psychic College, *Psychic Research* for January, 1925. Iceland, it may be remarked, is very advanced in psychic science, and in proportion to its population or opportunities is probably ahead of any other country. The Bishop of Reykjavik is President of the Psychic Society, which is surely a lesson to our own prelates whose disassociation from the study of such matters is little less than a scandal. The matter relates to the nature of the soul and to its fate in the Beyond, yet there are, I believe, fewer students of the matter among our spiritual guides than among any other profession.

So, we try to help these lost souls – and we do. And we know that we do because they report to us afterwards and register their progress. Such methods are often used by our people. They are called “rescue circles”. Among the careful and trustworthy experimenters are Mr. Tozer of Melbourne, and Mr. McFarlane of Southsea, both of whom have run methodical circles for the purpose of giving help to earthbound spirits. Detailed accounts of experiences which I have personally had in the former circles are to be found in Chapters IV and VI of my *Wanderings of a Spiritualist*. I may add that in my own domestic circle, under my wife’s mediumship, we have been privileged to bring hope and knowledge to some of these unhappy beings.

Full reports of a number of these dramatic conversations are to be found in the last hundred pages of the late Admiral Usborne Moore’s *Glimpses of the Next State*. It should be said that the Admiral was not personally present at these sittings, but that they were carried out by people in whom he had every confidence, and that they were confirmed by sworn affidavits of the sitters. ‘The high character of Mr. Leander Fisher’,

says the Admiral, 'is sufficient voucher for their authenticity.' The one may be said of Mr.E.G.Randall, who has published many such cases. He is one of the leading lawyers of Buffalo, while Mr.Fisher is a Professor of Music in that city.

The natural objection is that, granting the honesty of the investigators, the whole experience may be in some way subjective and have no relation to real facts. Dealing with this the Admiral says: 'I made inquiries as to whether any of the spirits, thus brought to understand that they had entered a new state of consciousness, had been satisfactorily identified. The reply was that many had been discovered, but after several had been verified it was considered useless to go on searching for the relatives and places of abode in earth life of the remainder. Such inquiries involved much time and labour, and always ended with the same result.' In one of the cases cited (op. cit., p.524) there is the prototype of the fashionable woman who died in her sleep, as depicted in the text. In all these instances the returning spirit did not realise that its earth life was over.

The dramatic case where the spirit of a man (it was the case of several men in the original) manifested at the very time of the accident which caused their death, and where the names were afterwards verified in the newspaper report, is given by Mr.E.G.Randall. Another example given by that gentleman may be added for the consideration of those who have not realised how cogent is the evidence, and how necessary for us to reconsider our views of death. It is in *The Dead Have Never Died* (p.104).

"I recall an incident that will appeal to the purely materialistic. I was one of my father's executors, and after his dissolution and the settlement of his estate, speaking to me from the next plane, he told me one night that I had overlooked an item that he wanted to mention to me.

"I replied: 'Your mind was ever centred on the accumulation of money. Why take up the time that is so limited with the discussion of your estate? It has already been divided'.

" 'Yes', he answered, 'I know that, but I worked too hard for my money to have it lost, and there is an asset remaining that you have not discovered'.

" 'Well', I said 'if that be true, tell me about it'.

"He answered: 'Some years before I left I loaned a small sum of money to Susan Stone, who resided in Pennsylvania, and I took from her a promissory note upon which, under the laws of that State, I was entitled to enter a judgment at once without suit. I was somewhat anxious about the loan, so, before its maturity, I took the note and filed it with the prothonotary at Erie, Pennsylvania, and he entered judgment, which became a lien on her property. In my books of account there was no

reference to that note or judgement. If you will go to the prothonotary's office in Erie, you will find the judgment on record, and I want you to collect it. There are many things that you don't know about and this is one of them'.

"I was much surprised at the information thus received, and naturally sent for a transcript of that judgment. I found it entered Oct. 21, 1896, and with that evidence of the indebtedness I collected from the judgment debtor 70 dollars with interest. I question if anyone knew of that transaction besides the makers of the note and the prothonotary at Erie. Certainly I did not know about it. I had no reason to suspect it. The psychic present at that interview could not have known about the matter, and I certainly collected the money. My father's voice was clearly recognisable on that occasion, as it has been on hundreds of others, and I cite this instance for the benefit of those who measure everything from a monetary standpoint."

The most striking, however, of all these posthumous communications are to be found in *Thirty Years Among the Dead*, by Dr. Wickland of Los Angeles. This, like many other valuable books of the sort, can only be obtained in Great Britain at the Psychic Bookshop in Victoria Street, S.W.³¹

Dr. Wickland and his heroic wife have done work which deserves the very closest attention from the alienists of the world. If he makes his point, and the case is a strong one, he not only revolutionises all our ideas about insanity, but he cuts deep also into our views of criminology, and may well show that we have been punishing as criminals people who were more deserving of commiseration than of censure.

Having framed the view that many cases of mania were due to obsession from undeveloped entities, and having found out by some line of inquiry, which is not clear to me, that such entities are exceedingly sensitive to static electricity when it is passed through the body which they have invaded, he founded his treatment with remarkable results upon this hypothesis. The third factor in his system was the discovery that such entities were more easily dislodged if a vacant body was provided for their temporary reception. Therein lies the heroism of Mrs. Wickland, a very charming and cultivated lady, who sits in hypnotic trance beside the subject ready to receive the invader when he is driven forth. It is through the lips of this lady that the identity and character of the undeveloped spirit are determined.

The subject having been strapped to the electric chair – the strapping is very necessary as many are violent maniacs – the power is turned on. It does not affect the patient, since it is static in its nature, but it causes acute discomfort to the parasitical spirit, who rapidly takes refuge

in the unconscious form of Mrs. Wickland. Then follow the amazing conversations which are chronicled in this volume. The spirit is cross-questioned by the doctor, is admonished, instructed, and finally dismissed either in the care of some ministering spirit who superintends the proceedings, or relegated to the charge of some sterner attendant who will hold him in check should he be unrepentant.

To the scientist who is unfamiliar with psychic work such a bald statement sounds wild, and I do not myself claim that Dr. Wickland has finally made out his case, but I do say that our experiences at rescue circles bear out the general idea, and that he has admittedly cured many cases which others have found intractable. Occasionally there is very cogent confirmation.

It is not apparently everyone who is open to this invasion, but only those who are in some peculiar way psychic sensitives. The discovery, when fully made out, will be one of the root facts of the psychology and jurisprudence of the future.

So I repeat: these powers are given to some of us for the consolation of humanity and for a proof of immortality. They were never meant for worldly use. Trouble always comes of such use, trouble to the medium and trouble to the client.

Arthur Conan Doyle

ON LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN HEAVENS

I will say a few words on that. I wish you to understand that there is one man, and only one, for each woman, and one woman only for each man. When those two meet they fly together and are one through all the endless chain of existence. Until they meet all unions are mere accidents which have no meaning. Sooner or later each couple becomes complete. It may not be here. It may be in the next sphere where the sexes meet as they do on earth. Or it may be further delayed. But every man and every woman has his or her affinity, and will find it.

Of earthly marriages perhaps one in five is permanent. The others are accidental. Married couples do not necessarily reunite, but the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realisation. Real marriage is of the soul and spirit. Sex actions are a mere external symbol which mean nothing and are foolish, or even pernicious, when the thing which they should symbolise is wanting. Some have the wrong mate here. Some have no mate, which is more fortunate. But all will sooner or later get the right mate. That is certain.

Do not think that you will necessarily have your present husband, or wife, when you pass over. It is love – real love – which unites us there. He, or she, goes his, or her, way. You go yours. You are on separate planes, perhaps. Some day you will each find your own, when your youth has come back as it will over here.

There is no sexuality in the grosser sense. Children are not born there. That is only on the earth plane. It was this aspect of marriage to which the great Teacher referred when he said: “There will be neither marriage nor giving in marriage.” No! It is purer, deeper, more wonderful, a unity of souls, a complete merging of interests and knowledge without a loss of individuality. The nearest you ever get to it is the first high passions, too beautiful for physical expression when two high-souled lovers meet upon earthly plane. They find lower expression afterwards, but they will always in their hearts know that the first delicate, exquisite soul-union was the more lovely. So it is with the spirits.

*Arthur Conan Doyle*³²

Light

12 September 1925

“PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHS”

Sir, – I have noticed that my name is quoted in a contemporary psychic paper in connection with the photographs of the young mediums Falconer, of Edinburgh. May I say that I have no experience at all of the work of these mediums and cannot vouch for the *bona fides*³³ in any way. There is a reproduction of one alleged spirit photograph in the same pages which is undoubtedly an out-of-focus picture of Albert Moore’s well-known study called “Blossoms.” Such cases of transference may be honest, but they are disconcerting and awaken not unnatural suspicions.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Crowborough, September 4th

The Christian Spiritualist

11 November 1925

**SOLDIERS WHO HAVE COME BACK.
THE RETURN OF “DEAD” SONS**

Sir, – My Kingsley was not killed in the War. He was badly wounded at the Somme, but he died just before the Armistice in London from pneumonia.

It was about a year or more afterwards when I was sitting with Evan Powell that he came back. His voice sounded, very intense and earnest, before me. He said his own name, and my wife, his step-mother, heard it before I did. I listened very intently. Then I heard the word "Forgive!" in a loud whisper. I realised that he was alluding to the fact that he had opposed Spiritualism, for certainly there was nothing else in his manly and beautiful life which could possibly have hurt me. I, of course, assured him that I had nothing to forgive, and that he was right to form his own opinion. I then said, "Are you happy?" He answered, "I am happy now." I felt a heavy hand upon my head, which was bent forward, and I felt a kiss upon my brow. It would seem, therefore, that he was partly materialised. The medium who knew nothing of my relations with my son, was bound in his chair, and could not approach me. All the sitters heard the dialogue, so there was no hallucination. I have had several communications since, but none which moved me so much as this first one.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Daily News
9 December 1925**

THE PSYCHIC MUSEUM

Sir, – The article by your representative upon this museum is so genial that I should be churlish indeed if I were to take serious exception to it.

In it he couples my name with Sherlock Holmes, and I presume that since I am the only begetter of that over-rated character I must have some strand of my nature which corresponds with him. Let me assume this. In that case I would say (and you may file the saying for reference) that of all the feats of clear thinking which Holmes ever performed by far the greatest was when he saw that a despised and ridiculed subject was in very truth a great new revelation and an epoch-making event in the world's history.³³

There are many more now who would subscribe to this opinion than a few years ago, and I am convinced that a very short time, at the rate of its present progress will bring about the considered comprehension of it on the part of the whole human race.

My great difficulty with inquirers who come to my museum is that often they know nothing of the subject – worse than nothing in many cases, for they may be filled with prejudices and misrepresentations. Then in a few minutes I have to try and convey to them the elements of a great

science. Fancy a man coming to a geological museum who knew nothing of the science and imagined that he was competent to correct the curator upon the order of the fossils. That is a fair analogy to what is a constant experience.

To show the untenable nature of the views which they put forward I will take those of your correspondent concerning the experiment which produced the original Geley gloves. Let us take the facts as recorded in the *Journal de l'Institut Métapsychique*, which is the organ of that body – a scientific and not a spiritualistic institution in Paris.

First of all we will take the fact that the report of what occurred was signed by Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology at the University of Paris, Gustave Geley, who was the head of the Institute, and of European reputation, finally by the Count de Grammont, an experienced investigator, none of the three a professed Spiritualist.

They observed what occurred under a fair red light, and all were agreed as to their observation. Their scientific reputation depended upon the truth of their statement. Now I ask your representative for a fair answer to this question. Were these three men deliberately and senselessly lying? I will assume, as he is a sane man, that his answer is no.

Then the only alternative is that they were deceived. Let us see if this is credible. They had locked the door, and as the room was their own (I know it well, and it is in a basement) there was no secret entrance.

When Kluski, who is a Polish banker, had sunk into a trance, and when the ectoplasmic figure was formed from him in a fashion already recorded and photographed on many occasions with other mediums, it was asked to dip its hand into a pail which contained warm paraffin. All the observers saw it do so, and controlled the medium at the same time.

When the wax had encrusted the hands of the phantom it was asked to disappear. It did so, leaving the wax gloves which had formed over its hands upon the table.

And now comes the point which your correspondent has overlooked, and which is fatal to his theory of impersonation. The wax gloves, as anyone can see for themselves, are in one solid piece, and are much narrower at the wrist than across the hand. How, then, could the hand have been withdrawn save by dematerialisation inside the glove. No one has ever yet suggested any feasible way in which this could have been done.

To show the care taken by the researchers, Geley had put cholesterine in the pail of wax. An independent chemist analysed a portion of the glove and reported cholesterine. This, of course, is proof positive that the glove was not brought ready-made into the room.

Impressions were taken of the spirit hand and of that of the

medium, with the result that a certificate was obtained from M.Bayle, of the Paris police, that there was no resemblance.

The experiment was repeated with various sitters, Mr. and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie being among those who obtained the gloves at the Psychic Museum. Some 28 impressions were taken in all on different occasions.³⁵ Is it to be supposed that in every case these observant circles were unable in a red light to see that a stranger had come through the locked door and was walking about the room?

It is a foolish thing to be too credulous, and it is an equally foolish thing to be too incredulous. The balanced judgment holds its poise between.

I can well understand that a reporter may find it impossible to attain in half an hour the experience and knowledge which 38 years of work have given to me. That is natural. But it is not natural or reasonable that a novice who was not present should ascribe to fraud or folly events which were observed and guaranteed by some of the first intellects of Europe.

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The International Psychic Gazette
April 1926**

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MR. F.T.MUNNINGS

Sir, – The most puzzling and disconcerting cases which we ever encounter are those where a medium has intermittent psychic powers – sometimes of a high order – which are accompanied by a total want of moral perception, so that he is prepared to supplement such powers by cold-blooded and deliberate artifice when it suits his purpose. Mr. F.T. Munnings is an example of this type of medium, and it is our duty, after having some experience of his work, to warn the public that they sit with him at their own risk. We know of cases where the psychic result has been beyond suspicion and we know of others – notably one recently in a private family – where he has been exposed in obvious fraud with the tools of deception in his possession. We trust that this warning may prevent any such incident in the future.

Yours faithfully,

R.H. Saunders

H. Dennis Bradley

Arthur Conan Doyle

Abraham Wallace, M.D.

March 3, 1926

The Morning Post
12 April 1926

THE “PHOTOGRAPH” OF LORD COMBERMERE

Sir, – Mr.Campbell Swinton has criticised in your columns the psychic photograph which I showed at the Queen’s Hall, and which exhibits a figure, supposed to be that of the late Lord Combermere, seated in a chair.

I received the photograph through the great courtesy of Lord Combermere himself, and he apparently accepted the facts as I have stated them. I also hold a letter from a near relative giving further particulars and adding the name of the lady visitor who took it. He concludes with the words, “I am quite sure the negative was not faked. I got it direct from her.”

The idea that this perfectly clear figure of a seated man is a defect in the plate is too absurd for argument, but it shows the extreme lengths to which our opponents will go in their frantic search for a materialist explanation. “Ex uno disce omnes.”³⁶

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

P.S. – I was careful to point out that this figure was not necessarily the spirit of the deceased, but might be one of those mind forms or memory forms which do appear to exist.

Athenæum Club, April 10

The Morning Post
19 April 1926

THE COMBERMERE PHOTO

Sir, – I should be happy to allow you to publish this photograph, but Lord Combermere has shown me great courtesy in allowing me to screen it, and I hesitate to go further until I have his express permission. For the moment it seems difficult to communicate with him, but I hope I may presently be able to respond to Mr.Campbell Swinton’s challenge.

Meanwhile may I say once more that I received the photograph direct from Lord Combermere through the intermediary of a mutual friend. On the back is written:

“This photograph was taken of the library by Miss Corbet on December 5, 1891, on the afternoon of the funeral of Wellington Henry 2nd Viscount Combermere. The figure on the chair on the left of the photograph (legless) is supposed to be a likeness of him.”

In view of this endorsement your readers are in a position to judge

how far Mr.Campbell Swinton was justified in applying so insulting a term as “photographic fraud” to a picture which I had exhibited in public.

I would add that a comparison of features is impossible, since the face is shadowy. It is the time and the place which connect the photograph with the deceased.

The possible explanation that someone sat for a short period in the chair while the exposure was being made has, I understand, been completely negatived.

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

April 14

The Morning Post

23 April 1926

THE COMBERMERE PHOTOGRAPH

Sir, – I beg to enclose the Combermere photograph. I am advised that it will not reproduce, but you will be the best judge of that. Meanwhile you are at liberty to show it to any whom it may interest.

I notice with concern that one of your lady correspondents, with the spacious address of South-West London, complains that she was devil-ridden through a sentence in one of my works. As the same lady has appeared in one or more controversies, with the same story we may reasonably conclude that her case is an isolated one. Since, on the other hand, I have boxes and drawers filled with letters which tell me of hopes renewed and faith strengthened through these same works, I venture to hope that the balance is upon the right side.

It is strange to see some disputants urging the diabolical nature of spirit intercourse.³⁷ Does it not strike them that if the Devil were to teach mankind he would infallibly urge that we should concentrate upon the affairs of life, and suck the last drop of pleasure from it, since there was nothing beyond and no retribution to be feared? Certainly the last thing he would preach would be that we continue our existence, and that the quality of that future existence is regulated by our conduct here. If instead of using the catchword “familiar spirit” they were to substitute “guardian angel,” people would get a clearer view of what Spiritualism means. The Bible, too, would become more intelligible if they would realise that a “prophet” was an inspired medium and an “angel” a high spirit. Old records would then be brought into line with modern thought, and people would understand that God is not dead nor sleeping, but that He works for the education of His poor human children even as He did in the days of old.

There has never, in my opinion, been a time in the world’s history

when divine inspiration was more obvious than at present, but it is a common human error to magnify and idealise that which is distant and to fail to appreciate that which is near. In a century or two this Spiritualistic movement will be viewed with reverence as one of the great turning points of human thought.

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

15, Buckingham Palace-mansions,
S.W.1, April 21.

*[The photograph could not be reproduced for technical reasons,
but it was to be seen at the office of Morning Post.]*

**The Christian Spiritualist
2nd June 1926**

THE BIBLE

Sir, – Your correspondent who mentions my name in connection with the Bible must understand that a Moslem or a Hindoo can be a Spiritualist even as a Christian can. My view of the Bible, as of all other sacred books, is that they are gold in clay and that it is left to our intelligence to separate the one from the other. The Old Testament has more clay than gold. The New has very much more gold than clay.³⁸

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Morning Post
14 June 1926**

CONJURES AND SPIRITUALISM

Sir, – There is an abnormal frame of mind which may be called the Conjuror's Complex or Houdinitis. It is based upon several fallacies. The first is that Spiritualism depends upon physical phenomena for its proofs, whereas the more cogent are mental. The second is that manual dexterity bears some relation to brain capacity and enables its possessor to sit in judgment upon the Crookes, the Wallaces, and the Lombrosos. The third is that people who were not present are better judges of an episode than those who were present.

Now and again a conjurer is brought into contact with real psychic forces, and then realises his limitations. Kellar endorsed Eglinton, Bellachini endorsed Slade, and Howard Thurston endorsed Eusapia Palladino. But as a body the conjurors have not a good record in this long-drawn battle between the new knowledge and the old.

Yours, &c.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

15, Buckingham Palace-mansions,
S.W. June 10

Light
21 August 1926

“ALARMIST PROPHECIES”

Sir, – You have published two letters, one from Mr. Howard and the other from Major Tudor Pole, both to the effect that prophecies of the future of the world which may alarm people should be suppressed. It is a subject to which I have given much anxious thought, as I have not only received such prophecies in a very consistent and detailed form, but also so large a number of independent corroborations that it is difficult for me to doubt that there lies some solid truth at the back of them.

One's own reason must always be the ultimate judge in such a case; but one cannot altogether disregard the views put forward by the unseen communicators, especially when their other communications indicate wisdom and knowledge. If one takes their information seriously one must also take seriously their advice as to how such information should be used.

Rightly or wrongly – only the future can prove that – they take the view that certain changes, spiritual and physical, are shortly coming upon the earth. Also that such changes might be modified by a lessened materialism and an increased spirituality – in a word, a more serious appreciation of the objects of human existence.³⁹ If the messages are in any degree to effect this change of mind it is clear that they cannot be entirely suppressed.

Again, they declare that if such events should occur in a sudden and overwhelming manner, and be utterly unexpected and inexplicable, their result would be far more shattering to the human mind than if they had been foreseen, even in the vaguest fashion, and their ultimate purpose understood. This purpose, as explained in the messages, is remedial and altogether beneficial, however rough the treatment may seem, which is to rouse the world from the sleeping sickness which weighs it down.

Therefore I hold that we cannot lightly dismiss their considered conclusion, which is that the matter should not be discussed in a sensational manner, but that a quiet preparation should be made by the conveyance of information “where there is an ear to hear” and a general but gradual diffusion of the news and the evidence amongst those who might lead and steady the people in the event of any cosmic crisis. I get occasionally more drastic counsel. “Make the people alive to these things. Never mind if it does frighten them. They are lethargic and sleeping.”

None the less I feel that the time has not yet come for such action, and that the advice of my own chief informant, as outlined above, is the course which I should pursue. I entirely understand the point of view of your two correspondents, but after reading this they will realise that the decision is not a simple one, and does not rest entirely with ourselves.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Athenæum Club.

**The Sunday Times
29 August 1926**

THE HISTORY OF SPIRITUALISM

Sir, – May I say a word upon the courteous review by my friend Sir Ray Lankester which appeared in your issue of the 15th inst.? He states there that I was converted to Spiritualism by the experiences of other men. This is very far from the fact. If he had said that my attention was drawn to Spiritualism and my interest first aroused by the testimony of Crookes, Wallace, and others, he would be within the truth. But my own actual convictions are based upon my own personal experiences in a research which extended over many years, but did not reach an absolute conclusion till the close of 1916. From that time onward I have known that communion and survival were true with an amount of definite objective proof which would have satisfied Professor Clifford or any other man who is capable of weighing evidence and is unclouded by invincible prejudice. I am sure that if Sir Ray Lankester, with his keen intellect, had devoted the same time to the research, and had enjoyed similar experiences, he could not have failed to come to the same conclusion.

In the chapter of my history which is headed “Some Modern Mediums,” I give a short synopsis of personal experiences which cover, I think, as wide a range as those of any investigator with whom I am acquainted. I cannot understand how anyone could read that chapter and afterwards state that I was indebted to any other man for my knowledge of psychic truth.

I may add that there is no single fact in my book which I have derived from Mr. Podmore, as Sir Ray Lankester seems to think.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Lyndhurst.

**Westminster Gazette
22 November 1926**

HOUDINI AND THE SPIRITS

Sir, – Mr.Clodd has given you a story of Houdini which I should wish to modify.⁴⁰ It has always been the custom of Mr.Clodd to swallow without question anything which is against Spiritualism however absurd, and to refuse to give credence to anything, however well authenticated, which is in its favour. In this case he quotes from Houdini's book as though it were an authority, whereas it has been shown to be packed with inaccuracies from end to end.

What really occurred in the case to which Mr.Clodd refers was published by me on page 180 of my *American Adventure*. The account was written at the time, and was not disputed by Houdini when I met him in America next year. He tacitly accepted it then and never dreamed of disputing it until he began his campaign against Spiritualism.

We were together at Atlantic City and he was talking in moving terms of his mother. Knowing how strong an inspiration comes at times upon my wife, I asked Houdini if we should try and get him some comfort. He eagerly assented. It was a pure act of humanitarian pity which prompted my wife's acquiescence, and it is strange that he could ever have alluded to it in slighting terms.

My wife wrote rapidly some fifteen block sheets of paper, and Houdini, reading it page by page as I tossed it across, grew white to the lips. He was then told to ask a mental question. An answer was written and he said, "That is right." He was moved to the core at the time, and when we met him three days later in New York he said, alluding to the episode, "I have been walking on air ever since."

When he undertook his frenzied campaign against Spiritualism, which has had so deplorable an ending,⁴¹ Houdini had to deal with this episode. He could only find two points on which he might make this courtesy extended to him seem ridiculous. The one was that my wife had put a cross at the head of the paper whereas his mother was a Jewess. The other was that she spoke Yiddish whereas the message was in English. These seem plausible, but they really only serve to show the unfamiliarity with the methods of psychic communication which was characteristic of the man.

First as to the cross. We were aware, of course, that Houdini was a Jew. My wife *always* puts a cross on her paper when she writes under inspiration, as she believes it to be a protection against deceit.

Then as to the language. In the case of an inspirational writer it is the thought, the ideas, which are poured through her brain, and so to the paper. She does not give a verbatim message in a strange language. Such a feat might be possible to a trance medium, but not to a normal inspirational one.

Thus Houdini's objections fade into thin air. There is one other

tragic point which I might add. On the same day as this séance we held a second one in the evening, as recorded on page 189 of the same book. On that occasion, through the lips of the wife of a well-known American lawyer who was present, there came a long message purporting also to come from the mother, mourning over the premature end which she saw approaching for her brilliant son. As we were all on friendly terms with Houdini at the time, we were shocked at the message. We did not pass it on to him, as we hoped it might prove mistaken, but that hope has now been dissipated.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Bignell Wood, Minstead, Lyndhurst,
19 November

**The Morning Post
20 December 1926**

**PSYCHOMETRY AND DETECTIVE WORK.
SIR A.CONAN DOYLE AND AGATHA CHRISTIE CASE**

Sir, – The Christie case has afforded an excellent example of the use of psychometry as an aid to the detective. It is, it must be admitted, a power which is elusive and uncertain, but occasionally it is remarkable in its efficiency. It is often used by the French and German police, but if it is ever employed by our own it must be *sub rosa*,⁴² for it is difficult for them to call upon the very powers which the law compels them to persecute.

In this case I obtained a glove of Mrs.Christie's, and asked Mr.Horace Leaf, an excellent psychometrist, for an opinion. I gave him no clue at all as to what I wanted or to whom the article belonged. He never saw it until I laid it on the table at the moment of consultation, and there was nothing to connect either it or me with the Christie case. The date was Sunday last. He at once got the name of Agatha. "There is trouble connected with this article. The person who owns it is half dazed and half purposeful. She is not dead as many think. She is alive. You will hear of her, I think, next Wednesday."

Mrs.Christie was found on Tuesday night but it was actually Wednesday when the news reached me, so that everything in the reading, so far as I could test it (there was a good deal about character and motives which was outside my knowledge) proved to be true. The only error was that he had an impression of water, though whether the idea of a Hydro was at the bottom of this feeling is at least arguable. I sent the report on to Colonel Christie that evening.⁴³

Arthur Conan Doyle

The Psychic Bookshop, Library and Museum,

2, Victoria-street,
Westminster, S.W., December 16

G.K.'s Weekly
11 June 1927

“PHENEAS SPEAKS”

Sir, – Your views are always of interest to me save when you touch upon religion, for there they may be predicted. Naturally you think of Spiritualism as your school of thought thinks of it. I only object to one sentence in your article upon *Pheneas Speaks*. It is that in which in some strange way you link up the Boer war and my views upon religion. The Boer war began in 1899. It was in 1879, or just twenty years earlier, that I came to the conclusion that the Almighty was not the Patron of any one sect, and that all were equally His children. What this has to do with the Boer war is beyond my comprehension.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Light
1 October 1927

“THE MYSTERY OF *EDWIN DROOD*”⁴⁴

Sir, – The *Edwin Drood* case seems to me to be so important, both from a psychic and from a literary point of view, that I was about to interrupt my brief holiday in order to send you an account of it, but I find that it would be a superfluous act, since Mr.von Reuter has done it so clearly and accurately. I would only add that my hands were not on the instrument and that I had not discussed the question with the von Reuters.

Yours, etc.,

A. Conan Doyle

The Daily Express
6 October 1927

POLICE EVIDENCE AND MEDIUMS

Sir, – Now that the Home Secretary is examining the value of uncorroborated police evidence, it is to be hoped that he will extend his inquiry into the cases where policemen, and policewomen, appear against mediums.

There are no doubt some frauds among fortune-tellers and clairvoyants, but no one can have much wider experience of the matter

than I, and I know that a good medium is the greatest source of consolation and the most cogent proof of immortality that can be found in the world today.

Yet these wonderful and sensitive instruments are worried by the unintelligent application of laws which were made before spiritualism was ever heard of, and were intended, as their name implies, to check vagrancy in the country.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Minstead, Lyndhurst

Light

26 November 1927

THE HYDESVILLE MEMORIAL (2)

Sir, – I appealed to your readers to help me with subscriptions for the Memorial which is being erected at Rochester in memory of the birth of Spiritualism in the neighbouring hamlet of Hydesville. It is important that this Monument, a handsome obelisk, should be international in character. Up to date I have received 22s. 6d. from our British community. Will they leave me to send that in as our British contribution?

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

The Morning Post

17 September 1928

THE HOUDINI CASE

Sir, – With reference to Sir William Bull's question I do not know that there was any sequel to the Myers experiment. On the other hand there have been many cases of documents, wills, &c., being found by information given apparently by the deceased and coming through mediums. An outstanding case is that of the code word agreed upon between Houdini and his mother, which came through the agency of Arthur Ford, the well-known medium, and was admitted to be correct by the only person in the world who knew it – namely, Mrs. Houdini, the widow of the great magician.

A. Conan Doyle

15, Buckingham Palace-mansions, S.W.

The Cape Times

21 November 1928

A HAPPY CREED

Sir, – Your correspondent, “Confirmed Agnostic,” need not be depressed. We are told that every man eventually gets his heart’s desire in the other world, and if his ambition is really annihilation, as he states, then perhaps something of the sort, if only temporary, may be arranged.

But he should not continue to repeat the often-refuted statement that Spiritualism breeds insanity. It is absolutely untrue. Of course there is a certain type of mind which is put off its balance by any form of religion. But religious mania usually attacks those who have melancholy beliefs – such as predestination. Spiritualism is a very happy creed and in all my forty years of experience I have hardly ever known a person the worse for it.

The legend of insanity was started by Dr. Forbes Winslow, who said there were 10,000 people in asylums through Spiritualism. Winslow afterwards became an ardent Spiritualist, and admitted that his figures were imaginary, but the evil lived after him and the assertion is still made. Dr. Eugene Crowell made an analysis of the asylums of four States, including New York, and among many hundreds of cases of religious mania could only find four Spiritualists. Morselli, the famous Italian Alienist, made a similar inquiry with the same result. I hope, therefore, that your correspondent will either withdraw his statement, or give some definite figures to support it.

I am, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

November 20

The East African Standard
2 March 1929

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Sir, – Mr. Sharpe Hillman’s suggestion that Spiritualism should be judged by its failures and not by its successes is the exact opposite to all scientific methods – and I may add to common sense. It is as if I denied the Atlantic Cable because I have once or twice received misdirected or unintelligible cablegrams. In all science it is the positive result and not the negative which counts. The Chemist empties his failures down the sink but he builds upon his successes.

Yours, etc.,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Nairobi, Feb. 22, 1929

The Freethinker
5 May 1929

THE NAIROBI GHOST PHOTOGRAPH

Sir, – I notice that in your issue of April 18, you accuse me of making “another bloomer,” in connexion with the Nairobi photographic incident. It is in truth yourself who make the bloomers, for I have never seen a statement about Spiritualism in your paper which was not either untrue, or else one of those half-truths, the nature of which is proverbial.⁴⁵ For example, in this instance, you tell half a story, the whole of which is told in the enclosed extract. This tells how Mr. Palmer, after claiming to be the ghost, admitted to the audience (and to me in a subsequent letter) that the real ghost had afterwards appeared and terrified him. “When I had seen and felt its power,” he writes, “I had no heart for further posing.” If you believe him in one point, how can you discredit him on the other, and how can you sustain your contention that the incident disproves the existence of this particular ghost?

Arthur Conan Doyle

The Freethinker
26 May 1929

THE NAIROBI PHOTOGRAPH

Sir, – I am sorry to trouble you again upon this matter, but it was you yourself who brought it up, and Mr. Palmer now continues the attack. It may interest you both to learn that the photograph was originally obtained by me from Mr. Melton, of Nottingham. When Mr. Palmer claimed it at Nairobi, it was impossible for me to confute his claim. But now I have referred the matter to Mr. Melton, and he assures me that the photograph was indeed taken by him, that it is truly psychic, that he has the original negative, and that Mr. Palmer is quite mistaken. So it would appear that I have been right from the first.

Arthur Conan Doyle

The Morning Post
12 June 1929

THE “WITCH” OF ENDOR

Sir, – It is curious that so exact a scholar as Bishop Barnes should speak of the “Witch” of Endor. No such person is mentioned in the Bible.

She was always the “woman” of Endor.⁴⁶ The opprobrious name is given to her in the chapter heading, which reflects the ignorance of psychic matters which prevailed among the high ecclesiastics who did the translation, and which has not entirely disappeared from among their successors.

Personally, I could never see anything of evil in the episode in which Saul consulted the seer. She was what we should call a clairvoyante, for she had to describe to the King what it was she saw. As a medium she had first to get a promise of immunity, for the laws of Israel were as barbarous as those of England are today in the matter of Spirit intercourse. She then was the means of conveying a direct message from the Lord, together with a prophecy which was duly fulfilled. What is there reprehensible in such a transaction?

Bishop Barnes talks of the strong current of materialistic thought which sets against miracles. But he says nothing of the very notable and increasing minority who understand that there are really psychic laws which produce results which might well appear to those who saw them to be miraculous, though they only meant that a lower law was temporarily in abeyance owing to a higher one, as when gravity seems to be contradicted when the steel bar springs up to the magnet. It is amazing that all the well-attested results of modern psychical research seem to be completely ignored by Dr. Barnes and the school which he represents. It is a school, I think, which has already passed its zenith and is on the downward grade.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Bignell Wood, Minstead, Lyndhurst

**The Morning Post
17 June 1929**

“THE ‘WITCH’ OF ENDOR”

Sir, – The letter of the Archdeacon of Chester seems not to refute but to confirm my assertion that the opprobrious word “witch” does not occur in the text of the Bible, but is inserted in the chapter heading to humour the well-known weakness of James the First. As the medium was made the direct messenger from God it is difficult to see why the incident is always quoted as if it were a scandalous one.

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex

**The Occult Review
December 1929**

CONVENT SCANDALS

Sir, – I am glad to have the assurance of Mr. Thomas Foster that stories of escaped nuns and the occasional scandals in convents “have been long since exploded.” One would certainly not wish to counter false accusations against spiritualism by advancing false ones against our critics. But if it is really as Mr. Foster says then why these sad tales from those who have got out, why these prison-like walls, and above all why this determined opposition to inspection? I am convinced that the Roman Church would be in a stronger position if these matters were open to public inquiry and that her true interests lie that way.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

**The Journal of
the Society for Psychical Research
March 1930**

RESIGNATION FROM THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

DEAR SIR (or MADAM), – I had occasion recently [on the 22nd of January 1930.] to send the following letter to the Chairman of the Council of the S.P.R. -

“Dear Sir,

“I have just read an article in the January number of the *Journal* by Mr. Besterman upon the Millesimo sittings. It is, in my judgment, such a series of misrepresentations and insulting innuendoes that it tends to lower the good name of the Society. The insolence by which the considered opinion of a man like Professor Bozzano, who was present, is set aside and treated with contempt by one who was not present, and who has had very little experience of psychical research, makes one ashamed that such stuff should be issued by an official of a Society which has any scientific standing.

“To appreciate the full absurdity, as well as the gratuitous offensiveness of Mr. Besterman’s alternative theory of fraud, one has to visualise what it exactly implies. It means that an Italian nobleman of old family, a member of the legislative body, has invited a circle of friends to his home in order to practise a succession of complicated frauds upon them. That he is himself implicated is shown by the fact that levitation of his own body and other personal phenomena are among those most clearly recorded. Having assembled his guests he causes the voices of his own

dead relatives and others to be sounded in the room. A lady confederate conceals under the short modern skirt a long medieval rapier, a matador's sword, a big doll and other objects quite unseen by a critical company. She or some other confederate produces a large ballon-like object which hovers above the company, and in some unspecified way produces blasts of ice-cold air. All these and many other wonders are brought off so successfully that in a succession of sittings the company, including Professor Bozzano, are completely deceived, and the latter stakes his scientific reputation upon the truth of the phenomena. This is the picture which Mr. Besterman's theory of fraud would compel us to accept, the whole being done with no conceivable object. Can we dignify such nonsense as this by the name of Psychical Research, or is it not the limit of puerile perversity?

"A further example of prejudice is to be found in the allusions on page 15 of the same *Journal* to the real psychic researcher, Mr. Dennis Bradley, and to George Valiantine in Berlin. The assertions of the opponents of Spiritualism are at once accepted on their face value without the slightest attempt at discriminate examination.

"I have long waited hoping that the Podmore, Dingwall, Besterman tradition of obtuse negation at any cost would die away. But as there is no sign of it, and the obsession seems rather to become more pronounced, my only resource is, after thirty-six years of patience, to resign my own membership and to make some sort of public protest against the essentially unscientific and biased work of a Society which has for a whole generation produced no constructive work of any kind, but has confined its energies to the misrepresentation and hindrance of those who have really worked at the most important problem ever presented to mankind.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle"

Those of us who are conscious of the extreme importance of the movement called "Spiritualism," or even those who are desirous to see fair play in the matter, must be aware of the way in which the Society, originally intended to be a sympathetic and fair centre for inquiry, seems to have become simply an anti-spiritualist organisation. Everything which tends to prove the truth of that cult, no matter how honourable or sane the source may be, is assailed by suppression, misrepresentation and every sort of unreasonable and vicious opposition.

For a generation, since the death of Myers and the end of the Piper sittings, the Society has done no constructive work of any importance, and has employed its energies in hindering and belittling those who are engaged in real active psychical research. This latest article of

Mr. Besterman may be insignificant in itself, but it is a link in that long chain of prejudice which comes down from Mr. Podmore, Mrs. Sedgwick [sic], and Mr. Dingwall, to the present day. It is necessary, as it seems to me, to call a halt, and to make inquiry as to how far the Society is to be forever in the hands of this small central body of reactionaries, or whether they really represent the opinion of the members. It is not desirable that the Society should lose its independence or become a Spiritualistic body, but it is most essential that it shall not treat what so many regard as a matter of supreme importance with the irresponsibility and levity which have been shown hitherto, where it has been the custom again and again for a commentator to jeer at phenomena which he has not witnessed, in the face of the most cogent evidence of their having actually occurred.

I would ask those who would wish to appreciate what I say to read Mr. Besterman's article in the January *Journal*, and then Professor Bozzano's measured and dignified preface to Mrs. Hack's *Modern Psychic Mysteries* (Rider), which treats of these sittings.

This matter is of more importance than would at first sight appear, for I say deliberately that these Millesimo sittings are on the very highest possible level of psychical research, both from the point of view of accurate reporting, variety of phenomena, and purity of mediumship. Therefore, if they can be laughed out of court anything we can produce will be treated with similar contempt. I can hardly believe, as I read Mr. Besterman's criticism, that he has actually read the book. It bristles with errors of fact. He complains that we are not told where the sword was apported from. On page 93 may be read: "The weapon had been lying on a large table on the second floor of the palace. In a direct ... thirty yards." He talks of the apports as if their extreme length was two feet (in order to insinuate that they could be concealed by the lady). On page 176 is a picture of a lance 6 feet long, and on page 208 of a plant 4/2 feet high – both apports. He complains that he does not know what a flexatone is, and yet it is described on page 97. Yet this slovenly critic takes advantage of his official position in order to warn the reading public of the S.P.R. away from this most important book.

I have waited long in the hope of some reform but I have now concluded that it is not to be expected, and that the influence of the Society is entirely for evil. I have, therefore, resigned my membership, and the protest would be more effective if those who agree with me would see their way to follow my example. It need not hamper their psychic studies. In the British College of Psychic Science, 15 Queen's Gate, W., they will find an Institution where they can participate themselves in real positive psychical research, with mediums at hand to be tested, a good library, an excellent quarterly magazine, and an atmosphere which is progressive and

not stagnant.

I write this under a strong sense of duty, for I am now one of the oldest members of the S.P.R. I am convinced, however, that they have long been not a help but a hindrance to the psychical knowledge of the world, and that a strong protest is called for.

I may add that, having uttered such a protest, I cannot undertake to enter upon prolonged argument or correspondence, nor can I attend meetings, as my health hardly permits me to leave the house.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

M.D. (Edin.), LL.D., January 1930.

P.S. I would remind members of the words of that great pioneer, Sir William Barrett: "A scepticism which is too lofty to see the existence of a mass of evidence under its very eyes is anything but healthy. It calls for medical attention."

**The Morning Post
6 March 1930**

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE

Sir, – In the early morning of February 3 I was lying awake when I became aware of heavy steps approaching along the passage which leads to my room. They were quite as well marked as those of the butler when he brings me my early morning cup of tea. They paused outside my door, and I then heard clearly a short cough as of someone clearing their throat.

I turned up the light and noticed that it was 3.30 a.m. I then rose and went to the door. I flung it open fully expecting to find some person on the other side. The light from my lamp shone down the passage and there was no one there. Having made sure that this was the case, I returned to bed in a somewhat shaken state, as I was a sick man and in no condition for such nocturnal adventures.

In a quarter of an hour or so my heart palpitation passed away and I fell into a deep sleep.

Two days later my wife received a letter from Mrs. Osbourne Leonard, the well-known medium, saying that she had never dreamt of me before in her life, but that between 3.30 and four o'clock on Monday morning she had had an extraordinarily vivid impression of having visited me and actually seeing me and administering some healing treatment to me. "It was all so real," she said, "that it cannot be classed as a dream." In this letter Mrs. Leonard offered to come to Crowborough and to give me a special séance, which she did three days later nobly fulfilling her promise, which involved a drive of thirty miles partly through deep snow.

The séance was a very wonderful experience, but it makes a story by itself. When it was over I discussed with Mrs. Leonard the happenings of Monday morning, and I mentioned to her the short cough which I had heard outside my door. She said: "That is really final. I seldom have anything the matter with my throat, but that night every time I woke I found myself coughing in the very way you describe. It was so unusual that it impressed itself upon my memory."

These are the facts, and they seem to me beyond all range of coincidence, and to present a very clear case of bi-location. Mrs. Leonard was sleeping at Kenley, but undoubtedly her double or etheric body had visited me at Crowborough.

A. Conan Doyle

**The Times
29 March 1930**

LORD BALFOUR

Sir, – In the various obituary notices of the late Lord Balfour I have not observed that any reference has been made to his keen interest in the things of the spirit.

As early as 1894 he was president of the Society of Psychical Research, and his presidential address of that year showed how keen was his understanding of the problems at issue. He had already amassed considerable practical experience of mediumship, for it is mentioned by Mr. Campbell Holmes in his "Facts of Psychic Science" (page 388) that as early as 1875 he had investigated materialisations in a series of séances with Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb, some of which were held in his own house.

He was exceedingly cautious in expressing his convictions, and, though on one occasion I interchanged letters with him upon the subject, I am unable to say that he fully accepted the theory of communication, although I am quite certain that he did not absolutely reject it. As a proof of this I may mention that some years ago he was asked to address the annual conference of the Spiritualists' National Union, and he accepted the invitation. This, of course, would not imply full acceptance of the spiritualists' view, for spiritualists are always keen to get sane and intelligent outsiders' criticism. He was, however, prevented from carrying out his intention by an illness which entailed a visit to a Continental health resort.

I think that I am right in stating that he had even some undeveloped psychic gifts of his own and that he obtained some results in an

experiment in crystal-gazing. Andrew Lang mentions the fact in one of his books.

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Conan Doyle

Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,
March 27

Light
5 April 1930

THE USE OF GREAT NAMES

Sir, – It might interest your readers to know that some weeks ago I had a communication which professed to come from Thomas Hardy. It came through an amateur Medium from whom I had only once before had a message, which was most veridical. Therefore, I was inclined to take Hardy's message seriously, the more so as intrinsically it was worthy of him. I should place it on the same level of internal evidence as the Oscar Wilde and the Jack London scripts. Hardy gave a posthumous review of his own work, some aspects of which he now desired to revise and modify. The level of his criticism was a very high and just one. He then, as a sign of identity, sent a poem, which seems to me to be a remarkable one. It describes evening in a Dorsetshire village. Without quoting it all I will give here the second verse which runs thus:

Full well we know the shadow o'er the green,
When Westering sun reclines behind the trees,
The little hours of evening, when the scene
Is faintly fashioned, fading by degrees.

The third and fourth lines are in my opinion exquisite. I do not know if they were memories of something written in life. I should be glad to know if anyone recognises them.

Arthur Conan Doyle

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES ⁴⁷

Early in my career, I had a year with the Jesuits, for I was despatched to Feldkirch, which is a Jesuit school in the Voralberg province of Austria, to which many better-class German boys are sent. It was in the summer of 1876 that I left Feldkirch, and I have always had a

pleasant memory of the Austrian Jesuits and of their old school.

Indeed I have a kindly feeling towards all Jesuits, far as I have strayed from their paths. I see now both their limitations and their virtues. They have been slandered in some things, for during eight years of constant contact I cannot remember that they were less truthful than their fellows, or more casuistical than their neighbours. They were keen, clean-minded earnest men, so far as I knew them, with a few black sheep among them, but not many, for the process of selection was careful and long. In all ways, save in their theology, they were admirable, though this same theology made them hard and inhuman upon the surface, which is indeed the general effect of Catholicism in its more extreme forms. The convert is lost to the family. Their hard, narrow outlook gives the Jesuits driving power, as is noticeable in the Puritans and all hard, narrow creeds. They are devoted and fearless and have again and again, both in Canada, in South America and in China, been the vanguard of civilisation to their own grievous hurt. They are the old guard of the Roman Church. But the tragedy is that they, who would gladly give their lives for the old faith, have in effect helped to ruin it, for it is they, according to Father Tyrrell and the modernists, who have been at the back of all those extreme doctrines of papal infallibility and Immaculate Conception, with a general all-round tightening of dogma, which have made it so difficult for the man with scientific desire for truth or with intellectual self-respect to keep within the Church.

For some years Sir Charles Mivart, the last of Catholic Scientists, tried to do the impossible, and then he also had to leave go his hold, so that there is not, so far as I know, one single man of outstanding fame in science or in general thought who is a practicing Catholic. This is the work of the extremists and is deplored by many of the moderates and fiercely condemned by the modernists. It depends also upon the inner Italian directorate who give the orders. Nothing can exceed the uncompromising bigotry of the Jesuit theology, or their apparent ignorance of how it shocks the modern conscience. I remember that when, as a grown lad, I heard Father Murphy, a great fierce Irish priest, declare that there was sure damnation for every one outside the Church, I looked upon him with horror, and to that moment I trace the first rift which has grown into such a chasm between me and those who were my guides.

This brings me to my own spiritual unfolding, if such it may be called, during those years of constant struggle. I have already in my account of the Jesuits shown how, even as a boy, all that was sanest and most generous in my nature rose up against a narrow theology and an uncharitable outlook upon the other great religions of the world. In the Catholic Church to doubt anything is to doubt everything, for since it is a

vital axiom that doubt is a mortal sin when once it has, unbidden and unappeasable, come upon you, everything is loosened and you look upon the whole wonderful interdependent scheme with other and more critical eyes. Thus viewed there was much to attract – its traditions, its unbroken and solemn ritual, the beauty and truth of many of its observances, its poetical appeal to the emotions, the sensual charm of music, light and incense, its power as an instrument of law and order. For the guidance of an unthinking and uneducated world it could in many ways hardly be surpassed, as has been shown in Paraguay, and in the former Ireland where, outside agrarian trouble, crime was hardly known. All this I could clearly see, but if I may claim any outstanding characteristic in my life, it is that I have never paltered or compromised with religious matters, that I have always weighed them very seriously, and that there was something in me which made it absolutely impossible, even when my most immediate interests were concerned, to say anything about them save that which I, in the depth of my being, really believed to be true. Judging it thus by all the new knowledge which came to me both from my reading and from my studies, I found that the foundations not only of Roman Catholicism but of the whole Christian faith, as presented to me in nineteenth century theology, were so weak that my mind could not build upon them.

It is to be remembered that these were the years when Huxley,⁴⁸ Tyndall,⁴⁹ Darwin,⁵⁰ Herbert Spencer⁵¹ and John Stuart Mill⁵² were our chief philosophers, and that even the man in the street felt the strong sweeping current of their thought, while to the young student, eager and impressionable, it was overwhelming. I know now that their negative attitude was even more mistaken, and very much more dangerous, than the positive positions which they attacked with such destructive criticism. A gap had opened between our fathers and ourselves so suddenly and completely that when a Gladstone wrote to uphold the Gadarene swine,⁵³ or the six days of Creation,⁵⁴ the youngest student rightly tittered over his arguments, and it did not need a Huxley to demolish them.

I can see now very clearly how deplorable it is that manifest absurdities should be allowed to continue without even a footnote to soften them in the sacred text, because it has the effect that what is indeed sacred becomes overlaid, and one can easily be persuaded that what is false in parts can have no solid binding force. There are no worse enemies of true religion than those who clamour against all revision or modification of that strange mass of superbly good and questionable matter which we lump all together into a single volume as if there were the same value to all of it. It is not solid gold, but gold in clay, and if this be understood the earnest seeker will not cast it aside when he comes upon the clay, but will value the gold the more in that he has himself separated it.⁵⁵

It was, then, all Christianity, and not Roman Catholicism alone, which had alienated my mind and driven me to an agnosticism, which never for an instant degenerated into atheism, for I had a very keen perception of the wonderful poise of the universe and the tremendous power of conception and sustenance which it implied. I was reverent in all my doubts and never ceased to think upon the matter, but the more I thought the more confirmed became my non-conformity. In a broad sense I was a Unitarian, save that I regarded the Bible with more criticism than Unitarians usually show. This negative position was so firm that it seemed to me to be a terminus; whereas it proved only a junction on the road of life where I was destined to change from the old well-worn line on to a new one. Every materialist, as I can now clearly see, is a case of arrested development. He has cleared his ruins, but has not begun to build that which would shelter him. As to psychic knowledge, I knew it only by the account of exposures in the police courts and the usual wild and malicious statements in the public press. Years were to pass before I understood that in that direction might be found the positive proofs which I constantly asserted were the only conditions upon which I could resume any sort of allegiance to the unseen. I must have definite demonstration, for if it were to be a matter of faith then I might as well go back to the faith of my fathers. "Never will I accept anything which cannot be proved to me. The evils of religion have all come from accepting things which cannot be proved." So I said at the time and I have been true to my resolve.

It was in these years after my marriage and before leaving Southsea that I planted the first seeds of those psychic studies which were destined to revolutionise my views and to absorb finally all the energies of my life. I had at that time the usual contempt which the young educated man feels towards the whole subject which has been covered by the clumsy name of Spiritualism. I had read of mediums being convicted of fraud, I had heard of phenomena which were opposed to every known scientific law, and I had deplored the simplicity and credulity which could deceive good, earnest people into believing that such bogus happenings were signs of intelligence outside our own existence. Educated as I had been during my most plastic years in the school of medical materialism, and soaked in the negative views of all my great teachers, I had no room in my brain for theories which cut right across every fixed conclusion that I had formed. I was wrong and my great teachers were wrong, but still I hold that they wrought well and that their Victorian agnosticism was in the interests of the human race, for it shook the old iron-clad unreasoning Evangelical position which was so universal before their days. For all rebuilding a site must be cleared. There were two separate Victorian movements towards change, the one an attempt to improve the old building and make it good

enough to carry on – as shown in the Oxford and High Church development, the other a knocking down of ruins which could only end in some fresh erection springing up. As I have shown my own position was that of a respectful materialist who entirely admitted a great central intelligent cause, without being able to distinguish what that cause was, or why it should work in so mysterious and terrible a way in bringing its designs to fulfilment.

From my point of view the mind (and so far as I could see the soul, which was the total effect of all the hereditary or personal functionings of the mind) was an emanation from the brain and entirely physical in its nature. I saw, as a medical man, how a spicule of bone or a tumour pressing on the brain would cause what seemed an alteration in the soul. I saw also how drugs or alcohol would turn on fleeting phases of virtue or vice. The physical argument seemed an overpowering one. It had never struck me that the current of events might really flow in the opposite direction, and that the higher faculties could only manifest themselves imperfectly through an imperfect instrument. The broken fiddle is silent and yet the musician is the same as ever.

The first thing which steadied me and made me reconsider my position was the question of telepathy, which was already being discussed by William Barrett⁵⁶ and others, even before the appearance of Myers' monumental work on *Human Personality*⁵⁷ – the first book which devoted to these psychic subjects the deep study and sustained brain power which they demand. It may, in my opinion, take a permanent place in human literature like the *Novum Organum*⁵⁸ or *The Descent of Man*⁵⁹ or any other great root-book which has marked a date in human thought. Having read some of the evidence I began to experiment in thought transference, and I found a fellow-researcher in Mr. Ball, a well-known architect in the town. Again and again, sitting behind him, I have drawn diagrams, and he in turn has made approximately the same figure. I showed beyond any doubt whatever that I could convey my thought without words.

But if I could verify such conclusions up to six feet I could not well doubt them when they gave me the evidence that the same results could be obtained at a distance. With an appropriate subject, and some undefined sympathy between the two individuals, it was independent of space. So the evidence seemed to show. I had always sworn by science and by the need of fearless following wherever truth might lie. It was clear now that my position had been too rigid. I had compared the thought-excretion of the brain to the bile-excretion of the liver. Clearly this was untenable. If thought could go a thousand miles and produce a perceptible effect then it differed entirely not only in degree but in kind from any purely physical material. That seemed certain, and it must involve some modification of

my old views.

About this time (1886) the family of a General whom I attended professionally became interested in table turning and asked me to come and check their results. They sat round a dining-room table which after a time, their hands being upon it, began to sway and finally got sufficient motion to tap with one leg. They then asked questions and received answers, more or less wise and more or less to the point. They were got by the tedious process of reciting the alphabet and writing down the letter which the tap indicated. It seemed to me that we were collectively pushing the table, and that our wills were concerned in bringing down the leg at the right moment. I was interested but very sceptical. Some of these messages were not vague platitudes but were definite and from dead friends of the family, which naturally impressed theirs greatly, though it had not the same effect upon me, since I did not know them. I have the old records before me as I write. "Don't tell the girls when you see them, but they will talk about me. Kiss my baby for me. I watch her always. Francie." This was the style of message, mixed up with a good many platitudes. We held twenty or more of such meetings, but I never received anything evidential to my own address, and I was very critical as to the whole proceedings.

None the less there was a problem to be solved and I went on with its solution, reading the pros and the cons, and asking advice from those who had experience, especially from General Drayson, a very distinguished thinker and a pioneer of psychic knowledge, who lived at that time at Southsea. I had known Drayson first as an astronomer, for he had worked out a revolutionary idea by which there is a fatal mistake in our present idea as to the circle which is described in the heavens by the prolonged axis of the earth. It is really a wider circle round a different centre, and this correction enables us to explain several things now inexplicable, and to make astronomy a more exact science, with certain very important reactions upon geology and the recurrent glacial epochs, the exact date of which could be fixed. His views impressed me much at the time, and several books upholding them have appeared since his death, notably *Draysoniana* by Admiral de Horsey. If he makes good, as I think he will, Drayson will make a great permanent name. His opinion therefore was not negligible upon any subject, and when he told me his views and experiences on Spiritualism I could not fail to be impressed, though my own philosophy was far too solid to be easily destroyed. I was too poor to employ professional mediums, and to work on such subjects without a medium is as if one worked at astronomy without a telescope. Once only an old man with some reputed psychic power came for a small fee and gave us a demonstration. He went into a loud-breathing trance to the alarm of his audience, and then gave each of us a test. Mine was certainly a very

remarkable one, for it was “Do not read Leigh Hunt’s book.” I was hesitating at the time whether I should read his *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration* or not, for on the one hand it is literature and on the other the treatment repelled me. This then was a very final and excellent test so far as telepathy went, but I would not fully grant that it was more. I was so impressed, however, that I wrote an account of it to *Light*, the psychic paper, and so in the year 1887 I actually put myself on public record as a student of these matters. That was thirty-seven years ago, as I write, so I am a very senior student now. From that time onwards I read and thought a great deal, though it was not until the later phase of my life that I realised whither all this was tending. This question I will treat in a final section by itself, so that those to whom it is of less interest can avoid it.⁶⁰

I was deeply interested and attracted for a year or two by Theosophy, because while Spiritualism seemed at that time to be chaos so far as philosophy went, Theosophy presented a very well thought-out and reasonable scheme, parts of which, notably reincarnation and Karma, seemed to offer an explanation for some of the anomalies of life.⁶¹ I read Sinnett’s *Occult World* and afterwards with even greater admiration I read his fine exposition of Theosophy in *Esoteric Buddhism*, a most notable book. I also met him, for he was an old friend of General Drayson’s, and I was impressed by his conversation. Shortly afterwards, however, there appeared Dr. Hodgson’s⁶² report upon this investigation into Madame Blavatsky’s⁶³ proceedings at Adyar, which shook my confidence very much. It is true that Mrs. Besant⁶⁴ has since then published a powerful defence which tends to show that Hodgson may have been deceived, but the subsequent book *A Priestess of Isis*⁶⁵ which contains many of her own letters leaves an unpleasant impression, and Sinnett’s posthumous work seems to show that he also had lost confidence. On the other hand Colonel Olcott shows that the woman undoubtedly had real psychic powers, whatever their source. As to Spiritualism it seems to have only interested her in its lower phenomenal aspect.⁶⁶ Her books show extraordinary erudition and capacity for hard work, even if they represent the transfer of other people’s conclusions, as they frequently do. It would be unjust, however, to condemn the old wisdom simply because it was introduced by this extraordinary and volcanic person. We have also had in our branch of the occult many dishonest mediums, but we have hastened to unveil them where we could do so, and Theosophy will be in a stronger position when it shakes off Madame Blavatsky altogether.⁶⁷ In any case it could never have met my needs for I ask for severe proof, and if I have to go back to unquestioning faith I should find myself in the fold from which I wandered.

My own life was so busy that I had little time for religious

development, but my thoughts still ran much upon psychic matters, and it was at this time that I joined the Psychical Research Society, of which I am now one of the senior members. I had few psychic experiences myself, and my material philosophy, as expressed in the *Stark Munro Letters*, which were written just at the end of the Norwood period, was so strong that it did not easily crumble. Yet as year by year I read the wonderful literature of psychic science and experience, I became more and more impressed by the strength of the Spiritualist position and by the levity and want of all dignity and accurate knowledge which characterised the attitude of their opponents. The religious side of the matter had not yet struck me, but I felt more and more that the case for the phenomena vouched for by such men as Sir William Crookes,⁶⁸ Barrett, Russel Wallace,⁶⁹ Victor Hugo⁷⁰ and Zöllner⁷¹ was so strong that I could see no answer to their exact record of observations. "It is incredible but it is true," said Crookes, and the aphorism seemed to exactly express my dawning convictions.⁷² I had a weekly impulse from the psychic paper, *Light*, which has, I maintain, during its long career and up to the present day, presented as much brain to the square inch as any journal published in Great Britain.

During these long and happy years before the War I did not lose my interest in psychic matters, but I cannot say that I increased my grasp of the religious or spiritual side of the subject. I read, however, and investigated whenever the chance arose. A gentleman had arranged a series of psychical séances in a large studio in North London, and I attended them, the mediums being Cecil Husk and Craddock. They left a very mixed impression upon my mind, for in some cases, I was filled with suspicion and in others I was quite sure that the result was genuine. The possibility that a genuine medium may be unscrupulous and that when these very elusive forces fail to act he may simulate them is one which greatly complicates the whole subject, but one can only concentrate upon what one is sure is true and try to draw conclusions from that. I remember that many sheeted ghosts walked about in the dim light of a red lamp on these occasions, and that some of them came close to me, within a foot of my face, and illuminated their features by the light of a phosphorescent slate held below them. One splendid Arab, whom the medium called Abdullah, came in this fashion. He had a face like an idealised W.G. Grace, swarthy, black-bearded and dignified, rather larger than human. I was looking hard at this strange being, its nose a few inches from my own, and was wondering whether it could be some very clever bust of wax, when in an instant the mouth opened and a terrible yell was emitted. I nearly jumped out of my chair. I saw clearly the gleaming teeth and the red tongue. It certainly seemed that he had read my thought and had taken this

very effective way of answering it.

1923

THE PSYCHIC QUEST ⁷³

I have not obtruded the psychic question upon the reader, though it has grown in importance with the years, and has now come to absorb the whole energy of my life. I cannot, however, close these scattered memories of my adventures in thought and action without some reference, however incomplete, to that which has been far the most important thing in my life. It is the thing for which every preceding phase, my gradual religious development, my books, which gave me an introduction to the public, my modest fortune, which enables me to devote myself to unlucrative work, my platform work, which helps me to convey the message, and my physical strength, which is still sufficient to stand arduous tours and to fill the largest halls for an hour and a half with my voice, have each and all been an unconscious preparation. For thirty years I have trained myself exactly for the rôle without the least inward suspicion of whither I was tending.

I cannot in the limited space of a chapter go into very lengthy detail or complete argument upon the subject. It is the more unnecessary since I have already in my psychic volumes outlined very clearly how I arrived at my present knowledge. Of these volumes the first and second, called respectively *The New Revelation* and *The Vital Message*, show how gradual evidence was given me of the continuation of life, and how thorough and long were my studies before I was at last beaten out of my material agnostic position and forced to admit the validity of the proofs.

In the days of universal sorrow and loss, when the voice of Rachel was heard throughout the land, it was borne in upon me that the knowledge which had come to me thus was not for my own consolation alone, but that God had placed me in a very special position for conveying it to that world which needed it so badly.

I found in the movement many men who saw the truth as clearly as I did; but such was the clamour of the "religious," who were opposing that which is the very essence of living religion, of the "scientific," who broke the first laws of Science by pronouncing upon a thing which they had not examined, and of the Press, who held up every real or imaginary rascality as being typical of a movement which they had never understood, that the true men were abashed and shrank from the public exposition of their views. It was to combat this that I began a campaign in 1916 which can only finish when all is finished.

One grand help I had. My wife had always been averse from my psychic studies, deeming the subject to be uncanny and dangerous. Her

own experiences soon convinced her to the contrary, for her brother, who was killed at Mons, came back to us in a very convincing way. From that instant she threw herself with all the whole-hearted energy of her generous nature into the work which lay before us.

A devoted mother, she was forced often to leave her children; a lover of home, she was compelled to quit it for many months at a time; distrustful of the sea, she joyfully shared my voyages. We have now travelled a good 50,000 miles upon our quest. We have spoken face to face with a quarter of a million of people. Her social qualities, her clear sanity, her ardent charity, and her gracious presence upon the platforms all united with her private counsel and sympathy, have been such an aid to me that they have turned my work into a joy. The presence of our dear children upon our journeys has also lightened them for both of us.

I began our public expositions of the subject by three years of intermittent lecturing in my country, during which period I visited nearly every town of importance, many of them twice and thrice. Everywhere I found attentive audiences, critical, as they should be, but open to conviction. I roused antagonism only in those who had not heard me, and there were demonstrations outside the doors, but never in the halls. I cannot remember a single interruption during that long series of addresses. It was interesting to notice how I was upheld, for though I was frequently very weary before the address, and though my war lectures had often been attended by palpitation of the heart, I was never once conscious of any fatigue during or after a lecture upon psychic subjects.

On August 13, 1920, we started for Australia. In proportion to her population she had lost almost as heavily as we during the war, and I felt that my seed would fall upon fruitful ground. I have written all details of this episode in my *Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, in which the reader will find among other things some evidences of that preternatural help which went with us in our journeys. I addressed large audiences in all the big towns of Australia and New Zealand. An unfortunate shipping strike prevented me from reaching Tasmania, but otherwise the venture was an unalloyed success. Contrary to expectation I was able to pay all the expenses of our large party (we were seven) and to leave a balance behind me to help the successor whom I might choose.

At the end of March, 1921, we were back in Paris again, where, greatly daring, I lectured in French upon psychic subjects. Our stay at home was not a very long one, for urgent invitations had come from America, where the Spiritual movement had fallen into a somewhat languishing state. On April 1, 1922, our whole party started for the States. What happened to us I have recorded in *Our American Adventure*. Suffice it to say that the trip was very successful, and that from Boston to

Washington, and from New York to Chicago, I spoke in all the larger cities and brought about a great revival of interest in the subject. We were back in England at the beginning of July, 1922.

I was by no means satisfied about America, however, as we had not touched the great West, the land of the future. Therefore we set forth again in March, 1923, getting back in August. Our adventures, which were remarkable upon the psychic side, are recorded in *Our Second American Adventure*. When I returned from that journey I had travelled 55,000 miles in three years, and spoken to quarter of a million of people. I am still unsatisfied, however, for the Southern States of the Union have not been touched, and it is possible that we may yet make a journey in that direction.

I have placed on record our experiences, and no doubt they have little interest at the moment for the general public, but the day will come, and that speedily, when people will understand that this proposition for which we are now fighting is far the most important thing for two thousand years in the history of the world, and when the efforts of the pioneers will have a very real interest to all who have sufficient intelligence to follow the progress of human thought.

I am only one of many working for the cause, but I hope that I may claim that I brought into it a combative and aggressive spirit which it lacked before, and which has now so forced it upon public attention that one can hardly pick up a paper without reading some comment upon it. If some of these papers are hopelessly ignorant and prejudiced, it is not a bad thing for the cause. If you have a bad case, constant publicity is a misfortune, but if you have a good one, its goodness will always assert itself, however much it may be misrepresented.

Many Spiritualists have taken the view that since we know these comforting and wonderful things, and since the world chooses not to examine the evidence, we may be content with our own happy assurance. This seems to me an immoral view.

If God has sent a great new message of exceeding joy down to earth, then it is for us, to whom it has been clearly revealed, to pass it on at any cost of time, money and labour. It is not given to us for selfish enjoyment, but for general consolation. If the sick man turns from the physician, then it cannot be helped, but at least the healing draught should be offered.

The greater the difficulty in breaking down the wall of apathy, ignorance and materialism, the more is it a challenge to our manhood to attack and ever attack in the same bulldog spirit with which Foch⁷⁴ faced the German lines.

I trust that the record of my previous life⁷⁵ will assure the reader

that I have within my limitations preserved a sane and balanced judgment, since I have never hitherto been extreme in my views, and since what I have said has so often been endorsed by the actual course of events. But never have I said anything with the same certainty of conviction with which I now say that this new knowledge is going to sweep the earth and to revolutionise human views upon every topic save only on fundamental morality, which is a fixed thing.

All modern inventions and discoveries will sink into insignificance beside those psychic facts which will force themselves within a few years upon the universal human mind.

The subject has been obscured by the introduction of all sorts of side issues, some of interest but not vital, others quite irrelevant. There is a class of investigator who loves to wander round in a circle, and to drag you with him if you are weak enough to accept such guidance. He trips continually over his own brains, and can never persuade himself that the simple and obvious explanation is also the true one. His intellect becomes a positive curse to him, for he uses it to avoid the straight road and to fashion out some strange devious part which lands him at last in a quagmire, whilst the direct and honest mind has kept firmly to the highway of knowledge.⁷⁶ When I meet men of this type, and then come in contact with the lowly congregations of religious Spiritualists, I think always of Christ's words when He thanked God that He had revealed these things to babes and withheld them from the wise and the prudent. I think also of a dictum of Baron Reichenbach: "There is a scientific incredulity which exceeds in stupidity the obtuseness of the clodhopper."

But what I say in no way applies to the reasonable researcher whose experiences are real stepping-stones leading to his fixed conclusion. There must to every man be this novitiate in knowledge. The matter is too serious to be taken without due intellectual conviction.

It must not be imagined that I entirely deny the existence of fraud. But it is far less common than is supposed, and as for its being universal, which is the theory of the conjurers and some other critics, such an opinion is beyond reason or argument. In an experience with mediums which has been excelled by very few living men, and which has embraced three continents, I have not encountered fraud more than three or four times.

There is conscious and unconscious fraud, and it is the existence of the latter which complicates the question so badly. Conscious fraud usually arises from a temporary failure of real psychic power, and a consequent attempt to replace it by an imitation. Unconscious fraud comes in that curious half-way state which I have called the "half-trance condition" when the medium seems normal, and yet is actually hardly responsible for his actions.

At such a time the process by which his personality leaves his body seems to have set in, and his higher qualities have already passed, so that he can apparently no longer inhibit the promptings received from the suggestion of those around him, or from his own unchecked desires. Thus one will find mediums doing stupid and obvious things which expose them to the charge of cheating. Then if the observer disregards these and waits, the true psychic phenomena of unmistakable character will follow as he sinks more deeply into trance.

This was, I gather, noticeable in the case of Eusapia Paladino,⁷⁷ but I have seen it with several others. In those cases where a medium has left the cabinet, and is found wandering about among the sitters, as has happened with Mrs. Corner,⁷⁸ with Madame d'Espérance,⁷⁹ and with Craddock⁸⁰ – all of them mediums who have given many proofs of their real powers – I am convinced that the very natural supposition that they are fraudulent is really quite a mistaken one.

When, on the other hand, it is found that the medium has introduced false drapery or accessories, which has sometimes occurred, we are in the presence of the most odious and blasphemous crime which a human being can commit.

People ask me, not unnaturally, what it is which makes me so perfectly certain that this thing is true. That I am perfectly certain is surely demonstrated by the mere fact that I have abandoned my congenial and lucrative work, left my home for long periods at a time, and subjected myself to all sorts of inconveniences, losses, and even insults, in order to get the facts home to the people.

To give all my reasons would be to write a book rather than a chapter, but I may say briefly that there is no physical sense which I possess which has not been separately assured, and that there is no conceivable method by which a spirit could show its presence which I have not on many occasions experienced. In the presence of Miss Besinnet⁸¹ as medium and of several witnesses I have seen my mother and my nephew, young Oscar Hornung, as plainly as ever I saw them in life – so plainly that I could almost have counted the wrinkles of the one and the freckles of the other.

In the darkness the face of my mother shone up, peaceful, happy, slightly inclined to one side, the eyes closed. My wife upon my right and the lady upon my left both saw it as clearly as I did. The lady had not known my mother in life but she said, "How wonderfully like she is to her son," which will show how clear was the detail of the features.

On another occasion my son came back to me.⁸² Six persons heard his conversation with me, and signed a paper afterwards to that effect. It was in his voice and concerned itself with what was unknown to the

medium, who was bound and breathing deeply in his chair. If the evidence of six persons of standing and honour may not be taken, then how can any human fact be established?

My brother, General Doyle, came back with the same medium, but on another occasion. He discussed the health of *his widow*.⁸³ She was a Danish lady, and he wanted her to use a masseur in Copenhagen. He gave the name. I made inquiries and found that such a man did exist. Whence came this knowledge? Who was it who took so close an interest in the health of this lady? If it was not her dead husband then who was it?

All fine-drawn theories of the subconscious go to pieces before the plain statement of the intelligence, "I am a spirit. I am Innes. I am your brother."

I have clasped materialised hands.

I have held long conversations with the direct voice.

I have smelt the peculiar ozone-like smell of ectoplasm.

I have listened to prophecies which were quickly fulfilled.

I have seen the "dead" glimmer up upon a photographic plate which no hand but mine had touched.

I have received through the hand of my own wife, notebooks full of information which was utterly beyond her ken.

I have seen heavy articles swimming in the air, untouched by human hand, and obeying directions given to unseen operators.

I have seen spirits walk round the room in fair light and join in the talk of the company.

I have known an untrained woman, possessed by an artist spirit, to produce rapidly a picture, now hanging in my drawing-room, which few living painters could have bettered.

I have read books which might have come from great thinkers and scholars, and which were actually written by unlettered men who acted as the medium of the unseen intelligence, so superior to his own.

I have recognised the style of a dead writer which no parodist could have copied, and which was written in his own handwriting.

I have heard singing beyond earthly power, and whistling done with no pause for the intake of breath.

I have seen objects from a distance projected into a room with closed doors and windows.

If a man could see, hear, and feel all this, and yet remain unconvinced of unseen intelligent forces around him, he would have good cause to doubt his own sanity. Why should he heed the chatter of irresponsible journalists, or the head-shaking of inexperienced men of science, when he has himself had so many proofs? They are babies in this matter, and should be sitting at his feet.

It is not, however, a question to be argued in a detached and impersonal way, as if one were talking of the Baconian theory or the existence of Atlantis. It is intimate, personal, and vital to the last degree.

A closed mind means an earthbound soul, and that in turn means future darkness and misery. If you know what is coming, you can avoid it. If you do not, you run grave risk. Some Jeremiah or Savonarola is needed who will shriek this into the ears of the world. A new conception of sin is needed. The mere carnal frailties of humanity, the weaknesses of the body, are not to be lightly condoned, but are not the serious part of the human reckoning. It is the fixed condition of mind, narrowness, bigotry, materialism – in a word, the sins not of the body, but of the spirit, which are the real permanent things, and condemn the individual to the lower spheres until he has learnt his lesson.

We know this from our rescue circles when these poor souls come back to bewail their errors and to learn those truths which they might have learnt here, had their minds not been closed by apathy or prejudice.

The radical mistake which science has made in investigating the subject is that it has never troubled to grasp the fact that it is not the medium who is producing the phenomena. It has always treated him as if he were a conjurer, and said, "Do this or do that," failing to understand that little or nothing comes *from* him, but all or nearly all comes *through* him. I say "nearly" all, for I believe that some simple phenomena, such as the rap, can within limits be produced by the medium's own will.

It is this false view of science which has prevented sceptics from realising that a gentle and receptive state of mind on the part of sitters and an easy natural atmosphere for the medium are absolutely essential in order to produce harmony with the outside forces.

If in the greatest of all séances, that of the upper room on the day of Pentecost,⁸⁴ an aggressive sceptic had insisted upon test conditions of his own foolish devising, where would the rushing wind and the tongues of fire have been? "All with one accord,"⁸⁵ says the writer of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and that is the essential condition. I have sat with saintly people, and I too have felt the rushing wind, seen the flickering tongues and heard the great voice, but how could such results come where harmony did not reign?

That is the radical mistake which science has made. Men know well that even in her own coarse, material work the presence of a scrap of metal may upset the whole balance of a great magnetic installation, and yet they will not take the word of those who are in a position to speak from experience that a psychic condition may upset a psychic experiment.

But indeed when we speak of science in this connection it is a confusion of thought. The fact that a man is a great zoologist like

Lankester, or a great physicist like Tyndall or Faraday, does not give his opinion any weight in a subject which is outside his own speciality. There is many an unknown Smith and Jones whose twenty years of practical work have put him in a far stronger position than that of these intolerant scientists; while as to the real Spiritualist leaders, men of many experiences and much reading and thought, it is they who are the real scientific experts who are in a position to teach the world. One does not lose one's judgment when one becomes a Spiritualist. One is as much a researcher as ever, but one understands better what it is that one is studying and how to study it.

This controversy with bumptious and ignorant people is a mere passing thing which matters nothing. The real controversy, which does matter very much, is with the Continental school who study ectoplasm and other semi-material manifestations, but who have not got the length of seeing independent spirit behind them. Richet,⁸⁶ Schrenck-Notzing⁸⁷ and other great investigators are still in this midway position, and Flammarion⁸⁸ is little more advanced. Richet goes the length of admitting that he has assured himself by personal observation of the materialised form that it can walk and talk and leave moulds of its hands. So far he has gone. And yet even now he clings to the idea that these phenomena may be the externalisation of some latent powers of the human body and mind.

Such an explanation seems to me to be the desperate defence of the last trench by one of those old-time materialists, who say with Brewster⁸⁹: "Spirit is the last thing which we will concede," adding as their reason "it upsets the work of fifty years." It is hard when a man has taught all his life that the brain governs spirit to have to learn after all that it may be spirit which acts independently of the human brain. But it is their super-materialism which is the real difficulty with which we now have to contend.

And what is the end of it all?

I have no idea. How could those who first noted the electric twitching of muscles foresee the Atlantic cable or the arc lamp? Our information is that some great shock is coming shortly to the human race which will finally break down its apathy, and which will be accompanied by such psychic signs that the survivors will be unable any longer to deny the truths which we preach.

The real meaning of our movement will then be seen, for it will become apparent that we have accustomed the public mind to such ideas, and provided a body of definite teaching, both scientific and religious, to which they can turn for guidance.

As to the prophecy of disaster, I admit that we have to be on our guard. Even the Christ circle was woefully deceived, and declared

confidently that the world would not survive their own generation. Various creeds, too, have made vain predictions of the end of the world.

I am keenly aware of all this, and also of the difficulty in reckoning time when seen from the other side. But, making every allowance for this, the information upon the point has been so detailed, and has reached me from so many entirely independent sources, that I have been forced to take it seriously, and to think that some great watershed of human experience may be passed within a few years – the greatest, we are told, that our long-suffering race has yet encountered.⁹⁰

People who have not gone into the subject may well ask, “But what do you get out of it? How are you the better?” We can only answer that all life has changed to us since this definite knowledge has come. No longer are we shut in by death. We are out of the valley and up on the ridge, with vast clear vistas before us.

Why should we fear a death which we know for certain is the doorway to unutterable happiness?

Why should we fear our dear ones’ death if we can be so near to them afterwards?

Am I not far nearer to my son than if he were alive and serving in that Army Medical Service which would have taken him to the ends of the earth? There is never a month, often never a week, that I do not commune with him. Is it not evident that such facts as these change the whole aspect of life, and turn the grey mist of dissolution into a rosy dawn?

You may say that we have already all these assurances in the Christian revelation. It is true, and that is why we are not anti-Christian so long as Christianity is the teaching of humble Christ and not of his arrogant representatives.

Every form of Christianity is represented in our ranks, often by clergymen of the various denominations. But there is nothing precise in the definitions of the other world as given in the holy writings. The information we have depicts a heaven of congenial work and of congenial play, with every mental and physical activity of life carried on to a higher plane – a heaven of art, of science, of intellect, of organisation, of combat with evil, of home circles, of flowers, of wide travel, of sports, of the mating of souls, of complete harmony. This is what our “dead” friends describe.

On the other hand we hear from them, and sometimes directly, of the hells, which are temporary spheres of purification. We hear of the mists, the darkness, the aimless wanderings, the mental confusion, the remorse.

“Our condition is horrible,” wrote one of them to me recently at a séance. These things are real and vivid and provable to us. That is why we

are an enormous force for the resuscitation of true religion, and why the clergy take a heavy responsibility when they oppose us.

The final result upon scientific thought is unthinkable, save that the sources of all force would be traced rather to spiritual than to material causes.

In religion one can perhaps see a little more clearly. Theology and dogma would disappear.

People would realise that such questions as the number of persons in God, or the process of Christ's birth, have no bearing at all upon the development of man's spirit, which is the sole object of life.

All religions would be equal, for all alike produce gentle, unselfish souls who are God's elect. Christian, Jew, Buddhist, and Mohammedan would shed their distinctive doctrines, follow their own high teachers on a common path of morality, and forget all that antagonism which has made religion a curse rather than a blessing to the world.

We shall be in close touch with other-world forces, and knowledge will supersede that faith which has in the past planted a dozen different signposts to point in as many different directions.

Such will be the future, so far as I can dimly see it, and all this will spring from the seed which now we tend and water amid the cold blasts of a hostile world.

Do not let it be thought that I claim any special leadership in this movement. I do what I can, but many others have done what they could – many humble workers who have endured loss and insult, but who will come to be recognised as the modern Apostles. For my part, I can only claim that I have been an instrument so fashioned that I have had some particular advantages in getting this teaching across to the people.

That is the work which will occupy, either by voice or pen, the remainder of my life. What immediate shape it will take I cannot say. Human plans are vain things, and it is better for the tool to lie passive until the great hand moves it once more.

1924

“People ask me what it is which makes me so perfectly certain Spiritualism is true. That I am perfectly certain is surely demonstrated by the fact that I have abandoned more congenial and lucrative work and subjected myself to all sorts of inconveniences, losses and even insults in order to get the facts home to the people.”

Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Memories and Adventures'

THE *POSTHUMOUS* MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

**(an experience of an afterdeath existence,
narrated by the Spirit**

of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

**in the course of the sittings
with participation of friends and relations)**

Part One

THE RETURN OF SIR ARTHUR.

**THE PRELIMINARY
CONVERSATIONS**

(extracts)

“My dear all of you. I have greatly looked forward to this, but I cannot come in contact as I ought. There lies my difficulty. My greetings to you all. You are indeed doing God’s work.”¹

*Arthur Conan Doyle*³¹

Chapter I

THE FIRST MEETINGS

22nd May 1931 ²

“Yes... yes... yes.... I am coming – I am coming.... Yes... thank God! A large gathering! (A realisation as of some mighty concourse of beings of brightness and splendour there present seemed to dawn.) I seem to be amongst a great company of friends...³ the light is very bright; this is grand... grand!... Speak! Speak!” (A murmur of voices, "We welcome you!")

“Arthur speaks to you *again* – my wife!” [*Here a portion of the record is omitted.*]

“Thank God! God bless you! I am here – I am here! You must forgive my emotion. [It is] not like me to feel emotion, but it is so marvellous to speak with you. You do not understand what this means! I have come back!... Yes, it is all coming to me. I have spoken, of course I have spoken before, but not with such power. I have passed through wonderful experiences. I want to tell you. I want to tell you *all*... it is difficult. I have heard ... [*name omitted*] calling me. I have been so close, and yet there seems to have been some difficulty. Now I have been given power. I must keep calm, as I have a definite message, my friends. Will you follow what I have to say with close attention?

“I would thank those who helped me... I seemed to be very puzzled when I first realised where I was. My one desire was to get back – and then... oh, there is so much to explain and tell you! I have been to my home, I have been in my home, I have seen my dear ones. What is it that has prevented me from doing all that I intended?... I see a mission. I have to give a message to you all.... It is difficult.”

[*The figure of the medium lay back, exhausted. Fifteen minutes slipped away, and the medium spoke again*]:

“Still here, gathering power to speak with you.... I have not left you, but there is confusion [in me] surrounding manifestation. I have learned a considerable amount concerning manifestation from the after-death side. Much that is erroneous must be cleared away [from existing beliefs]. I find there is a part of me which can manifest to a slight degree in various places and under various conditions. I see now that some of the phenomena in Spiritualism are attributable to astral projection and astral

memories. Thus it is possible to pick up these astral memories which are registered in places and conditions of thought, and can be manifested to the people of earth as coming from their loved ones. There have been a variety of communications as from myself, not always projected consciously from me. You know and understand, Jane?⁴ I so desire to clear up this point.⁵

"I have passed through what you know as the astral life, and have now been freed from the condition which was hampering my work. To clear the astral vibrations was not altogether an easy matter; but do not be misguided with regard to this state, it is a necessary evil. To be loosened from astral ties does not sever one from his loved ones. It frees the spirit man and allows him to enter into the full realisation of his own nature.

"You do not yet know one another as you will when you pass into the illimitable consciousness of God; and those same material ties which bind you here on earth will bind still when you leave the earth condition, until you wake to the glory of God's love.

"In other words, we mean this: a loosening of the personal and an entering the impersonal consciousness of the creative essence called God, and in that consciousness realising 'perfectness' of all you love.

"I must work – I must work. I must go forward. For it is shown to me the mission which we have to fulfil. I see so clearly now, whereas before I saw through a glass darkly; and now I see you and all men face to face. Most of all I see *myself*.

"I thank God for the many opportunities he gave me to help my fellow men.

"I see certain things in which I was mistaken. No man can have the entire truth. In some respects I was misled. I had before had my suspicions regarding astral memories, and I knew a certain amount of spiritualistic phenomena was attributable to these memories. But I do not believe that all communications are of such cause; nor are they! I tell you definitely, that it is possible for the spirit... for the real man, if he has a definite mission to perform for the good of humanity... to come back and execute that mission and help forward the evolution of the race.

"Survival is a proven fact; is unquestionable. But the world is waiting for a greater demonstration and a clearer proof of this mighty truth. Humanity must realise that communication with the astral memory and with the real man are vastly different. It is necessary for the spirit of the loved one on earth to be raised to the consciousness of spiritual reality, before he can hold true communication with his beloved in spirit.

"So much is futile in the [Spiritualist] movement today; today; but the glorious truth of survival must be given to humanity in clear and perfect form.

“Personal responsibility and the redeeming power of love. Personal responsibility is irrefutable. I find it is not only a man’s actions that count, but man’s inmost thought. The spirit world is a world of thought, an internal state rather than an external condition of life.... Thought promotes action; the actions of an individual again promote thought in his fellows. Thus we return again to the thought world. Truly it is said that: *as a man sows so he shall surely reap.*

“In the broad sense the seeds [of thought] he sows are interpreted as actions; but I find thought to be actually more powerful than action, since one of the first things that a man is faced with on his escape from earth life, is the world of his own thought.

“Let us pass from this condition to the next. It is not always pleasant to be isolated with all the thoughts one has projected during a lifetime – but God is Love, Wisdom, Justice. I would not have it otherwise, for it has been revealed to me in a most marvellous way how the love of God manifests in the deepest heart of his children.

“Personal responsibility and the redeeming power of love – this one great lesson I have learned, and I pass it on to you all. No man lives or dies apart from God: God... Christ... love – call it what you will. Earth has seen a supreme manifestation of that great power of love, in one, no, in several personalities.”

[A long pause ensued. The speaker had been under deep emotion and agitation throughout, and his power was now obviously flagging. He continued]:

“Yes... yes... yes. The redeeming power of love! I must conclude my message with this. Love! Not personal... impersonal. Love for all men. I see the great need... the Master.”

17th June 1931

“I have been trying for days to come through. Now let me thank my friends – all of you – for your gallant help. I shall get stronger – I shall not give up; I shall stick to it. And this what you, too, must do – stick to it! I shall improve with practice....

“I desire to say that it was I who manifested at Bletchley on the day of my birth. I was trying with all my strength to make my dear ones know that I was there. You do not understand the difficulties we have in coming through....”⁶

[*White Eagle continued*]:

“Brother Nobleheart⁷ is very disturbed – very anxious to speak with you.... (*To Mr. Bradbrook*;) Arthur Conan Doyle wants me to say that he looks to you to see these messages through. It means so much to him that his new realisations should be made known – it means all the difference between heaven and hell. Finding these things are true he must needs give them forth. It doesn't matter about the opponents. God will fight for him. Lady Conan Doyle has no need to be anxious, for he appreciates the wonderfully brave fight she has made. He is out for the universal truth, those fuller truths which he brings back. O! if you could see how small personalities are! Yet since a notable man may be used to bring universal truth into the hearts of man, so far as ACD is turned in, he will be the channel.

“The [Conan Doyle] Memorial is not in the hands of the Spiritualists, as they are today, but of the universal light. Until all are united they cannot advance. The noble work he wrought may not be halted, but ever progress, and now that he has found greater knowledge of the afterlife, he will lead it advance.

“There are many who cannot reconcile the teaching of the séance room with the outworking of laws divine and immutable. When Nobleheart arrived on this side he found contact with earth not the easy matter he had once thought.

“There tosses a great sea of astral memories – mediums tap these unconsciously. He found the one vital thing to be the secret thought-life of the man. All that he had ever thought was now become his world. Into a world self-created folk enter, and heaven reveals itself as that which is within. Much accepted as evidence of spiritual life can be wiped off the slate. Evidence is to be found in spiritual contact *heart* with *heart*. Man can only see a spirit with his own spirit. Evidence must be spiritually discerned, or else may consist of husks, mere pictures – although there are, of course, exceptions to this rule, for sometimes a spirit having a divine purpose to fulfill can produce a ‘pictured’ impressiom of himself, much as a teacher may instruct a class.

“ACD now desires to make a restatement. He desires to clear out of Spirituailism all which is unreal and confusing. His soul is charged, and has a glorious mission and clearer teaching to unfold. In the light of this teaching must the Memorial be built, for there can follow no advance otherwise.”

[*White Eagle was asked if he could obtain a clearer outline of what was to come. ACD then spoke. It is interesting to note the change in words and phrasing. Would that print could indicate the change in diction, manner, in the whole personality that now manifested.*]

ACD: “It lies in these words: *The Kingdom of Heavean is within.*

“I see the need of a Master. In Christ you have all. In His teaching rest the secrets of life and death. Man must take up his cross and follow the light of love. The cross symbolizes the crucifixion of all selfish aims and desires – the complete submission of the personal to the impersonal love of God – the Creator of all. This is the secret of life both here and hereafter. Man must live not for himself nor for his good name, for personal power or prosperity, or his own success, but to contribute to the common good. Giving all, he receives all. Thus, and thus only will he enter into his kingdom of heaven.

“Truly it is said, *Man must be born again* – not of the flesh but of the spirit. Every man incarnate or discarnate must eventually pass through death of himself, and awaken again into new life, into fuller consciousness of the one all-loving God. Thus only will he find himself and all those whom he loves. From this sphere of Christ-consciousness descend those whom you love, in spirit, so until you can attune yourself to their light, your communication must lack something most beautiful and pure.

“Consider the gulf fixed between the rich man and Lazarus: the bridgeless gulf, yet of man’s own creation. Still there is a way... the way of *love*. But not, mark you, the personal or possessive love, but rather the impersonal love of self-giving, self-forgetting, and self-sacrifice.

“*Unless a man is born again of Spirit he can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.* True indeed; yet there remain some bound to earth, who seek to contact earth through channels provided by mediumship. They too need teaching. The veil between this world and yours is thin indeed, compared to the severance between the earthly man discarnate and the man of heaven.

“The mistake we labour under is that of stressing the importance of persons, of nationalities, forgetting that there must be mutual cooperation in the spreading of eternal truth. [That is why] I desire no personal reference in the Memorial appeal. Remember, you are working not for a person but for a principle, an ideal. Embody the broad charity of the Christian teaching, the pure principles of Christ, or of the Great White light of truth: it matters not whether it is interpreted through Buddha, Krishna or any other Master.

“My wife will admit me a man of strong opinions, which I was not easily persuaded. Nevertheless, Spiritualism compelled me to admit certain facts. Later I again changed my mind when accepting the leadership of Jesus Christ in the movement of Spiritualism. Yet again I change concerning the after-death state. Surely, surely, my friends would expect a man to have greater knowledge and clearer vision when freed from the limitations of the earthly tabernacle. Else where would progress be?

“I am not prepared to say more. These things cannot be forced. I am content to leave the matter in the hands of God.... This is the chosen instrument or channel for this work. Other means will be used when the time is ripe to satisfy those who require proof of a more material nature.

“The Wise Knight, with whom I am in close contact has arranged soon for another meeting. This, however, is the kind of gathering I like and think likely to bring best results.

"I am to endeavour to give you a proof on a photographer's plate.⁸ (*Turning to Silver Star*⁹;) You are very necessary. There is a special link with you.

“White Eagle once called me Brother Nobleheart – I should like this name to be mine. This is a triangle of great power.... Tell the brethren in Paris that I am deeply grateful. I am linked with the Wise Knight for a definite mission which will prove itself as time progresses.”

Chapter II

"I AM A HAPPY MAN"

22nd June 1931

White Eagle spoke first:

"[It may interest you to know that] I knew of the big work to come long before Arthur passed out of the body. I knew when I spoke at a circle held about twelve moons ago when I gave a great deal of valuable information. The records are in the possession of the sitters till.... Foundation stones have to be laid in differing times and places, and then connected up. You have to find these stones, for you build a temple. Long after you are gone from physical manifestation the work will go on. ACD is so happy...."

Then ACD spoke:

"Cannot you see that by my old face [in the picture]?¹⁰ That is what *you* have produced!... Your power has sent to them [the family] a message so that they – my dear ones – will know how I feel. I am a happy man.

"This you can see: I want you to compare the impression [of myself] which we were able to imprint on a photographic plate with some of the spirit photographs previously received by others. I particularly wish a close comparison. It will teach you much....

"I want you... to realise the difference between an "astral impression" and the real thing. This is the very truth we are determined to make clear. There is so much humbug [about these psychic things] unconscious, I admit. What the world needs is a sane discrimination between the substantial and the nebulous, and this is what Spiritualism's critics, good men at heart, stand out for. You must help your people to discriminate between the real and the unreal. By this you do not lessen but rather give them strength to mount to spiritual consciousness.

"This brings me to the very core of my mission. It is to indicate the difference between that which is foolish and nonsensical, and that which is a jewel of eternal truth. The latter will reveal heaven itself; the former makes a fool of a man. So long as man remains enmeshed in intellectual pride he can never find truth. (I am afraid my friends will disagree.) And this brings me to another point: *Except a man become as a little child he can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.* Again I repeat my statement.... Any questions?"

A questioner: Will you define *except a man become as a little child*?

ACD: "Except a man be stripped of all pride and egotism; except he realise he is nothing without the power of almighty Spirit; until a man breaks out from arrogance to the understanding that *of myself I can do nothing*, he is dulled to the glories of Heaven.

"Each soul must eventually be stripped of all possessions, and stand forth naked, an infinitesimal *nothing* bathed in a vast ocean of universal knowledge and power. He must go through the valley of death, not of the physical body, but of *himself*, naked of all....

"Then and then only can the light dawn – for him. So the spiritual sunlight breaks upon the way, which is also the truth and the life. So comes growth in power, peace and joy to the soul entering on the Universal, the babe about to grow to spiritual manhood in the tender and everlasting arms....

"Has it never seemed strange to you that men of force and power, intellectual power, should never return from the unseen to communicate with earth? The answer lies in the foregoing. They cannot.

"I look to you all here to put forward these messages of mine. They will increase in power and clarity as I become more accustomed to using Brighteyes [Minesta].¹¹ You realise my dependence on you to give this message to the world?

"I can but hope that these words will clear away both doubt and credulousness from many who question or accept the teachings of Spiritualism. No words of mine detract one iota from the great love and true communion which can assuredly take place between those on earths and those in spirit. Not for an instant would I shake the belief of thousands who have received comfort from knowledge of the spirit life: *but I would give a higher conception of it*, give something not only ennobling to themselves but to the whole community. We work for the impersonal, for a diviner love to be brought into the hearts of men, so that they may live rather than talk of brotherhood. I hold no other desire. May God grant it! I believe He will give me the power and opportunity to carry this message to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"I may not speak of great work or wide success. What is required rather is for you to be as babes, to be guided, to be used, willing channels for the spirit. An ideal, perhaps; but in that alone will you find your joy, your happiness, your kingdom of heaven. You may well thank God for the opportunity.

"God bless old White Eagle! He is one of the shining ones! To you he is just old White Eagle; to us something more; but sufficient be it that he is just old White Eagle, your loving companion."

2nd July 1931

[*White Eagle spoke first*]:

“You must be conscious of the power in your midst. By purity of heart and purpose only you command this power. Of yourselves you can do nothing, it is true; but by allowing the purity of God's love to fill your being, which can only be when the heart is devoted to the service of God, you raise yourselves and immediately command power from the celestial sphere.

“In the silence, in your innermost hearts, know God's love! You cannot fail. It is a sacred trust that those assembled here have placed upon them. God sees purity of heart and sincerity of purpose. In spite of the dross and weariness of the flesh, light will pour through these channels. We desire you to continue at intervals as the power is assembled. Only a small amount of material can come through each time, but we shall endeavour to give quality in the message.

“ACD will be used by his own freewill and desire to give the truth of the life that immediately follows death of the body of flesh.” [*Long pause.*]

ACD then spoke:

“When I can adjust myself to the medium, we will continue our pleasant little talk. It requires a certain amount of practice, I find – that is, in the controlling of the physical body of the medium – to be able to give through her consecutive and clear ideas. [*Taps meditatively with fingers of right hand on chair.*] Yes... yes... let us have a friendly chat. I think it is easier. Yes, we will warm up to the subject later – a friendly chat is the best with which to commence....

“I used to think that everything was very easy in the spirit world. In fact, I made a point of painting pretty pictures of it. I would not take away one iota of belief and hope, but should like to give a clearer idea of the state to which one passes on leaving the physical body. The truth is this – that it is so difficult to explain to the finite mind the actual facts concerning the mental state of the individual after the change of death; because to each man comes a different experience, and one cannot lay down any hard and fast rules. There is a state, or intermediate condition, lasting perhaps a few days, weeks, months, or continuing for many hundreds of years. I find that there is so much on the astral plane of life to interest you that I hardly know where to commence the story.”

A questioner: What was your first impression after passing?

ACD: “It was utterly and entirely different from what I expected, and that is what most people, orthodox and Spiritualist alike, will find – a very different heaven, or Summerland, from that which they anticipated. We must clear the ground, and give a purer vision. Of course, it turns

largely on the quality of a man's mentality, but more on his attitude towards his fellows, and life in general. That is to say, a man may find himself much better off than he or anyone else had anticipated, or on the other hand, he may find himself in complete bondage.

"The power to create is the gift of every man. On his creative power rests the crux of the whole matter. The man of ability whose bent lies in the creation of characters; the painting of pictures, the writing of poetry; the creation either of beauty or the reverse by positive creative thought: he is as surely creating a world for his habitation when freed from the flesh.

"What of my first impression? Well! Well! I can speak only for myself. One does not at once realise that one has passed away from one's material body. One seems to be leaving, and yet has not left. One is still able to see, and to a certain extent contact earth and earth conditions. It is rather a terrible sensation when one endeavours to express oneself to one's friends, and is unable to make any impression; and when some souls here find their deeds working evil in the minds and hearts of others, it is terrible to find oneself unable to arrest the forces one has loosed.

"That is the main idea; the creations of one's own brain going on and on like the waves of a rolling sea, ever beating against the minds of many. When such creations are beautiful, then it is a heavenly and immeasurable joy to see the good radiating through the human universe. But when it is the reverse.... I dare paint no picture.¹²

"I would explain that there are different degrees of mental activity [in the spiritual world]. The more highly developed a soul is mentally and spiritually, the greater the joy or sorrow it will alternately experience; although in lower grades light and shade is not so apparent.

"Astral memories and interferences: I intend to deal fully with that question because there exists so much in Spiritualism of, I would not say untruth, but misrepresentation of actual fact. You have already, of course, a certain knowledge of the power of thought, and are aware that a thought in your own mind can be photographed.... If you compare a spirit photograph of myself lately published [in a psychic journal] with the one which you yourselves received, you will observe that the former lacks intelligence, vitality, life; the latter portrays – I flatter myself – an intelligent representation.

"This can be found throughout the phenomena of Spiritualism – in certain manifestations by means of ouija boards, or materialisation, or the direct voice.¹³ These phenomena are like bubbles; prick them, and they fall away, for they lack a sustaining intelligence. Prove this for yourselves by observation, and you will prove the existence of a great sea of etheric impressions, which lingers and clings to particular places such as to

former scenes of a soul's life. Unknown to the individual, such thought-forms, if very intense, will live. For instance, in a house much loved by a former owner, people may feel "presences" passing them on stairways, hear "whisperings" in rooms, and even the apparition itself may scare the inhabitants. These phenomena are not spirits, of course, but memories that live and cling. In churches and old buildings with an accumulated power, there will be found many such forms and lingerings, frequently seen by clairvoyants and described as spittits. Not so at all; they are merely the thought-vibrations of a bygone day.

"I do not wish for one moment to take away from the value of spiritualistic phenomena. Undoubtedly there is genuine manifestation.... There remains, however, so much that is merely shadowy.... The many spheres of thought and manifestation have all to be considered; but it must also be remembered that unprincipled spirits can manipulate astral thought-forces to suit their own mischievous purposes.

"The crux of the whole matter is the quality of the mind, or the aspirations of the communicant. If attuned to the spiritual sphere of love and intelligence, there will follow a perfectly intelligent communication; but if his mind is merely nebulous, untrained and without spiritual understanding, then comes trouble...."

[Speaking of his personal self, ACD continued]:

"It is not that part of me that I want to live in the spirit world. I want to forget personalities. Personalities, although very sweet and dear to us all, must take a subsidiary place. It is the great Christ light that we follow, to bring this into clear and perfect expression through the medium of men's own hearts. When I think of past errors in thought, when I see the results of those errors, O my anguish! O my despair! O to be able to give a clearer conception of truth to others! Only one thing in life matters, which is for men to realise the redeeming power of Christ's love in their lives. If the Christ-spirit is awake, if it is abiding within, they live! All the phenomena, all the continual running to mediums to keep touch with the dead, is all wrong. Men must seek rather for the living light of truth, the redeeming love which the demonstration of survival will help them to understand. Only with this object in view, should men seek to lift the veil."

Chapter III

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNION

22nd August 1931

“Confusion – that is what we see sometimes. We see those who are mediums as you see a light radiating through the fog, and we make contact with that light. Picture yourself in a London street on a foggy night, and it will give you some conception of the difficulty. Yet it is not always so. Sometimes we return and find things clear-cut and true, the mind of the medium happy and bright, with no ripple of depression or worry to disturb reception, and so we are able to sail in and make a clear impression on the brain.

“It is comparatively rare, however, to get a perfectly clear and definite message through, since there lingers usually a remainder of the mentality through which we have to press. Mediumship is a fine art, and as humanity is only waking to the value of the spiritual life, mediums themselves still remain ignorant of the powers which might be theirs. It is necessary for a medium to be well-balanced, but also to be flexible and easily influenced. It is no easy matter to attain and retain that combination of self-control, combined with the sensitiveness of the visionary and idealist. All this is essential, however, before a perfectly attuned instrument opens to receive the perfect message.

“The majority of communications received by the Spiritualist come from the denizens of the higher astral spheres, from souls both good in intention and pure in motive, although of limited knowledge and outlook. Remember, they pass on, more or less, but personal opinion and personal experience. For this reason we find so many controls in Spiritualist circles detailing only their own viewpoint and outlining their own ideas. He who dwells in the astral sphere narrows experience, much as a man voices set opinions, political or religious. Maybe he thinks he possesses the whole truth, and that his convictions are final. Every soul, however, must eventually enter that path whereon he becomes at length cleansed from all assertion. It is of this heaven-world I would speak tonight.

“The Spiritualist may not declare that in his contact with the first three or four, or even seven astral planes, he has found all. He has yet far to go, and there are, moreover, many pitfalls, snares and illusions in his contact. The psychic or magnetic forces about the human environment are responsible oft-times for phenomena too readily accepted as an evidential communication from a spirit. So much can be found in the sitters’ mentality and magnetism to account for such, and then there are deceiving

spirits, who find their amusement in the impersonation of higher personalities. (I have witnessed this myself, with some disquiet.)

“Sometimes a medium himself or herself will create a thought-form which becomes so endowed with animation as to attach itself to a medium, be seen by a clairvoyant, and actually give messages. This also I have seen.

“This is not necessarily conscious fraud. Many, when they come into Spiritualism, strongly desire to become mediums. Developing circles are formed, and the sitter having been told that he has mediumistic powers, a condition of self-hypnotism takes place. A thought may become so ‘backed’ and clothed that it becomes realistic. We have said that astralities are merely dead things, or masks which can be easily detected. The true spiritual communication holds always its own ring of truth.

“It is certainly not wrong, nor is it undesirable, for you to seek communion with those in the spirit life. Neither is it wrong for you to give your friends an opportunity of returning to communicate. In many instances such communication is of the utmost value and help to both of the parties concerned. But having had that experience, the man in the spirit world having been able to send his messages of reassurance, both of those concerned should realise that there is work to be accomplished in the next world which cannot be done if the spirit is continually being held back by those who mourn its passing.”

27th April 1932

“It may help you to understand me better if I give my own experience of control. I find the easier way to use this particular medium is not through her subconscious but through her subliminal mind.¹⁴ We have already said that man – broadly – can contact two planes of spiritual life. If he be attuned only to the lower grades of astral life he cannot expect to receive knowledge of an uplifting character; but if a medium can be induced to raise his or her consciousness, to open up that subliminal channel, true spiritual contact is established.

“My best work through this instrument [Minesta] has always been through her subliminal self, and not when controlling or endeavouring to control through the brain.... Although I cannot hold her by automatic or hypnotic control, I can pour facts and teaching through this medium’s spiritual intelligence. Therefore do not confuse her conscious mind with ideas. Leave her alone and mentally isolated. Then I can do my work.

“Seeing clairvoyantly, you would witness an illumination around the head which projects for two or three yards, of which the upper part

tapers into a golden beam of light like a channel or trumpet.

“In many communications through mediumship you may get automatic action or control. You may witness much which on occasion reminds you of departed friends, or hear short sentences so like in style and manner that proof seems certain, these being the product of the automatic trance control employed... [which is a kind of] hypnosis of mind and body. Remember that in such cases little more than an automaton functions, and the flow of inspiration is definitely checked.

“On the other hand, with control of the subliminal self of the medium, can be obtained a clear and satisfactory reflection of the nature and personality rather than the mannerisms of the communicating spirit.

“There is but a small percentage of what is called ‘subconscious mind stuff’ coming through Spiritualistic communications. What is often called ‘subconscious’ can be attributed rather to the conscious mind of the medium interfering with the spirit control. The core or inner life of the subliminal self remains always in contact with the universal life and thus can be, and occasionally is, influenced by greater beings, which usually operate in a band rather than singly.”

4th May 1932

“In our own particular instance... the messages are transmitted down through the spheres. Sometimes we obtain a clear channel, and are able to express exactly the idea desired, while at others there seems a certain crossing of currents and vibrations, so that when we read our message we feel a sense of dissatisfaction and sadness. Obviously our thoughts have not reached you with the clarity we could have wished.... Sometimes we find it impossible to convey our exact meaning. In spite of all these obstacles the veil thins between the two worlds. Proof of survival in the years to come will not so much depend on communications through recognised mediums, but rather will win acceptance because the majority of men and women will have become awakened and alive to the unseen powers around them.

“I impress it upon you that in certain conditions only will a shaft of clear light come through. Unquestionably mediumship can be developed, but I would not advocate the development of mediumship for everyone. Only the chosen vessels. That is the mistake made in the Spiritualist movement: the wholesale advocacy of the development of the mediumistic faculty. As in the days of old, so today – there are those chosen, and the dangers of forcing psychic development cannot be too much emphasised.

“Some think that a medium becomes as an empty vessel when in a

state of trance. This is not so; for although the medium's body serves to express the communicating spirit, there is retained a residue of its owner's personality and mentality which has to be cleared; and in the clearing the message given becomes coloured more or less. Thus can a medium be of the greatest help or the greatest hindrance.

"If the medium cultivates both mentality and spirituality, then that medium can become of infinite use and importance. It is untrue that a totally ignorant medium makes the best instrument. If an unlettered or ignorant medium has been chosen for a specific task, this choice is due to some spiritual quality or faculty inherent in the medium. Let me, however, impress this; the intelligence must never be overbearing but rather so docile that it lends itself to the communicator. An ignorant medium, while useful in so far as the mind does not dam thoughts brought through, labours under the disadvantage of being unable to bring forth with clarity and force.

"We are dealing with thoughts which can only be expressed in words, and we clothe them with such language as we find in the mentality or comprehension of our medium. Therefore you see the necessity of the mind being well trained, to enable us to give clear and precise teaching. We are hoping to use this medium: Brighteyes will forgive an old man for saying that it is no easy matter to play a fine tune on an instrument with one string and that she could help much.

"In later days you will find I shall finish many a theme commenced at the beginning of our sittings. In that you will recognise the handiwork of an individual and outside communicator. Do not judge until you see the finished article. Before my passing I did not understand the difficulties of communication, but became convinced on cold evidence which I recognise now might not be so valid as I once thought. When I come back hundreds of ideas attempt to pour through – I must learn to regulate this overcrowding....

"I find over here that it is difficult to get the human mind to receive, though it eventually accepts the idea. I want to link you all together for there is so much for you all to learn."

9th March 1932

"You have been asking for proof, my friend, that this is Conan Doyle communicating, that it is Conan Doyle who has come back to his friends to bring them the glad truth of life after death. I do assure you that these proofs are at hand; not only are the proofs lying in my words, in the talks which I have given concerning the life after death; but even so, more

tangible proofs than these are yet to come. I have expressed a desire that our friends should first receive the teaching, and after the message has been delivered, then will proofs be given of a physical nature.

“People will accept my message, they will – they must – for so much depends upon this teaching. Conan Doyle is the spokesman for the great ones, and when my mission is finished I shall leave the earth plane and advance. I have not hurried my own family in this matter, because I know that they find it difficult to accept the changed man that I am. I want you to recognise, however, that it is not Conan Doyle alone, but the powers behind which enable me to bring these proof and this message back. While the power here is good, and there is sympathy from all, I feel a certain difficulty in tuning in to the extra vibrations tonight...”

[A lengthy pause.]

“I am brought back by the thoughts of my family to the personal plane. I cannot hold that vibration of the celestial sphere, my friends.... [ACD had spoken throughout with considerable agitation.] But it is good to feel a reunion with them. What a strong personal link I am feeling in this room tonight – quite different, quite different.

“You remember, friends, I have told you before that we function on these different planes of being, and even from the earth plane you can touch the astral, the mental, the universal? I have explained all this, and coming back to earth conditions it is for me also exactly the same. We attune ourselves to the different degrees of mental life of those we contact. Sometimes I speak from the astral plane, sometimes from the mental and at others from the celestial; but I have to attune my vibrations always in accordance with conditions provided....

“I am directed to speak tonight about the work which lies ahead. You have been prepared for years, much as I myself was prepared, although I did not then realise my mission. I did not realise that I must pass from the earth into the spiritual life in order to be a servant of the White Brotherhood. I am under the direction of the Wise Ones. I am their servant, their instrument, and I have to organise this group, this work, in London. This teaching, these messages, are to be the foundation. I come back to amplify those teachings I gave whilst in the body. I have to reveal that finer life, a nobler path than ever dawned upon my earthly conception. All must be put right. Men must be taught the truth concerning the life after death. I have given it. Send it out to the world!

“No man who knows me, my thoughts and my writings, will doubt these words: they will recognise me therein; they will understand; they must understand.

“Why was I once inundated with all those prophecies of disasters and catastrophes to which humanity is heading? Because, as I see now, I was the pivot, the central point. Thousands then hung on my words. Because of this I was destined to be used for the Great White Brotherhood to bring a clearer, truer, and more exact teaching about the life beyond.

“In this connection, you wonder why the Conan Doyle Memorial has been kept in abeyance, why such an organisation has not travelled faster? Had it gone ahead it would have been likely to have got into the wrong hands, been run on the wrong lines. Men’s minds have to be prepared. Communication has its place, the proving of survival is necessary, but must not be abused.”

[*White Eagle said afterwards*]:

“Evidence is not always what the human minds consider to be evidence. The spiritual brotherhoods have their own way of producing evidence, and the spirit of man must be ready to receive it; otherwise it means nothing to him.... The foundation of the English group of the White Brotherhood lies in your records. When the message goes out many will accept its teaching. People will say, ‘This is true; we will follow!’ All classes of men will be brought to believe.

“Your faith and loyalty will carry it through. You will never fail – never fail.”

Part Two

THE MESSAGE

Chapter I

MAN'S REALISATION OF HIMSELF, AND OF A LIFE EVER MORE ABUNDANT

18th November 1931

"I find myself in an unspeakably beautiful 'heaven-world' at the present time. I desire above all to bring this reality home to my friends, but realise only too well I can share it only if they understand the 'heaven' to which I have gone. And this has made me feel a deeper urge to spread the truth concerning the afterlife. I believe that I have won some reputation as a missionary. I carry on my work still upon earth, but by diverse means and ways from those I once followed. O the difficulties of coming into touch with the earth plane! It is all so different from what I anticipated. The true conception of the life of spirit has yet to dawn on man. Thank God, the mists thin, and I can see with a clearer vision than once seemed possible. My friends expect me to talk of the trivialities of the earth life, but I have done with trivialities, having found the realities. Is it possible for me to paint, with the language at my disposal in this medium, an adequate description of heaven's glories and beauties? It can but be attempted – it shall be done.

"It is fact that after passing through what is known as the astral plane we do actually shed a 'shell', shed the 'dress' or 'envelope' which once contained the soul, and which... remains in that astral condition from which we die to rise again to true spiritual life. And that same 'shell' or 'raiment' can be reanimated or resurrected temporarily by psychic powers. Be it noted, such a purely an artificial animation, but can appear to a medium as a reality. We would raise people's minds to the true life of the spirit, wherein alone they may make perfect contact with those who have passed on. Let us remember, however, that a large percentage of those in the spirit world entertain no desire whatever to return to the earth plane, being neither interested in its progress nor in the people they have left behind. It is not for everyone to seek or try to force communication between the so-called dead and the living.

"I repeat, in this new life intercourse between the two worlds proves not nearly so simple as I had been led to think, but communion can be a finer truth and more glorious reality than is yet understood. Communication must come to mean a true communion of spirit. Of the personal aspect of such communion, I would agree that while personal affections and mannerisms endear one to one's friends on earth, it is well

to remember that these may be also a pitfall to man's relationships with his brother man. There exists too much of the surface relationship and insufficient of the deeper understanding of the needs of man's spirit.

"Here lies the basis upon which much of the future Spiritualism will evolve. It must no longer be that free-and-easy, happy-go-lucky contact of personal memories, of earthly pleasures and desires, but growth into deeper understanding and recognition [of the spiritual needs of each soul]. What I am driving at must become the bedrock of Spiritualism. It is not enough, this free-and-easy contact of personalities. Spiritualism and spiritual contact must grow to an abiding reality. When such reality becomes part and parcel of the soul life, all fear of death, sickness, and poverty will be wiped away. This same spirit – the very spirit of the living Christ – can heal the ill of all. *For He shall wipe away all tears... and there shall be no more weeping or wailing or gnashing of teeth.*

"With all the strength of my spirit I desire to reveal to my friends the new man [that I am]. I am no longer concerned with the trivialities of earthly affairs, except so far as these experiences affect the spiritual development of the individual concerned. (Not that I can help the individual save in teaching the foundation of the spiritual life.)

"Yes, the old Doyle seems to be passing. But I will prove to you all that while I die yet I live again! There are no trimmings on a man when he has passed the Second Death; only pure spirit remains. O! that second awakening! One thing only was I conscious of – and that was the Allness, the infinitude, the wonder of God's love. In that supreme moment I knew no such thing as separateness of existence. Personality had died, but individuality was reborn. Into that great celestial throng of pulsating spirit life have passed all those who lived in innocence, in forgetfulness of self. In this mighty living host men and women who have passed through earth-death *live*, and give of all that is most beneficial to God's plan."

25th November 1931

"Not for one moment would I have you think I destroy the beliefs of Spiritualism. No! Rather am I trying to bring back a larger, wiser and finer understanding of this glorious truth of immortality. Some pass weary in mind and spirit, to a condition of dreaminess wherein they live, just breathing, as it were, for long periods. Others speedily traverse the lower spheres, shed that dense body which is theirs on quitting the still denser physical body, and enter the heaven-world. Realise this – only in this state of consciousness is man brought face to face with 'judgment': with God. When faced with the 'judgment' – which is but the realisation of *himself* –

he is able to look once and for all into the deeps of himself. Knowing at last his own frailty set beside the glow and glory of the God-life, his soul is filled with compassion towards all: with love, that redeeming love of Christ.

“Now the ways open. He can go forward, leaving the earth plane behind, forward into ever higher realms of spiritual consciousness and understanding, ever opening to the inflow of life more abundant; or else he is arrested by the cry – the anguish of those sorely struggling in darkness and sorrow on the earth plane. Is it for him to ignore the heart-cry of humanity?

“*Rest in peace!* Yes, friends, I understand now.... If you had experienced the peace, the tranquillity, and the beauty of the heaven-world you would realise that there are many who prefer to rest in peace. Does not man also rest after strenuous labour?

“I do not like the personal [that is, singular] pronoun very much, for it has become ‘we’ now – *we*. And that is how men will all feel upon entry to that spiritual life wherein there exists no separateness. Although individuality becomes greater than you on earth can conceive, in its greatness it becomes unified with the whole. Therefore no individual speaks of himself as ‘I’, because the individual is become no longer ‘I’ but ‘we’. This is the teaching which will come to men’s hearts – *we*. Man will know then that he can neither think, speak, nor act entirely of himself, for every thought, word or act must bear its effect upon the entire community.

“*We – WE!* Did not the Master Christ say, *Of myself I can do nothing?* Does not the great man say, ‘I am nothing’? And being nothing, he becomes everything – he becomes all-infinite! Is it humility that speaks here? This is one of the first lessons a man learns when he passes the Second Death.

“Spiritualism brings a vital message for this reason. There are thousands of souls released from physical life who need contact with their dear ones when they first come here. Then communion is right and true. The fault lies when there results [from that contact] a clinging to that soul when it would else pass onward. To establish true communication, man must seek the pure spiritual contact, never obtainable through the more crude psychic phenomena.

“I trust we bring a message of happiness and beauty. Carry on patiently and you will see far deeper into the truth which these messages convey. Meet soon! God bless you all!”

22nd May 1932

“Oh, the ineffable longing in my heart to bring back the greater truth of this heaven-world and the world of the discarnate! It seems an age since I left my body, and yet today comes to me an increased power. Today, I believe, was my earth birthday, and although men may consider this long past and finished so far as I am concerned, yet indeed the links of earth seem to hold. Be it known that the day of the spirit’s incarnation in flesh is a day of power for that spirit, and can be used either for good or evil. Thus on the anniversary of a death, a birth, a murder or a suicide, of any happening tragic or otherwise which vitally affects man’s soul, comes a recurrence on the earth plane of psychic vibrations about the scene of the experience.

“I seem to be far removed from earth memories – that is, up to a point. Experiences which were spiritually trivial fade and only those conditions which deeply affected my spirit remain. Much of which I wrote has vanished, while yet other works of my pen and imagination live: live sometimes, friends, to sadden; at others to inspire. Thank God that many a writing of mine dwells in my heart as a glowing memory of happiness and joy!

“As I am speaking – or, shall we rather say, am pouring my spirit through the channel long prepared for this especial labour – I am again caught up in a ray of power, and can express with increased vigour my experiences since my release.

“In very truth *a man does not fall into a honeypot when he passes from earth to the spirit world!*

“Of course, all depends on the man’s mentality and spiritual development at the time of his release. He who has lived a life gross, material, sensual, or selfish, finds himself in ‘queer street’. [that is, in trouble]. Understand this, my friends; the soul must pass through every condition and phase of desire once encouraged and gratified: pass through, still [as] the conscious self, grown so familiar – longing for, yearning for, desiring with all his being to gratify the thirst and hunger for singular experience now torturing his newly-released astral body; and unable in most cases to attain even alleviation. Eventually the man becomes shattered, as it were: so driven by unquenched longings, until at last realisation dawns that the grey astral is barren of anything to gratify or satisfy him. No picture can paint, no description attempt, the driven life of the underworld.

“Of course, inevitably and eventually he reaches the point of exhaustion, once the fire of his being has all but flamed away. As a last resort his soul cries upon God. Where else can a soul turn in desperate extremity?¹⁵

“So soon as aspiration has found birth – *My God, my God, why hast*

thou forsaken me! – so, according to capacity, awakes such tincture or germ of God sufficient to enkindle the desire for more.

“He passes onward, through the underworlds. Every step towards salvation must be earned. Even in the next sphere, although lighter, clearer, brighter, there operates the law of salvation by effort; not even there will he attain satisfaction, but onward and upward must he strive.

“My friends, there is always the other side [of the picture]. Whilst man may traverse hell and suffer tortures of mind and body both on the earth and in the spirit, there remain times when we can and do attain the heights: you there [on your world] and we here.

[Remember that from spirit] “we come back by our own volition. By *right of choice* we accept conditions such as we, the ego – the true innermost of man – know will yield most valuable experience. Never imagine that the time of birth, the place of birth, or man’s condition of birth to be an accident. The whole of the earth life – I say the ‘earth life’ because that forms a focal point from which the succeeding spiritual life evolves – must fall into accordance with definite and divine plan.

“With what precision spoke the Master when He said, *Not a sparrow falls to the ground but your Father in Heaven knows. Even the very hairs of your head are numbered!* Such is very truth. The whole lies in the mind of God, for He holds you in the cup of His hand.

“What man has to learn is to support himself by courage and effort. He must find not only himself, but control of his own being. Until then, man cannot realise his own tremendous potentialities: which same realisation forms the object of life’s discipline.

“By ‘life’ I mean life, not as you understand it through mortal eyes, but as a whole, as one vast experience, passing from apex around the cycle, to return to the apex.

“Yes, yes; I was given a glimpse of those heaven-worlds. Sometimes I seemed lifted up, to be borne on angels’ wings to catch a glimpse of surpassing wonder.

“Do not however mistake me. In many cases those conditions in the lower worlds, in the underworlds, are never experienced. The newly-released spirit can rapidly transverse those planes in an unconscious state, much as when at night you dream. To such they remain only a dream, thank God! Many wake on the plane known to Spiritualists as the ‘Summerland’,¹⁶ and there find a comfortable place, a very good place, waiting....

“On this subject you may have queries.... I will try to give you lucid answers.”

Question: I assume from your teaching that the seventh astral plane, the denser, is the underworld of desires and lusts?

“The lowest astral plane consists of a plane of desire, burning and persistent desire, the which the man has fostered during his life on earth. Those who migrate thither are such as hold neither affection nor love for any creature save self.

“The plane above? Well, there we find life a little brighter. Although still dark, there abides more a greyness like a foggy English November morning. A dim light penetrates, because the inhabitants have developed some affection, some love, albeit merely love of nature or of animals. Throughout the journey of the spheres, light comes only from the waking within. In the greyness are seen stunted trees and vegetation, while forms of men live and dwell in mists damp and thick, being themselves clothed in grey; being in fact so wrapped up in themselves, in self-centredness as to create about themselves environments unpleasantly cold and repellent.

“Thus self-centredness becomes outwardly actualised in a perfectly logical and natural manner.”

Question: What about the next astral plane [the fifth]?

“Now here we find brighter conditions, a desire to do something for the fellow next door, a waking interest in one’s neighbour. Earth conditions tend to reproduce themselves. We gather in public worship, we dwell in houses not beautiful, somewhat dilapidated, and occasionally not exactly salubrious. Again the interior spiritual conditions of the inhabitants become outwardly actualised. The soul, however, here strives towards the light, and thus conditions grow more beautiful, more hopeful.

“We pass into the fourth sphere. Now things are decidedly better. Here we come to beautiful scenery, to happy and on the whole harmonious conditions. Families dwell together; we see the homes described in many spiritualistic books, the lakes, rivers, mountains, flowers and animals: altogether quite a bright ‘second edition’ or continuation of a comfortable life on the earth plane. On this plane the soul attains to mental and spiritual development, and having so attained creates these outer conditions of harmony and of beauty, which after all are but the reflex of the soul’s mental and spiritual level.

“Cannot you understand? Paradoxical though it appears these conditions result because the mental and spiritual advancement of the spirit creates these things for itself, out of itself; much as a man on earth contributes to his home life either harmony or disharmony. Thus only our beauty, serenity and comfort come into being in the spiritual realms.”

Question: If the astral planes number seven, how can this be reconciled with the dominant number, twelve? You have given us seven astral, three mental and three celestial planes, thirteen in all?

“There are actually twelve planes. Of the seven spheres which we

must call astral, the lowest, or seventh, remains so closely interwoven with earth, so identified with earthly interests and influences, that it cannot be included. To be mathematically correct, one should couple that lowest with the earth plane, for the denizens are still earth-men. The first plane of spirit commences in the first grey sphere. Is that clear?

“Therefore the spheres number twelve: six astral and six heavenly. The last mental plane marks the stopping place, or the *nirvana*, where the soul meditates, contemplates and absorbs experiences of the past. This is the resting-place after every incarnation before the soul returns to gather fresh experience.

“Beyond these mental planes, beyond *nirvana*, awaits – we will not call it the ‘third death’ – but the final liberation from incarnations. Then the soul goes onward through the ‘waiting halls’ into the celestial or cosmic consciousness.”

Chapter II
THE HARMONY, PERFECTION AND GLORY
OF THE HEAVEN LIFE

Date unknown

“After I left my earth body I could not free myself for a considerable period, yet it is impossible to describe exactly the ‘geography’ of my condition. I felt strangely linked with the place of my birth and early years. I could not escape either to return or to advance to that heavenly plane which I knew existed and was quite near. Truly I was tied, and all my hopes of communicating with my friends knew frustration. I tried and tried again, and yet again, and found the contact most difficult. I was at a loss to understand the cause. I found myself only able to give thought-projections, and sketchy bits seemed to filter through the denseness around me. Such slight messages gave assurance to my dear ones that I was conscious, at all events.

“And then I seemed to be picked up, as it were, in a ray of light. A power unknown came to my aid, giving me a vision of my true state, and I subsequently learned that this ray of light was a projection of love and power from the Polaires Brotherhood.¹⁷ It proved of inestimable value to me, and has brought a clear vision of the actual state of life immediately following death.

“Every soul must pass through such a condition, such a period of time, short or long, according to the mental condition of the man when he leaves his body. To some this is a matter of a few hours or days; to others of years. Remember, even the Master Jesus himself descended into a condition of uncertainty and what is described as ‘Hades’, the sphere of the disquieted spirits. So, too, must every man on leaving the earth pass through that belt of the disquieted souls of men. As I said before, it is very difficult to escape from these astral attachments, mental and physical – only the enlightened soul rapidly traverses the sphere of astral, lower astral, and denser astral matter.

“Time is nothing in spirit life. *In the twinkling of an eye we shall be changed*, as St. Paul truly said. *At the last trump* – but this does not mean at the end of the world, as our Christian friends are wont to believe. It means at the end of the soul’s world of matter. Then, when the man passes through the grey astral spheres and is touched by the light of the eternal spirit of God, *in the twinkling of an eye* he is changed! – and casts off the old terrestrial body and puts on the body celestial, and dwells in the heart

of eternal spirit.

“Truly, truly, it is said that a gulf is fixed between the man who dwells in Abraham’s bosom, and the rich man imprisoned in the fires of hell. Can this be obviated? Will the gulf always exist between the man of heaven and the man on earth? Always, so long as the man continues to think and house his being in earthiness!”

9th December 1931

“We have dealt of late with the conditions immediately following death, and it may appear that we have perhaps enlarged on the gloomy side, by talking rather pessimistically about the grey spheres, the astral memories, and the mistakes of the Spiritualists. We unfold the reverse of the story. I have so recently passed through that state which is disquieting and disturbing that it may have left a rather deep impression upon the part of me which the more readily contacts the earth plane.

“The difficulty is to find words in which to describe these conditions of life. The representations of life in the astral planes made from time to time through Spiritualism are often only the actual experience of those souls still closely linked with earth. As you have many social levels of life, so on the astral plane exist various conditions attuned to the desires of those who dwell therein; therefore you will get a variety of descriptions of this particular plane. After passing through the ‘death’ of the astral body, when the man discards his astral vehicle and enters the heavenly life, we there find a condition of at-one-ment – attunement – condition wherein the soul is conscious only of the one vibratory note of love and service. In this sphere the soul is cognizant mainly of the great cosmic powers.”

20th January 1932

“In speaking of that Second Death through which we all pass after experiencing a period of unconsciousness – which may last for minutes, hours, days, or even years – a period of quiescence of consciousness, we said that the spirit then wakes to life rich, vivid, renewed. Time is nothing over here: the Second Death has taken place, and all that was of earth has passed away. With the Second Death there comes the great awakening – the soul’s awakening – when it sees truth, and for a moment gains vision of the mighty salvation through Christ! With that in view a man advances into the mental condition of life.

“I would, however, make it clear that the soul passes not through every mental plane, but migrates to the one particular mental plane to which he is attuned. Thus in succession he will work his way up through every plane of spiritual life, not only from that one experience which you understand as the physical life of here and now, but by and through every incarnate life the soul of man has lived. Thus he will mark out during each separate incarnation that place in the mental plane to which he must travel; and so in course of time experience every phase and every condition of spiritual life.

“Is this clear? For that particular astral, mental, or celestial plane to which he is destined he lays the foundation, in this physical world, the result being that he attains to lesser or fuller degrees of astral life, of mental, and of celestial life according to the aspiration and growth of his soul whilst on earth.”

9th December 1931

“I have here a most difficult task. I shall endeavour to show the difference between the mental plane, whereon the soul emerges after the Second Death, the mental activities themselves, and the celestial life which lies beyond. The mental body contacts a mental state only, a state widely differing from that known as the spiritual and celestial.

“The mental plane is very powerful, and on it it becomes necessary for the soul to use the mental faculties, which become unloosed as it enters this plane of existence. A delicate balance must be attained between the mental and the spiritual before the soul wakes to the celestial. For a period it would seem the soul must grow in quietude. As the seed is sown and left to germinate, so too the man, when passed into the mental world dwells there for a period of quietness and growth, and then emerges into the celestial, carrying with him the power and equipment gathered.

“In the celestial world the work of creation commences. That is the glory and magnificence of that condition of life – that creative art which is the real *becoming* of all creation. In this heaven-world man absorbs some potency from the divine quality of Christ. Almost having become angelic, he dwells amongst angelic beings. Would we could endow you with some flash of intuition by which to gather some idea of the harmony, the perfection, of the life!

“Here the soul becomes conscious of its true nature. Here the ego knows itself as very part of God....

“Passing from earth in normal course of development, men reach this sphere of life in about thirty years. There can be no drive or urge for

the soul [against its will], for ever man exerts his own freewill. If he would linger in the astral condition he can stay long, so that a century or longer may elapse, or sometimes he passes quickly onward, anxious, longing with all his soul to be reunited with the God-consciousness.

“What then can it mean to a soul willingly to renounce its heaven world, to retrace its steps earthward to serve? Can you conceive a tithe [that is, a tenth] of the wonder, the harmony of life celestial? Yes, there are forms, but forms that one sees are angelic: perfect in beauty, with faces tranquil and peaceful, shining with the glory of a great peace and love. Each mind is softened and becomes beatified. The air is rare and fine. There as a harmony, a divine music, which breathes continually in the soul. The soul finds a supreme joy in service, in self-giving. Do not conceive this as a sphere of rest, albeit it is a sphere of peace: for in peace we learn something of creation’s ways, and become ourselves creative.

“Yes, there *are* souls who willingly sacrifice even such joys to descend to the lower planes to labour. Like a diver descending to the deep, or a collier into the bowels of the earth, so can the returning soul don its astral garb and wear again something of the limitations of personality. And then they can labour in lower spheres only for a period, after which they ascend, as it were to breathe, unable to sustain for long so dense an atmosphere.

“It *is* possible for souls still dwelling in celestial spheres to communicate with earth. There are messengers for that purpose. Few understand the wonderful mysticism of our Bible, wherein Jacob dreamed he saw a ladder placed between heaven and earth. A childish story, perhaps? He saw angels descending and ascending it – and that is precisely what is still happening. Communications *are* coming from those in the celestial spheres to the earth people: alas, that so much is lost in transit and that so much confusion exists regarding the methods of communication!

“We spoke last about St. Paul’s words, *In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, we shall be changed*. This is the call from the supreme power, the Christ-power, the Cosmic Christ, to whom all men shall find [their true] relation. Sooner or later each and all must awaken to that call, the trumpet of the spirit, summoning them homeward. Man will then leave behind all that is of the earth, earthy; the individuality will become preserved, enhanced; the personality will die, and be shed. Regret it not, for although of the earth, and soiled by earth, it has yet been a means to an end – a means necessary to enable contact with experiences invaluable on man’s upward climb to God.

“Yes; teach the people the truth of communion, but for God’s sake teach them the truth! Do not offer a fool’s paradise! I can assure you that

life after death is a very serious matter, not to be regarded lightly, nor to be glossed over with a varnish paint. I can assure you that when a man passes over from the physical to the astral condition he has to face up to things; there can be no more backsliding. Life resolves itself into a forward march!

“Proofs – proofs? People of the earth cry out for proofs! They do not know what proofs are! They only consider something capable of being conveyed to their understanding through any of the five senses physical as proof of spirit power! And yet the great proof of spirit power is manifesting itself at this precise moment in a very definite and drastic manner all over the face of your world!”

16th December 1931

“So let us return to deal further with the mental plane: not, mark you, to be confused with the celestial. Although terms almost baffle me, the several planes in the mental world must be clearly subdivided. Thus, after the Second Death, the soul enters to the plane whereon it finds itself surrounded by previous creations of intellectualism. In other words, the chief characteristics of the man find expression in cold, hard intellectual thought.

“Yet a delicate balance exists between the intellectual and the intuitional, for on this next plane the soul responds to that intuitional or spiritual light which draws it ever onward, ever higher and nearer to the central focus of its being, the Godhead. On this second mental plane man becomes conscious of an intuitional flow, toning down hard intellectuality, and enforcing purer, intuitional concepts of life. In this condition man himself is becoming creative, since from this plane all the creative activities spring which take ultimate form as art, literature, music, religion, science: the many varying expressions of creative energy. Here man finds himself able to contact the source of all inspiration and creation.

“From this intuitional... but still mental, plane, you understand... he passes to the higher, the third and last mental plane. Now he enters a state of quiescence.

“As the man journeys upward he is ever shedding: shedding that stratum of himself which is of the earth, earthy. Always he absorbs lessons learned in his journey, which are retained by the ego. When man attains to this condition of peace and tranquillity – not lethargy, mark you! – the spirit remains still conscious, although mentally in a state of soliloquy, and he is at last enabled to see himself as he really is: able to gauge the effect of his life, not only as it has affected the lives of others, but in relation to

the whole creative principle; able to estimate the magnitude or otherwise of his personal contribution towards the evolution of God's plan."

16 March 1932

"The third mental plane is a condition of withdrawal from outer form into inner relationship with the Universal. It is essentially a plane where the individual ego contacts that universal sphere of spiritual being. Whereas the past planes have been of definite form, when man arrives at this third mental plane there is to a certain extent a lack of form. It is very difficult for one on the earth, concerned only with a life of form, to comprehend such a condition. Yet, my friends, when you consider the universal life – that great Omnipotence which you worship and love as God, you can conceive of no particular form. Yet there dwells within and without you God's pulsating life-power, which you recognise by its myriad manifestations as an individual intelligence proclaiming its handiwork in every creation of its power. When you pray, you pray to a mind that understands, to a heart that loves and is compassionate, yet to try to formulate that heart or mind is utterly impossible. For no other reason the Cosmic Christ manifested to the earth plane in flesh that he might give a form, a nexus, in order that the people of the earth might make contact – according to their capacity – with the universal Godhead.

"So when we reach the third plane of the mental – spiritual world, we find that lack of form. That is, the ego is not limited, confined or bound to any particular form of being. The man is rather spending his time, not only by withdrawing into the centre of himself, but also expanding from that centre until he contacts the whole, the Universal.

"It is true that from the earth plane men and women contact this universal sphere; but it is so powerful, so tremendous in its vibrations, that it proves oft-times dangerous in its effects on the human organism. This is a vast theme; but you occasionally see advanced souls on earth at whom men wonder – adored, loved and respected by their fellows – and yet for some unknown reason they collapse and death awaits them. They die of disease which the medical world cannot diagnose. Again we say that until medical science deigns to study the laws governing man's spiritual being, it must face and be baffled by obscure diseases.

"Do not mistake this statement. We do not [seek to] convey that all who die thus are necessarily people of high degree of spiritual consciousness, whose end is due to contact with the universal sphere. It seems well, however, to explain that this universal power proves responsible sometimes for the shattering of the physical body unless

sought in humility and truth.

“You ask exactly what is meant? We reply that there lies an inmost centre within all, a divine birthplace of the spirit, which to reach and comprehend is beyond all intellectual striving or attainment. To attain to this plane by intellectual straining and striving, without that due attunement of the spirit, or growth to the spiritual planes of being, must inevitably bring disaster. Yet if man will strive with heart and mind and spirit to seek the kingdom of heaven in simple, childlike faith, he must reach that plane to receive of truth and power and life.

“We repeat, friends, that on this third heavenly plane there is a withdrawing from expression through form into the inmost depths, and in such withdrawal there follows expansion into and absorption of universal life.

“With this the thought will arise: has man thus ultimately sunk individuality and lost desire? No, no, my friends, no! It means that man has become greater, nobler, in his individuality. He has tasted the divine fruits, and *knoweth at last of his own divinity*. He has become at one, even as the Gentle One said: *I and My Father are One; I in thee and thou in Me*.

“But then, of course, the man, the ego, can still return. Although he is become as a seed sown deeply in the soil of life, again to blossom in the spring, the human ego can again emerge, assume form, and re-enter the various states of being, until, if he so desire, he takes upon himself once more physical existence.”

16th December 1931

“I spoke of a period of quietness and review before the passing from the mental plane. Remember, in the mental plane, a man is more or less concentrated upon himself, strenuously labouring within, concerned now not so much with output as with his intake. Released from the mental plane, the ego loses touch in great degree with earth life, but in the celestial sphere, it seems, the contact again becomes far more vivid than before.

“To cover the ground again: we have outlined three mental planes the lower mental or intellectual; the intuitional; and the higher mental which is where man contacts the cosmic forces. We then pass onward to the true spiritual spheres.

“The Buddhists refer to the heavenly condition as *nirvana*, which well expresses that peace, the tranquil retracement of the experiences gained by the soul on its long march.

“Did I not hear someone speak of the ‘waiting halls of heaven’? Let me now return to these waiting halls. The soul whose fulfilment lacks completion dwells for a period in the mental state, an indweller of the ‘waiting halls’, having then gathered all his knowledge and reviewed his past. There he waits until the call comes or he accepts the order to descend, to take another dip into earth life, as it were, much as a diver to the deeps.”

20th January 1932

“We have referred to the astral, the mental, the celestial, and the Christ sphere. There has been some confusion of terms, and I wish to clear up this point now. I conceive of seven planes of astral life, three of mental, and three celestial. From the celestial we pass to what has been referred to as the Christ sphere (but which I would prefer to call the ‘cosmic or universal spheres’). In this condition of life dwell those beings who, freed from rebirth to a physical plane of existence, are now concerned not only with the earth but with the cosmic life of the Universe. From this plane go forth creative masters, responsible for the life of the soul on other planets and in other spiritual spheres of existence.”

16th December 1931

“Thousands of years must elapse, of course, before the ego attains to full expression and development, and only after gaining all knowledge possible through physical existence does it pass onward, beyond the halls of waiting, onward beyond even the celestial, into a still higher plane. What term can prove adequate? – *the Christ sphere!* – the at-one-ment with Christ! The rapture of a perfect love, a perfected fulfilment.

“Passing from the mental to the spiritual spheres, the soul becomes conscious of a spiritual element [which was] before lacking, the near contact of the Christ sphere, from which the creative ones, the exalted ones, may descend to merge into some earthly existence by a supreme sacrifice. Such as this happened when the Master Jesus made his renunciation – but you have so much to learn yet of his life and death.

“It is unnecessary for man to pass through physical death to contact all the planes of spirit life. Mortal man can and indeed does contact and responds to the influence of all planes of spiritual being, the difference being that when the soul is released, spiritual life gains a sweet intensity: the soul having lost a physical body, all the more surely does the

soul-experience afford greater reality.

“Again, *all the spheres of the spirit life are, or can be, reached by incarnate man*, who may thus indeed draw experience from a hell of desire or heaven of ecstasy.”

Chapter III

THE SPHERE OF REUNION

16th March 1932

“At this stage of our discourse a question will arise: this is all very interesting and very well, but what about that vibrant human love and reunion so long our dream and desire – will this be ours in the spirit spheres of life? What is the use of being a formless mass of consciousness, like an egg without a shell? Very unattractive, very uninviting, it seems, when one dreams of love, deep, rich and full, the fulfilment of which alone can make earth life worth its price. We remember the longing with which man looks forward to that reunion, to peace and happiness such as the world can neither give nor take away. Long have we dreamed that beyond the river Jordan we should find reunion.

‘And with the morn those angel faces smile
That we have loved long since and lost awhile.’¹⁸

“Are we then destined to some formless condition, far removed from the fragrance of human love?

“Oh, my friends, I can assure you that there is indeed a sphere in the spirit world, a divine sphere of life in the upper regions of the astral plane, far more than the Summerland of the Spiritualist, a sphere of souls united. Mark you, there can be found not only reunion for those incarnate souls who can soar thither from the earth plane, but the reunion of all grades of spiritual life.

“Let me explain: this is the sphere of family reunions – might it not be described as a family gathering, where all the dear ones greet one another? But not, be it noted, necessarily *continually* doing this, nor always indulging in a flow of merriment and joy. Duty may be joy and ecstasy or sullen labour, but when the call comes all must obey, migrating to that condition for which they are suited, or to which they have adapted themselves.

“There exist periods in the astral world, or ‘festivals’, when there are family gatherings, much as you hold at birthdays, at Christmastime, at Eastertide, Whitsuntide, and so forth. On these occasions families meet and exchange experiences, meet in wonderful love and happiness and peace. Yes, indeed, a man can find his beloved there, and live and dwell together in happiness and reunion. Then again they mingle in massed concourse, in vast... not halls or temples, no... vast open-air cathedrals, as I

may term them, where they praise God by song and love and prayer, in gratitude, in profound thankfulness.

“Would you [like to] question me about this sphere of reunion?”

Question: Suppose one partner follows another to the life beyond, and is much lower in spiritual attainment than first, and so cannot reach the plane of reunion: what happens then?

“He or she who has attained the higher spiritual plane can always raise the other, if only for a brief period. Illustrate this by your own experience. Take a woman of a deeply spiritual nature who loves greatly one whom, you would say, seems unworthy. Cannot that woman by her influence and love, at certain times raise that other soul by power of her spiritual presence? It may be but a fleeting experience, but he knows he is become near to her for a flash. In the spiritual sphere the same law operates. Remember, time is nothing over here: but a question of consciousness – that is all.¹⁹ By intensity of experience two souls may live a period in a moment, and the time seem long. A light will then have dawned upon that soul, and afterwards he or she will strive with added desire and zest to reach again that plane of consciousness whereon they two had enjoyed some marvellous moment of bliss and reunion. *There can be no separation in spirit!*

“This must be very difficult to understand. Try, however, to grasp this idea of spiritual affinity. Although there may be work to be accomplished in different planes of life, there waits always one point at which souls may contact, although perhaps only at given intervals. At times you yourselves can reach heights of spiritual consciousness. True, you fail to sustain them and fall, as it were, with a crash. Nevertheless, you have had your moment. Surely to go to the spirit world does not make a man an angel always, or for ever?

“Oh, how can I make you understand the love, bliss and joy souls here experience when they reach at last to their beloved? What joy to know that separation can never again be theirs: although they must perforce sometimes go their separate ways to service and to labour! Or to come to the supreme realisation that separation dies forever in the arms of love!”

Question: What of twin souls who are indeed affinities? What is their destiny?

ACD: “It is a big question, but here again there follows no question of two souls, twin souls as you term them, merging and becoming one individual. There can be no question of the individuality of either becoming lost and absorbed in the other or both in one; but there may develop such perfect harmony of desire and understanding that the two life-courses run as one within a single channel. When the soul reaches the

higher celestial spheres there remains still the active and the passive aspect, the man and the woman and each still contributes his or her particular creative ray, his or her ray of life-force, to the Universal.

“I want to emphasise this truth again, and yet again. There can never be, with the eternal good, the universal good, any question of absorption; and yet it is all absorption. Here is a paradox; do you not see? In becoming one you become *all*, and in becoming *all* you become One: a most magnificent, stupendous, and transcendent thought!

“If you could grasp – if only occasionally – some realisation of this, you would find that world affairs run as a perfectly oiled machine. Friction would depart, because man would be translating the individual out of the personal viewpoint into some realisation of his true nature. To this realisation Jesus the Master and the Christ strove to bring men!

“Whilst we are here we would leave another thought in your minds. On this plane of consciousness we have called the Universal – which means the all-ness of all life – man (I have to use the word man, [although I mean something greater]) can control the elements, can create at will by filling his consciousness with the universal creative life-force. Such is the secret which the masters utilize. Through that same vibration they overcome, or rather can control, all material elements, be they the physical atoms or those of the astral and the spiritual world. The Master, having realised this plane of consciousness, would by an effort of spiritual will (not physical will, mark you, but spiritual will) raise himself, and so quicken his vibrations as to attract to himself spiritual atoms. When they are accumulated, he can lower their vibrations, lower, lower, and yet lower, until they become no longer spiritual but physical atoms, to be formed by the force of his desire. Many question the record of the ‘feeding of the five thousand’ with five loaves, and two fishes. How did the Master accomplish this miracle? By raising His consciousness to the Universal, holding His thought *at one* with God, and attracting to that thought those spiritual atoms, slowing them down, and by His will determining the particular form of matter that these atoms should take. Thus He fed the five thousand.”

30th March 1932

“We were speaking last about the sphere of reunion, that condition of spiritual understanding upon which all could meet. We spoke of family reunions on festive occasions which obtain also in this spirit life. We tried to show that even from the earth life there can be reached this common ‘plane’, ‘sphere’ or ‘condition’ of spiritual harmony and contact. In

preceding talks it was indicated that the life which is described as ‘the life after death’, is in reality *the life of eternal spirit*, so that these realms of spiritual consciousness cannot be limited to the life discarnate, but are with you, here and now.

“This is the crucial point to be brought home; that this life of spirit, erroneously referred to as ‘the life after death’, is the life of the present, the life of the future, the life of the past – in fact, the life eternal; the life which every soul is living and contacting every moment, whether he be conscious in fleshly body, or functioning on any one of the planes of spiritual being.

“This inner spiritual life will harmonize and unite every school of thought, every religion that has held the hearts of men. It is indeed the full gospel of Universalism.”

Chapter IV
CONCERNING NATURE SPIRITS
AND ANGELS

6th January 1932

“Neither pen nor brush can paint the beauties of the heaven-world. Man glimpses but faintly the wonders of the spiritual life, and but few there are who, by aspiration and actual contact with high spiritual spheres, catch fleeting visions of the glory of these lands. Such are the artist, the writer, the musician, the man of fervour and religion. But these glimpses are not sustained, and soon must fade when the man returns to the mundane affairs of earth.

“It is true: the spirit world and the physical world are inextricably interwoven, and it is impossible for man to separate these two states of being. When man has advanced to such a degree of understanding as this he will live no longer in so dense a material world. The very matter or fabric of the world will become so refined, so etherealised, that man will enter more or less to the astral condition of life. Such will be the future, and even in your day will commence the gradual etherealisation of the material atom, so that the world becomes more beautiful as humanity advances on the path of divine evolution.

“We touch now upon another side of spirit life which seems much neglected; that is, the *nature spirit* line of evolution. We have been concerned hitherto with human life incarnate and discarnate, to the exclusion of physical nature. We must take into account also the life of the plant, the animal, even the life in the elements, of all those planes of pulsating life distinct from the human. Let us remember that nature also continues its evolution beyond earth to the astral, the mental and the celestial planes. Natural life fits also into the plan of creation in a perfect manner.

“Strange as it may seem, I was always a follower of the ‘little folk’ and loved the fairy tales which delight the children – fairy tales possibly, to the hard-headed, but actually the most delightful little realities one could imagine. I take joy in visiting the great underworld – shall I call it undergrowth? – of nature life. It is the greatest joy to see the little people, the gnomes and fairies, at their work in the gardens of the earth plane, and in the gardens of the astral plane; and on the higher planes, a-weaving their dreams and aspirations (to be some day captured by someone dexterous with brush and pen); to see the little people creating their

representations of the divine love and beauty of God.

“This perhaps sounds rather flowery, and no doubt you will expect us to come down to a more practical and concrete description of these planes of nature life! How sensitive is the plant world! How wonderful it is to see little fairy creatures busily carrying spiritual life and sustenance to the plants! Without the fairy aid your plants would surely wither and die. Without the powers which are controlled by the deva, your physical world would fall to chaos. Man speaks complacently of the law and order governing his universe, without understanding of the mighty power which holds the sun and the planets in their courses. Man speaks trustingly of a divine plan and loving Father who orders all things aright, but fails to take into account the marvellous organisation of the spiritual spheres or the control, sustenance, and retention of these laws of nature.

“Science regards these happenings [that is, what happens in nature] as normal, the outcome of certain laws named but never understood. Science proclaims that if a seed be planted in the earth, given certain conditions of moisture, sunshine and warmth, that seed enters upon a certain process of development to become a plant. Mankind accepts this outcome not as a miracle, nor as a wonderful manifestation of divine power, but as a commonplace; much as man accepts the ordinary routine of nature as a matter of course, almost, it seems, as a matter of right, refusing tribute to that infinite care and love and patience, the causation of all.

“So: lying behind every manifestation of life, broods this great world of spirit. I wish, my friends, that you could open your spiritual sight as you walk in your gardens, to see the innumerable little folk. Maybe they would ignore you, since all are busy builders, creating their part of the temple of the earth life.

“Yes, I catch a thought. There are in touch with the earth plane souls of angels who have evolved not through the human but through the nature line of evolution. True, these become sometimes attached to the human race that they may impart certain knowledge to bring power or accomplishment to the individual they serve. For instance, there are angel beings attracted to ceremonial. (This is no fairy tale: I give you facts.) I have myself seen such present at religious ceremonial or sacred functions. Some more or less nebulous knowledge of the angels of life and death has filtered through, and maybe you have regarded these beings as evolved spirits once of human men or women? You are wrong. There is an angel world apart from the human race, apart from the human chain of evolution, formed of souls never incarnated in a human body, souls advanced through a process of natural development, souls in close contact with inner laws of creative service.

“Of such are the angels of music. Here I would interrupt my theme by comparing the ‘little people’ with the ‘tones’, their labour forming one mighty union and selling the sublime harmony of nature. There will come a time, friends, when the brotherhood of men and angels will be better understood. To such end the whole of creation and evolution labours: to complete understanding and harmony between all God’s creatures.

“Why not? You are [all] one and we are [all] one. When man has passed that Second Death and is reborn to the realisation which comes and grows for evermore, as an expansion of consciousness – the realisation that in the giving and the serving of his brothers and sisters of all kingdoms of life, man becomes at one with the Universal – in that understanding he grows to become at one with God, and loses himself only to find in his submission the Christ himself.

“To talk with you is a very pleasant service, but sometimes so difficult that I feel not unlike a man on a very hot day with a collar unduly tight and a head almost bursting. Can you appreciate the conditions? We must be patient and do the best we can.

“Do not imagine any one plane, be it of nature or heaven itself, to be far above the earth in illimitable space. All wait within your own consciousness. Did not a wise and simple soul say, ‘*Closer is He than breathing and nearer than hands and feet*’?²⁰ Such is the lesson we have all to absorb, that *the kingdom of heaven is within*.

“It requires no great intellectualism to enter that kingdom, but only the simplicity of a little child. Teach your children about the fairies. Look for them yourself, and hold communion with this universal spiritual life.

“Our brother, White Eagle, knows far more than he has ever told you about the nature spirits! Ask him! The Indians, bless them, lived nearer their God than any of the proud intellectualists of the western world, did we but realise it.

“Here, then, is my last thought: *simplicity*. That is the keynote, simplicity. Life is not complex. Only the ignorant themselves – a sweeping statement, but true – only the ignorant make it complex. Life is great in its simplicity and simple in its greatness. God bless you. My tender love to you all and all you love.”

Chapter V

FREEWILL AND DESTINY: BOTH EXIST

10th February 1932

“In answer to a thought – no, I am not working singly in this matter. I am but one of a band, but have been strengthened and taught many things. It is my particular task to be the spokesman, and to bring these messages back. Much that I pass on has been given to me, although my mind has caught a glimpse of these outer glories which I describe. I know these things are, but cannot truly say I have experienced such wonders; yet it would seem as though the whole panorama of life at times opens, and I see not only into the past but into the future of the world. Great changes are coming, a wonderful light streams upon the earth, humanity is responding. As that humanity quickens to this light, so it will become more spiritual, more etherealised.

“Maybe you would like us to speak of something nearer to your own life, something more simple, tangible, understandable? *Dear friends, these things of which we speak are the simplest of God’s gifts to His children!*”

2nd March 1932

“We would speak tonight of the harmony of the spheres of life. We have already dissociated ourselves from the idea that the spheres of spiritual life necessarily mean life *after* death. We have explained how these same spheres of spiritual life interpenetrate the astral and physical planes. We cannot sever these spiritual spheres from the physical, a most important lesson yet to be learned by man.

“We would refer you to our talk a few weeks ago about life in the nature kingdom. We spoke of the marvellously intricate life of the nature spirits; of the rhythmic harmony and attunement between the varying grades of life in the natural kingdom.

“Compare these marvels with that wondrous thread of cosmic life which penetrates and interpenetrates every aspect of each man’s being, and try to realise the splendour of the love with which the Father God endows each and all of His children....

“You little realise, my friends, as you take your way daily, how marvellously you are guided and cared for at every step. You do not

realise that those dear ones whom you take as a matter of course – we speak of the beloved ‘guides’ – labour sometimes for years, even for half a lifetime, to produce some spark of divine light within your consciousness. They work persistently and consistently to piece together the broken fragments and disharmonies of human life, to bring to the human soul some degree of the Christ-consciousness. They labour continually on the earth plane, and also beneath your earth – that is, in the denser astral planes – as also in the higher astral planes.

“From the lowest rung of the human ladder to the highest there is this same transcendent love and care exercised. You question: if this be so, where does freewill come in? How then are we to be judged? by the measure of our own desires, our achievements, and our failures? If this mighty power binds even the outer framework of our daily life, surely we are as mere puppets in the game of life?

“Ah, no, my friends; although ordained by the great Lord of Love, this does not detract one iota from that freewill choice of action which is man’s. You are continually making choices, either of the upward or the lower path. If, however, you choose the lower, the passive or nugatory aspect, then you must needs, through suffering and tribulation, experience the effect of that course – *by yourself chosen, remember.*

“Freewill choice versus destiny: what a mighty problem! How little is it understood!

“These problems find solution only by gradual growth into knowledge of God, and never by a straining of the physical intellect. There exist *both* destiny and freewill choice. Destiny, so far as man is concerned, stands for certain physical experiences through which you must and will pass: choice lies *in your own reaction* spiritually to these conditions of physical life.

“We pass in our consideration to that great power which interpenetrates every moment of life and being.

“Consider again the wonderful organisation which exists in the natural kingdoms; in the creative life of nature, forever building, unfolding, encouraging, and forcing the growth of the plant; consider that same creative force which continually holds the stars in the heavens, the planets on their courses; that same creative life-force which is causing birth and life, death and rebirth, life and death again, like a rhythmic wave through all creation.

“Can you now conceive a tenth of the power of that infinite intelligence which creates and sustains through aeons of time this indomitable life-urge into being?

“Then, my friends, think of our wonderful human life, of your own individual lives! Of the power which supports, bringing you through these

physical life-experiences and which weave some pattern of spiritual beauty into the warp and woof of man's very being!

"If you could glimpse for one moment those gracious and beautiful beings living a life of tranquillity and harmony in celestial spheres; if you could see the beauty of face and form, it would bring some conception of that wondrous inflowing life of the Christ-consciousness, which has been working through aeons of time, through the many lives to produce eventually such radiant beings of glory.

"Remember, step by step, every man is thus gradually trained, is developing towards his own illimitable mastership and Godhead. Think well, then, that every effort of mind and will, every action, every experience from the smallest, goes to the building, to the creating of such a Man....

"Alas, when such realisation flashes upon one's understanding, one is appalled... appalled at the ingratitude and selfishness of one's own heart!"

Chapter VI

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL

27th April 1932

“Greetings, my friends. Power comes with such dynamic force that I am almost swept off my feet, rather like a straw before the blast. This seems a good simile by which to describe the power of the spirit upon the earth plane at this precise time. With this onslaught you will witness national calamities and international distractions; withal, will be seen a remarkable rebuilding of a humanity which indeed will be inspired.

“The same was told me during my earth life; I can but repeat them. There will be physical catastrophes; yet even now we see creative powers at work. The fiat has gone forth! There will emerge a great continent where now exists ocean, and there will follow the equivalent subsidence of land. There will arise a new continent, upon which will evolve a race of humanity in advance of that of the present day. With these changes there will come a refinement of the physical substance of the earth and the spheres surrounding the earth.

“The main theme we wish to develop tonight deals with the spiritual spheres above the astral. We again refer to the first mental sphere, the intuitional plane, and the plane of divine intelligence or wisdom. [To give you an example of the nature of this plane, we would say that] Christian Science as a ‘church’ draws its power from the first mental plane of the celestial spheres. When we pass to the next plane, the intuitional, there comes rather a withdrawing from the hard intellectual state to a more inward or intuitional condition of mind. And so to the next sphere, where the first two spheres become so perfectly balanced and interwoven that we arrive at that state of consciousness which may be described as divine intelligence.

“We would differentiate between *intellect*, which is the condition of mind existent on the first mental plane, and that consciousness which exists on the third plane of the mental sphere, [which I shall call] *intelligence*. We re-emphasise the vital difference between intellect and intelligence. Intelligence is a very part of the divine mind. Alas! so many men, intellectual and clever, lack intelligence indeed, often possess little intelligence whatsoever. From the sphere of divine intelligence or wisdom we draw creative power – not the creative power which produces form in the astral planes of life, but the power which creates actual *substance*.

“On all planes of being dwell angels of light and angels of

darkness. Do you grasp this? Do not imagine the angels of darkness flung down to some uttermost pit of degradation, nor conceive the angels of light as raised to the highest, 'sitting God's right hand'. Nothing can be more erroneous than such a conception, which has long falsified man's outlook upon 'good' or 'evil'. Tonight it is my mission to endeavour to wake the realisation that these conditions of intelligence or, if you will, 'light' and 'darkness' – work and evolve side by side, and are the actual complement one of the other.

"This must be driven home, so that there may dawn a clearer concept of good and evil. Always men have conceived that good must oppose evil. Again, nothing is farther from the truth. 'Evil' stands always as the complement to the condition you call 'good', so without evil good could not be.²¹

"So we return to the angels of light and darkness. These powers, hand in hand, labour unceasingly to bring to perfection that divine intelligence which ever strives to manifest through all form and substance. Now then! From each plane of spiritual activity, even from this third mental plane, the sphere of meditation and soliloquy, the work goes forward. From this plane can be drawn power, which, shed upon the earth plane, penetrates lower forms of creation, much as rays of sunlight and sun-power light upon the earth. The lower the sphere, however, the less active it becomes.

"From all planes of spiritual consciousness can be drawn power which can be and is in use by man: power for good or power for ill. Never run away with the idea that all spiritual power must necessarily be good or 'white'. What, then, of the 'principalities of darkness', the 'adversaries' and 'princes of the shadow'? (You recall St. Paul's teaching on the subject. Being a disciple of the Ancient Wisdom he knew both 'good' and 'evil'.) With this in mind we can also recognise many an instance in which men and women utilize such powers for selfish and even evil motives. One might instance many a warlord and conqueror, many a great financier.

"Is this difficult to credit? Take for example a man desirous of accumulating wealth. Something within more forceful than himself ever spurs him forward, once embarked on his path – once he has attracted to himself such powers. Despite any wish to cry halt to his money-grabbing he cannot stop, though perhaps he is beginning to loathe a wealth that enslaves. Control is lost. Like an accumulator of limitless capacity, the cash flows in an influx he is actually unable to arrest, though no man now knows better the burden and the curse of wealth. Such an example may also be found in the writer, the dramatist, the statesman, in any who lust for power, and have that in them which can contact the power sphere. Beware, lest the driver become the driven!

“Beware! The angels of darkness are at work! I but give the idea, the concept, the realisation. You yourselves can trace this shadowing power in many a life ending in failure and disaster. Would it not be better, then, for evil to be wiped out and only good remain? If such be conceivable, is it desirable?

“We cannot see such a happening making for a perfect universe.

“Can we help you to visualise two great wheels, two rings, two cycles revolving one against the other, each keeping and holding, as it were by a magnetic force, the position of the other? We see an enlargement and a working of perfect harmony.”²²

“We would impress this upon all: *that which you call ‘evil’ is also of God; the universal Intelligence which man calls God contains both good and evil!*

“Such a statement must create much controversy. I give, however, such as I know and see the truth to be. We must live and strain and strive, all and each of us, for a perfect balance, so that darkness shall never overcome the light; but rather that good and evil together shall, not as masters but as our servants, work out in us the perfect law with perfect precision. At the present time comes an overshadowing, an overruling, by the powers of darkness. The earth has to readjust, to find and maintain once more her moral balance, such being perfection; greater than good, greater than evil. Good and evil must become your servants, even as they are God’s servants. That is the ultimate.”²³

4th May 1932

“Only when a man becomes raised above the physical and the personal thought-life can he view life as one stupendous whole; see it as one comprehensive *all* of God wherein can be no difference between good and evil, black and white.

“*Now the question comes: If what you say is true, do you not rob us of all impetus towards good? What need is there of striving to improve the world, or to raise oneself, if after all there be no difference between right and wrong? We might just tumble along any old way, for all will come right in the end.*

“We remind you that as the stars are poised in the heavens, so also is every human soul poised in the cycle of life, is held there within the consciousness of divine intelligence. Whilst that soul has been given a degree of freewill choice whereby to accept or reject good or evil, so also it can never break its link with the great Soul, God. To God there is always an upward pull. For a time that soul may divide, deny, reject, but can

never escape, at the last it must surely yield. Then: *I will arise and return unto my Father!*

“What follows if for a time the soul resists? It means that by his own freewill he takes the left-hand instead of taking the right-hand path. Remember, he hasn’t escaped! The magnetic force of the divine intelligence must ever hold him on the path of eternal progression. Through many transgressions he may take the easy path of evil, downwards, downwards. Then comes the turning, the lifting, the upward climb with bleeding feet. Thus no man can escape his destiny, which is ultimate perfection; ultimate *return* to the God of his creation.

“Truly, before man can become Godlike, he must pass the lowest arc; must bottom the depths of evil, as well as reach the heights. To win to perfection man must pass through the deepest hell, and climb to heaven. When at last man can grasp this tremendous truth he will cease to condemn. The bright ideal of a perfected soul towards which brother man evolves, to which he is even now striving through good or through evil – will hold and fill his heart. My brother’s path is his – my path is my choice. What matter?

“Thus only does the ego attain to mastership, master of himself and of all the powers whereby this earth life is encompassed.

“We touch here on the spheres of cosmic life. In the past we have described mental and celestial spheres, but now we deal with that cosmic life which is the highest, from which must descend and ascend the outermost and the innermost plane of spiritual consciousness in touch with man.

“When a man can by continual effort reach that cosmic consciousness he will be able to get into touch and receive clear communications from inhabitants of other planets. Although man has for long striven to invent an instrument [in order to obtain such communications], he will learn that only in spirit and through spiritual understanding can communication be established. First man must attain the brotherhood of man with man in social and national life; and then brotherhood between nations. Later will follow an interplanetary brotherhood, born of the interplanetary communication which will become possible to the raised consciousness of humanity.

“First, however, we have to learn the elements of brotherhood. *Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* In other words, man can accomplish, can attain to the fulness of life only through contact with spiritual verities.

“We are aware that the statements we have made about the problem of good and evil might evoke a good deal of criticism.²⁴ Nevertheless, we re-emphasise the fact that these two forces, ‘good’ and ‘evil’, are not so

opposed as appearance warrants. Marching in step with the creative powers of good must always tread the destructive powers of evil. Even as in your earth life it is necessary to consume and to destroy rubbish and garbage, so it is also with the economics of the Universe.

“Might we not then describe the angels of darkness as the individualized powers of evil, as great destructive forces which consume that which is unwanted in the scheme, a perpetual absorption from actual being of those things which prove undesirable? Thus we suggest that the powers of evil cloak our ultimate good. Being negative, it is true they absorb from life – the human life, the universal life – absorb that which is unwanted, cast off and discarded. Appearing to destroy, actually they do not destroy; though we have said they consume, rather they *transmute*.

“So let us conceive them as transmuting the undesirable to the eventually beautiful. Let us recall the two mighty cycles – shall we say of evolving purpose? – which men call ‘positive’, or ‘negative’, or roundly ‘good’, or ‘evil’, [and see them as] each the complement of the other; and both as being necessary to perfect the scheme of the Absolute. As night follows day, so with the same certainty does evil balance good, and good evil, while always there proceeds the transmutation – good to evil, evil to good. Thus the great cycles of God’s evolving purpose roll onward, through aeons of time, eventually to clothe the soul of humanity with perfect balance, and perfect harmony.

“Eternally this perfected attainment means the putting forth again of God’s energies for the creation of fresh worlds, destined for the habitation of new races of men – for the house of God must ever enlarge as His children return from their wanderings.

“It is utterly impossible for the finite mind to comprehend eternity. Again we can only suggest eternity is best represented by the great wheel, continually revolving, never checked, never stayed in its course.

“Yes: God is both good and evil. It is but your conception of ‘evil’ which is wrong. Shall we suggest evil to be rather a concept of thought than actual reality? If a man thinks and lives but to satisfy his own desires, so also he lives from a one-pointed sense, or selfish attitude of mind, in darkness or that which men call ‘evil’. If, on the other hand he lives and labours, desiring to give all, to unite himself with the common brotherhood, he dwells then in the light, and draws to himself light, happiness and all those attributes which are of the heaven-world.

“Cannot you see that merely a reflection of the man seeks the evil or the good, the two being one and the same to the inmost man?

“Man looks about him, seeing cruelty, evil, ignorance, and declares, ‘You cannot ignore or deny evil!’ Such a conclusion is based on false premises. By what possibility can man judge whether his fellow

serves good or evil? Mostly is he guided by the conventions of the country, by the customs of his people. 'Good' to one seems 'evil' to another, and vice versa.

"We would speak of an order of beings seldom described. Indeed, I think that to some they are not even known about – that is angelic beings, winged beings. Yes, they are winged beings: the great deva who holds the ordering of so many lives; who commands such wondrous power that without her, man's life would lack all sweetness.²⁵ I speak also of the angels of birth and of motherhood, of the angels of death; of the angels of music, of art and literature. Has man ever dreamed that the emotions of which music, art and beauty are the outcome, vibrations which are so fine, so delicate, originate from spheres beyond grey earth, from ranges beyond the compass of human mentality? Spiritual beauty must emanate from the spiritual world and the spiritual beings thereof. Such angels are dual personalities, crowned by the love which they bear to each other – and not only to each other but to the whole universe.

"Yes, yes – we have not dealt sufficiently with the heaven-world. We have occasionally painted pictures of rather gruesome character, I fear. It is profoundly difficult to express spiritual reality with words fitted only to explain and describe material and physical conditions of life. I would hold out to all a hope beautiful and true beyond compare. I would assure them of progression to be won by desiring and striving after beauty, love and wisdom. I would describe a life perfect in expression of all higher feelings and attributes which lie in the depths of man's nature. There is not one soul of earth – black, white, red or yellow – but that it finds providence in the vast universe of spirit. I would paint if I could a picture that must *satisfy desire and fire imagination for every living soul on earth*; were the words mine, I would show a world of spirit ever evolving and opening to new vista upon vista of beauty. As one attains one sees, endlessly, heights beyond. Ever the air grows finer. Exultation fills and floods one's being, nerving one to fresh effort and attainment."²⁶

Chapter VII

“AT TIMES THE WHOLE PANORAMA OF HUMAN LIFE OPENS BEFORE ME”

3rd February 1932

“We have reminded you that every phase of life in the spiritual realms interpenetrates the planes of physical life, and that man, whilst in the physical body, is still active on the spiritual planes, astral, mental or celestial, to which he passes on leaving the earth plane. This brings us right to the heart, to the very core, of spiritualistic philosophy, indeed to the very nexus of every religion which has ever been or ever will. The basic truth of all ancient religions lies in this teaching of the life of the soul, not only during earth existence, nor when it passes into the unseen, but during the whole soul life, from when it first became a separate ego, a projection from the great Sun of life.

“Such teaching comes from the very birth of time, when man dwelt in his highest form of spiritual consciousness, before the descent into the depths of materialism (from which he now struggles on the upward arc of evolution). Yet through those ages of his descent, man has never been bereft of inner consciousness of his true being and his relationship with the Godhead.

“The life of the spiritual realms represents always the inner life of man. In man’s descent from God, that inner life becomes less evident, since the life-urge then becomes a ‘putting out’ into form, the formation of a personality; in the ascent there comes a withdrawing into, a seeking and finding of his own true nature, his own vast heritage.

“I want again to emphasise this point – that during man’s life on earth he is acquiring that quality of consciousness whereby he can and does manifest on the numerous inner planes of life. Thus, when he is freed from the prison of flesh he will automatically migrate to that particular plane in the different worlds for which he has fitted himself. With this vision and this knowledge, life becomes orderly, no longer touched by chance nor subject to accident, disaster or injustice in any form.

“When people express loathing of the thought of reincarnation, it is indicative of a closed mentality.²⁷ It would seem that a shutter has come down on half the spiritual mind, as though a dark curtain hangs between the seeming outer realities and man’s inner, deeper intuitive knowledge. When one reviews life and examines closely the long experience inevitable before man draws near to spiritual completion, one recognises

not only the necessity for reincarnation, but the tremendous importance of the smallest detail of life.

“In the world of spirit all is law, order, and harmony. Few dispute that in the world of nature everything reacts to an exact law, and physical as these laws seem in their outworking, they originate from the spiritual universe. There are no haphazard methods, for nature is very drastic in dealing with delinquents. So also in the spiritual spheres; the smallest action calls forth an exact reaction, and thus man’s thoughts, his creations, become like his angels of good or evil. When he views his life from a higher plane of existence, he well realises the disaster of those mental creatures of gloom and depression and selfishness which were and are his children.

“I touched this some time ago. It has affected me deeply since my arrival, for I was wont to create characters, scene and word-pictures. Mine was a vivid imagination, and whilst I gave forth many a picture of joy, loveliness and beauty, on the other hand my pen also depicted ugliness, crime, crudity and horror. Whilst recognizing that such by their very contrasts teach their lesson, on the other hand creations of ugliness and terror live in a man’s mind and fill it with vibrations which are violent and unhealthy. Now I gaze into the lives of men and women who have been thus considerably influenced by me. This I tell you only to illustrate the lesson.

“Some day man attains the joy or terror of seeing the effect of his creations, be they beautiful or the reverse, no matter whether these creations are merely fictitious characters, or actual conditions of life resulting from actions such as have spread an influence in the lives of others. He sees his own contribution, be it of good or evil, to the collective whole. Thus indeed does man, every moment of his life, contribute to the universal power of good or the universal power of evil. Rather, shall we say, not ‘good’ or ‘evil’ – but ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ vibrations, because the positive only prove the creative, the eternal; while the negative, being destructive forces, eventuate in suffering and pain.

“Thus man recoils from a sickened world today. Yet we from the spirit can see the rays projected from the great Sun of life. There must result suffering, because humanity has sown the seed of suffering. Evolution swings on the upward arc, however, however strong the downward pull, there remains yet a greater attraction, and humanity will yet be saved by the true instinct within itself, that deep and innate hunger for God.

“Yes, we can promise a new earth and a new heaven, for the old earth is passing; a new earth and a new heaven will come because humanity creates anew both heaven and earth by its striving. God’s

workmanship strives ever towards an unimaginable perfection in spite of ignorance, cruelty and wrong.

“The old world passes, yet will it live again.

“The same laws rule on succeeding mental and celestial spheres of being. As man on earth aspires to become even as his Creator, as he receives the divine love and power of God, so must he raise the material vibrations of the globe he dwells upon. To such limited and circumscribed five senses as man possesses, this etherealised world of the future would be intangible, invisible; nonetheless that world will embrace a greater measure of reality than time and sense can now unfold. There roll planets even now within the radius of the solar system invisible to the eye, or the most powerful telescope, so spiritualised as to have risen beyond the compass of physical vision.

“While man dwells in lowly estate he cannot recognise anything outside his own capacity. Like a fish in darkened waters he gropes, unconscious of any other sphere of life. So is he blind to these more beautiful and ethereal worlds. To a larger consciousness only there opens a new universe (distinct, be it noted, from those spheres and planes of existence already described, and which interpenetrate our physical order of existence).”

20th January 1932

“I have already told you of worlds of which your astronomers know nothing, worlds composed of etheric matter, the influence of which is felt from time to time upon the earth. As the radiation of the known planets affects both the collective and the individual life of man, so also do these etheric planets influence men on the earth plane. At different periods of the earth’s history there have occurred catastrophes and cataclysms inexplicable in the ordinary terms of science, the cause of which may be understood when knowledge has been obtained concerning these powerful planetary forces.”

3rd February 1932

“The earth is the darkest planet of the system, so you have yet something to look forward to. If only the people of earth would open to us, and let us dispel the fear of death, they would step bravely the road to beauty, wonderment and joy.”

20th January 1932

“The question arises: if this [account of the cosmos] is so, are men merely puppets in the grip of the mighty powers of an unseen universe? Such is the natural query of the physical brain. But the untrammelled mind realises that such a law [as we demonstrate] may prove a fundamental ordinance of infinite love working out to the last degree the perfecting of God’s wayward humanity. So a wise mind remembers not only individual lives on a physical plane of existence, but ranges over the whole, the magnificent structure of the evolution of the divine spirit of God through human experience. That comprehension, that mind, can only bow down before such magnificence and majesty, and adore the Great One who has conceived the plan of this mighty evolution of spiritual life.

“The effect of these unknown and unseen planets can be of tremendous potency, but humanity as a whole may have a say in the direction of these forces, which bring an uplifting and spiritualising effect throughout human life. Equally can that same humanity attract those forces which are destructive of good. It is the collective thought-life of man which still decides the issues.

“I am endeavouring to touch on a subject so stupendous as to be almost beyond my power to clothe thought with words, although I think I have been compelled to venture because of the controversy now taking place regarding the prophecies of world catastrophe and world changes. I would impress upon the people concerned that cataclysmic changes will come to the earth plane; they are inevitable. A new era is at hand, when the great Cosmic Christ draws nigh to earth. May His children recognise His power and glory.

“Realise that those who reject Him are not wilfully mad, nor wicked, but suffer from a lack of spiritual evolution. They will therefore be returned to a lower cycle of evolution, and thenceforward journey onward by a different road from those who at this moment are ready for realisation and welcome.

“Now to define what we mean by the Cosmic Christ.

“He is little understood even by spiritually developed and intellectually advanced people, and there lingers a pathetic confusion of thought concerning the divinity and the deity of Jesus Christ. The churches, the orthodox churches, are guilty of almost as much materialism in their teaching as is Spiritualism, because they have seized upon the physical aspect only of that wondrous presentation of the infinite through the Initiate, Jesus of Nazareth; deifying Jesus of Nazareth himself, and failing to recognise the infinite love and wisdom manifest through him, failing to realise how small a conception is theirs of that indwelling force, that life-more-abundant known as the Son of God, Son of the infinite and universal life-force.

“Throughout history prophet and seer came to prepare His way, quickening humanity that it might receive this mighty manifestation of Christ in the flesh. He came and was made manifest, was despised and rejected, and is today despised and rejected by many calling themselves Spiritualists. How can they reconcile the name of Spiritualist with the denial of the noblest spiritual Being made manifest through a physical body?

“There was a time when I renounced the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and, as I was led into Spiritualism I believe that Spiritualism helped me to become a little less materialistic: I gradually began to see the light and the beauty of that life of the Nazarene. I accepted Him as a wonderful medium at first, as a noble Brother and comrade to man. Truly, truly, He is the great Brother; the Brother of humanity, but the quality of His brotherhood cannot be reconciled with the prevailing idea that He was merely a man as ourselves. All is a question of degree – [of the degree that He lives) in us, we in Him who was and is Son of the Father. Let us remember how limited and partial a manifestation could be made through the body of Jesus; but, surely, enough to teach mankind that God is a God of love. By the example of life itself He demonstrated that the one way to eternal life and the kingdom of God was through Him: through man identifying himself with His divine grace, His magnificent thought, His transcendent spirit of love and tenderness and mercy; the one saving grace for poor humanity.

“This will be very clearly demonstrated within the next five years. Man can see signs and portents creeping upon the world; the undermining of the rotten systems, the bitter fruits of wars, and armaments, reparations and tariffs. It is to be demonstrated to a bewildered world that all must bow to the one power which alone can save humanity from utter destruction – even the saving power of Christ, as demonstrated through Jesus of Nazareth.”

10th February 1932

“We have touched on many vital points and shall endeavour to enlarge on these, filling vacant spaces and painting a fuller picture. We have spoken of the cosmic sphere, and have left the soul in that condition, suggesting that from this cosmic sphere the great ones are sent forth. Man arrives at long last at that stage of his evolution when he has finished with physical life, when it is no longer necessary to return: but as regards his finer spiritual consciousness there are still great heights to scale. Therefore it remains necessary for the ego to descend again to some aspect of what might be termed incarnation, because only through such experience man

can attain further.

“So we direct your minds to the spheres, to those planets to which we have just alluded, those physical planets of gossamer matter which, were they of denser etheric substance, might radiate light sometimes visible to the astronomer.

“There are many souls who, having finished their course on earth and her spiritual environments, advance in communities and groups to recommence on one or another of these more highly evolved planets. They descend through various spheres which, in a sense, correspond to those spheres of spiritual – or, shall we say, celestial – life which surround this earth plane; through spheres of finer quality, of greater radiance, of higher and more spiritual vibrancy.

“These communities of spirits descend by easy stages, and ultimately manifest in what might be termed physical bodies, but I can never describe the beauty of their forms. Suffice it to say that these conditions of life are wondrous, wherein all the laws of spiritual life work harmoniously to their destined end. Life in such form is without limitation in the way that men bow to limitation, not only on earth but even on the higher astral planes surrounding the earth. Life has become veritably *illimitable*. Who can conceive a tithe of the glory, the fulness, the ultimate grandeur of existence? Knowing and realising bondage in matter the sympathy of these advanced beings is drawn to the earth plane, and this is why, with humanity in dire need, communities of these angelic ones direct the light of their compassion earthward.

“We spoke of guides who, descending from celestial spheres, are actually reborn on the astral plane instead of reincarnating on the physical. By choice they undertake this work, and only at considerable sacrifice. They can, and do, of course, gain much experience and give much help through their close contact with humanity.

“We spoke of reincarnation, too. You are told by some that it is true; by others, false. Both views are right, from their particular viewpoint. There are so many, many forms of life, too numerous to comprehend; and whilst souls do continually return to the earth, there are still many who refrain.

“This may sound somewhat contradictory, in view of previous communications. In our condition, however, we learn ever fresh aspects of truth, and since speaking I have been privileged to see a very much wider sphere than ever before. These forms – these cycles – have since been revealed to me.

“If you could apprehend with the clairvoyant eye, you would be astounded to see radiating from the earth plane innumerable ‘spirals’ of colour and light, pulsing upward and onward. All these ‘spirals’ represent

man's varying paths of progression. Now the Spiritualist, according to the teaching he has received from his guides, has embodied as his Seventh Principle a 'path of eternal progress open to every soul who wills to tread it – the path of eternal good'. But we would make it clear that everyone is not expected to advance along the same pathway. Such is one of the mighty laws of spiritual evolution. Whilst perfect law finds observance throughout every manifestation of the life-force, there remains a wide choice for the ego; when man can realise how many myriad paths of progression lie open, his mind will become attuned to the thought of ever-present divine love and understanding. Then will he cleanse himself of all intolerance, all restriction, for he will see that in every soul there quickens a fundamental urge, that each is drawn, because of its very essence, on the upward spiral.

"No soul is forced to any particular form or path, although it must perforce conform to the laws of spiritual life, being of itself spirit.

"I give a crude illustration. Imagine millions and millions of atoms seething in their etheric surround. Each atom reacts to attraction according to its particular quality or essence. Each must follow, as if drawn thither by a magnet, its own path of evolution. Thus, when the ego, the divine spark, is projected from the divine intelligence into form, it still feels the 'tug', of one or other of these myriad spirals of evolution open to the evolving soul. Here is a marvellous thought. Whilst all have to work in accordance with law, every soul is absolutely and entirely individual.

"Thus you will get some insight into the depth of meaning in those words of the Master Jesus, who said, *Even the hairs of your head are numbered*. From the waster in the gutter to the wisest in your land, every soul remains attuned in its degree to the divine intelligence and must ultimately follow that one pathway which leads it back to God."

Chapter VIII

THE ENNOBLEMENT OF LIFE BOTH INCARNATE AND DISCARNATE

30th March 1932

“When man realises that he lives and creates both in the ‘here and now’ and in that Beyond wherein he enters into fuller recognition of himself, he will alter his whole outlook. This understanding will ennoble his actions, raise his ideals, and inspire him to finer ambitions than those which leave him at the end grovelling on the lower, or first three planes, of astral life; to these he will assuredly find himself bound, as on a wheel, if aspiration and inspiration do not lead him forwards and upwards.

“If you compare the religions of past and present, there will be found one common source or fount – the Universal. It matters little whether it be the ancient Egyptian, the Greek, the Chaldean, the ancient wisdom of the Hindu, the orthodox Christian church, Christian Science, Theosophy or the higher Spiritualism – all these will be found to possess one common denominator: the *universal* sphere, or, perhaps, what we might call the ‘cosmic consciousness’; that ultimate ideal of perfect harmony of life, that plane of being whereon the soaring soul is merged into one illimitable sea of spiritual life. From that centre religion, pure and undefiled, draws its sustenance. I wish I could this night make the links for you. If I can but show you what I mean! I will try....

“But if I fail, you must use your own faculties. Let us together make the attempt.”²⁸

Question: We do not quite follow. What do you mean by the phrase ‘make the links’?

ACD: “Let me illustrate by an example. In Christian Science, there exists a definite contact with the mental plane, on the part of those calling themselves Christian Scientists. Through the mental body and through the intellect (for this is partly a religion of the intellect) the Scientists are definitely linked with the first mental plane of the celestial spheres.

“I am trying to show how every religion is linked to one or another of the different planes of life we are illuminating. The Spiritualists are, in the main, in contact with entities from the astral plane. Thus Spiritualism, in so far as it has evolved as a religion, is largely confined to the seven astral planes of life.

“The ancient wisdom known as Buddhism is linked with the third sphere of heavenly life. The devout Buddhist aspires to reach the plane of

nirvana, the plane of meditation, the plane from which the soul emerges into the Universal (erroneously interpreted as a condition of 'nothingness'). Realise that the ultimate goal of all is to attain that condition of consciousness where the personality dwindles and is absorbed, and the individuality becomes so at one with the Universal that, in losing itself, it becomes the very pulse of God. Then, indeed, self relinquishes self. Such is the ultimate, the highest to which we can point.

"This does not mean that the individual becomes so absorbed that he cannot, by will or intelligence, be detached from the whole to manifest as a separate ego. The average man cannot bear the thought of absorption, because he has immersed himself in the development of himself as an individual. Yet every soul has at last to let himself go, and become part of one universal life-force, for only when he reaches that stage does he become greater than himself, the point at which *the Father and I are One*...."²⁹

"We have already spoken at length on this subject."

Question: To which plane is the Hindu religion attached?

ACD: "The ancient wisdom of the Hindu is linked to the Universal. Most assuredly it is linked with the highest point of spiritual consciousness."

Question: What of the Egyptians?

ACD: "The truths which we have been endeavouring to transmit can be found in the ancient Egyptian teaching. This book will contain no more than a restatement of the ancient wisdom of Egypt."

Question: What about modern religions such as Theosophy?

ACD: "We might affirm that Theosophy contains these vital truths, but Theosophy, like many another religion and belief, has become distorted, the original foundation broken and split, and there are now many differing ideas difficult to unify. Pure Theosophy, however, that which emanated from the Ancient Wisdom, finds embodiment in our teaching. There is a branch known as Theosophy today, linked in the main to the first mental plane of the heavenly spheres."

Question: And Protestantism?

ACD: "A religion based upon wonderful truth and pure teaching but unfortunately over-ridden by creed and dogma.

"It is my work to unify, to create harmony, and not to destroy, so you will understand that I have to choose my words and give carefully thought-out answers to your questions. Therefore I prefer not to split the various denominations of orthodoxy, but to take the Christian teaching as a whole, and relate it to the life of the spirit as I find it in these realms of the discarnate.

"Take the teachings of the Master Jesus, and you will find from

beginning to end truth, simplicity, and yet a vast depth of spiritual understanding; a creative power and a wisdom which will open the doors of heaven to every human soul who wills to enter by the path of love and brotherhood; a truth which will bring to a follower of Christ a life of perfect health, harmony, prosperity, and happiness; a religion which, if truly followed, will link the human soul with every sphere: astral, mental, and to the ultimate *Universal*.

“We spoke about a sphere of *conscious* reunion (the only words I can find!) wherein the kingdoms of life, the animal, the vegetable, the human, the angelic, the divine, can meet as one. When thus inspired the soul recognises friendship and kinship with every beast and flower. It is here that men, known to your earth minds as masters, those who have attained mastership of the lower forms of life through strict training and endeavour, can hold in their will, their intelligence, the lesser will and desire of their brothers and sisters who are of lowlier forms of existence.

“This [mastery] is a subject difficult to grasp, but a condition into which all will enter. You may recall stories in your Bible and the scriptures of other races telling of wild beasts and man meeting with understanding one of the other. Let me mention two instances, although many another can be recalled. I speak of Daniel in the lion’s den, and also of Balaam’s ass: apparent fables, yet stories presenting profound knowledge of that sphere upon which all attain to the recognition within each of some universal kinship.... The episode of the unbroken colt which Jesus rode into Jerusalem will also occur [to some of you]. You see whither this understanding is leading us: you see the great potentialities herein, the new humanities it may teach?

“You will realise with wonder as we proceed – although you hardly recognise it yet, my friends – the completion of the structure now in formation in the course of these homely talks. Again we endeavour to emphasise this one recurring theme – that we live in this ‘life after death’ *now*. And this surely we have to bring home – not merely to prove to man survival after death, but to show that behind all life labours this universal and creative power; to prove that until man realises its potency, and inclines his heart to brotherhood with all, there can never be peace, harmony or happiness for him....

“Brotherhood first, and then freedom through contact with heaven.... That is it!.... Brotherhood, the great White Brotherhood, on earth as it is in heaven.”

*13th April 1932
(two weeks later)*

“Greetings. I have been considering the notes of our last talk. You

may wonder how and why? I was very pleased that Brighteyes studied these notes herself, because through her mind I was able to get a fairly clear idea of what had been recorded, and felt tempted to insert and correct as I should have done in the old days. One or two points need elucidation. First of all, to amplify my statement that the Spiritualist movement was in the main only related to the astral spheres. I should not like to leave the impression that Spiritualism is in any sense a religion or belief attached only to the lower planes. Let us therefore consider this question once again. It is true that Spiritualism mainly emanates from these astral spheres, but on consideration the reason becomes obvious. Spiritualists as a whole desire to come into contact with their loved ones. The pursuit of this desire becomes a science for the enquirer, and a religion for the bereaved and lonely.

“During the many years spent in spreading the gospel of Spiritualism, the main thought at the back of my mind was to bring comfort to those separated from their dear ones. Being a man of great human love, having a family whom I adored, I sympathized intensely with the sufferings of those bereaved. Cannot you see my dominant thought – to give to poor folk assurance that their loved ones were neither dead nor far away, but so close that they could hold communion; that their beloved lived on in a condition of bliss? Don’t you understand that to me this seemed man’s most vital realisation, compared to which all others faded into insignificance?

“Man possesses the power within to create conditions, visions, ideas of God, the afterlife, and heaven; as his imagination quickens, so he forms an ideal according to his capacity. When men were in the more ‘barbaric’ state they set up for their worship graven images of their God, the best and highest they could conceive. So with the average man and woman today. Each formulates ideas or ideals according to his or her depth of thought and emotion; that is to say, the man who concentrates on human love – the family tie, the personal contact, physical comfort, such things as please or delight the senses – engenders within himself that same conception of heaven. So I too, conceived the life after death, and felt that all who love as we ourselves loved – and love still! – must feel exactly as I; that all must dread that inevitable parting as we ourselves once dreaded it, until we established faith in survival upon truth and evidence.

“So the average seeker who enters Spiritualism is brought by this one reason – to make contact, personal contact, with his beloved. Can there be anything greater or more joyful than to find and to know that father, mother, husband, sister, brother or child can still commune across the gulf? It is true, very wonderfully true! Those who pass, as we have already told you, linger for a period in these astral spheres of life, and so

necessarily it must be true that Spiritualism derives its origin from the astral. Rarely do beings return from the celestial spheres unless they have a definite mission to perform.

“The astral planes are not planes of accomplishment. For this reason Spiritualism lacks in some degree the power which enfolds and binds those of other faiths. We, by this fresh influx of knowledge, hope to restore power because we endeavour to link Spiritualism to actual spheres of power. Remember, it is not from the astral but from the celestial spheres that the attracting force is drawn: the binding love, and the wisdom which kindles the life and fire of religion.

“There is much we Spiritualists have to learn. Let us open ourselves to truth from whatsoever source it comes. No doubt you have heard White Eagle speak of and call upon the centre of *power*? Right well he knows what he is doing when he thus opens the channel. We, too, must learn to fling wide our doors, so that wisdom, power and love may enter in to abide. Not for one moment would I decry Spiritualists because they contact chiefly the astral spheres of life; God knows, I would be the last [to do so], because I have seen, I *know* the wonderful consolation and the joy which comes to people on both sides of the grave by the contact [achieved through Spiritualism], by the spirit communion. But one might almost segregate communications into two separate grades – that is to say, one might separate the experimental part of Spiritualism (which should be purely scientific) from that communion of the spirit some day to grow so pure and blessed as to become sacramental.

“Spirit communion must come as a holy and blessed thing of purification, for the ennoblement of life both incarnate and discarnate. True, time, education, and fresh realisations are necessary to dispel ignorance. May this work serve that purpose by bringing some light of God’s truth to men!

“On the otherhand, scientific [psychical] investigation should be treated purely as experiment, its doors rigidly shut against the curious and the sensation-seeker. There should no longer be exploitation of the sensitive instruments. All must be put into proper place, and there must come law, system and order and more reverent understanding of the beauty and the wonder of physical and mental mediumship.

“Referring again to these celestial planes from which are drawn power and wisdom, the ritual of the Roman Catholic church and the High Anglican church is designed to call upon such power. Power gathers and binds their people. One can realise its potency on entering a church in which high ritual is practised. All things – the incense, the way the censer is used, and even the form for administration of blessing – are practised with deliberate intent to create and distribute power amongst the

worshippers. I have visited many a church since discarnate to witness the attraction and inspiration of the power gathered. I have witnessed the strains of music influence the mind, the worshippers themselves contribute by the emotional action of their emotional body. It is indeed surprising!

“On the other hand, in nonconformist churches, where the ornate has become simplicity, if true purity of heart and purpose be there, then also there gathers power, but of a somewhat different order. In some, however, there creeps a spiritual coldness, a lack due to complacency, and those who worship seem apt to become self-satisfied, to think themselves God’s chosen and elect. (I shall be severely criticised, but this also has been noted in my journeyings.)

“As to the wisdom and rightness of using ritual, music, and the like, to draw upon and to hold power over the people, we remind you, there can be use and abuse of all things. Doubtless, power rightly attained and rightly used forms part of the creative plan, for such creative powers lie within. If by knowledge, by purity of ideals and aspirations, man becomes linked to higher celestial spheres, it is by reason of his own spiritual growth that he attracts from the creative power centre.

“We told you that the Christian religion was the purest, containing as it does, the kernel of truth, pure truth. We wish to elucidate this statement. We shall be challenged as to the vicarious atonement³⁰ and the meaning of the words, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me*. The vicarious atonement remains still a sad stumbling block to Spiritualists. They have yet to realise, as I now realise, the spirit behind the words. Men still stumble over the wording rather than seek the deep occult meaning lying behind the words of Master.

“We do not propound a gospel of vicarious atonement. We know, we are assured, that *as a man soweth, so must he surely reap*; no other can ever wrest from him the responsibility of his own evil-thinking and doing. But when a man, however sunken, reaches that point whereby in a flash his soul is illumined by truth born of and through the power and the love of Jesus the Christ, he is become born again, and his old self dies. In that way only does the Christ preserve him, redeem him from ignorance, sin, and darkness, and point him to eternal life. To every soul, of whatever skin colour, whatever religion, there comes the dawning of the Great White Light... in other word, the Cosmic Christ; or, in yet other words, Jesus, the Christ,³¹ the *One Beloved*; the one Supreme Being. Every soul, whatever his label, however he deny, must enter heaven through the ‘narrow gate’ – through immeasurable love, the perfect wisdom of the compassionate Christ.

“We spoke last week also of the Buddhist belief. This point too

needs amplification. The Buddhist of today holds that the ultimate and supreme goal of existence is to enter the sphere of life known to him as *nirvana*. He desires to reincarnate, to pass as rapidly as possible through many a life that he may purify his soul, and ultimately reach that goal where at last is attained freedom from rebirth. He believes that *nirvana* will release him from the eternal round of life and death. In *nirvana* he will have found peace, having lost himself in nothingness.

“His error lies in his interpretation of the teachings of Buddha; so also the teachings of Jesus Christ are presented today in very different guise from the truths given to his disciples two thousand years ago. From the third mental plane the Buddhic faith derives its power and sustenance. Phases of this truth have since become so coarsened and degraded that I believe there exist today many who, when they pass over, cling to the earth plane, thus hoping to seize a speedy rebirth, and so become bound to earth for long periods.

“The Lord Buddha came to point the way to that ultimate goal of every human soul, the realisation of the true resignation to the supreme universal life. By profound experience he had proved that only *as a little child* man can enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus he taught.

“One more thing, please. If you follow the true vision of the spirit, you will find in the Ancient wisdom these same truths: you will find described the spheres of disquieted spirits; the higher astral spheres, the mental, celestial, and universal spheres of life. For all teachers through all ages have returned to the earth with the one revelation. And what glorious destiny lies unveiled to men willing to renounce the desires of self for service of man and God!”

Chapter IX

THE HEALING OF ALL DISEASE

10th February 1932

“I was with Brighteyes when she was reading some letters today. I am interested in the teaching set forth regarding the astral health as connected with the health of the physical body [and will now expand further on this]. It is truly said that medical science will be eventually compelled to study psychic laws. When I recall the operations I once witnessed I shudder with horror and disgust. Yet I appreciate the fact that many have been saved by the skill of the surgeon; but I dare to say that many a life and the sanity thereof will be saved when the medical world makes a study of the astral body.

“There exist certain rays which, when men can open themselves to the divine intelligence, can be used. This rests not so much on the quality of the intellect or physical brain, as on the spiritual intelligence or insight which enables the healer to attract them to himself as a magnet attracts, and then redirect the light through his patient. That is one of the new lessons to be assimilated when the medical world is open to receive information concerning colour and light rays. Of these, my friend [addressing Ivan Cooke], you are beginning to learn.³²

“How truly, my friends, has it been said that all needed for health, healing and sustenance waits in the Universal; but the ignorant cannot draw upon the abundance of God’s supply. It is equally difficult, if not impossible, for those who have this knowledge to convey it. It must dawn from your own understanding. The time must surely come when man will awaken, when the light from the Universal, from the Cosmic Christ, illumines man’s darkened understanding.”

11th May 1932

“There are many methods of healing known. Each appears to be effective in certain cases, and none so in all. We would therefore trace the healers’ source of supply, as well as the origins of all disease. In spite of the controversy which these statements will raise, we suggest that disease originates not, as is frequently thought, entirely in the mental state of the patient, but far deeper. Dis-ease has its origin sometimes in the conscious mind, sometimes in the subconscious, and more frequently in the

preconscious mind. By the latter we mean that condition of consciousness far older than the one human life, the consciousness which extends down the ages of man, but which must not be confused with what is known to your psychologists as 'racial instinct'.

"We suggest that the preconscious mind appertains to the actual ego, that is, to the spirit; whereas the instinctive life pertains to the animal and racial instincts which dwell in the flesh, and are not necessarily related to nor coordinated with the preconsciousness of man. The latter is a condition which is of the universal or spiritual life inherent in all. It would seem that that preconscious state of which we speak is unknown in the animal world.

"You are today chiefly concerned with conscious mind. You know that mind to be responsible for many of the minor complaints of the body and some of the major diseases. There are also diseases which cannot be traced, not being related either to conscious or subconscious minds.

"We would classify the healers into their several sections, as follows:

Magnetic or psychic healers;

Mental healers such as the Christian Scientists;

Hypnotists or mesmerists;

Dietists and nature healers;

Spiritual healers;

Sacramental healers;

Manipulative healers such as osteopaths;

Occult healers – those who deal purely with the occult forces of the patient;

Colour-ray healers (we shall have something important to say about these later).

"All effect cures in many cases, but not in all. We shall make it clear that each type mentioned, in treating pain and disease treats not only the physical body but the astral and mental bodies of their patients. All disease results from lack of harmony between the psychic bodies and the physical body; the physical is the last to feel the disease – or, shall we say, 'dis-ease'?³³ In all healing first the healer must discover a point of contact, otherwise he will never cure his patient. Therefore it is obvious that no one of the healers enumerated will achieve success in every case. Nor do we suggest that herbal remedies and serums should be ignored. Many cases can be more easily and effectively treated by drugs, herbs or serums rather than by wasting psychic powers and spiritual forces upon a localized affection. It is true, although not generally realised, that certain drugs already known can be employed to act not only on the physical but the astral bodies – and with the astral bodies we include the etheric body, very

similar to the physical body but of much looser texture. In that etheric body diseases lodge. By using such drugs the etheric body is caused to loosen its grip upon the poison and congestion which lodges as the result of conscious, subconscious, or preconscious disharmony in the mental body.

“Here it is well to interpolate that the term ‘mental body’ does not necessarily apply to the physico-mental body.

“To avoid confusion: you have knowledge that man possesses more than one mental body, since there is first the mental body directly related to the physical brain; secondly, the mental body related to the emotional or desire part of man; and thirdly, the mental body which is related purely to the celestial and the universal mind.

“So the conscious mind, by thinking erroneously, can so influence and weaken the cell-consciousness of the physical body as to create disease; and so the universal or the preconscious mind can also control the cell-consciousness through the ‘subliminal’ or higher mind, and can thus operate to purify and to cure all disease. *There is not one incurable disease on the earth plane.*

“We declare that all life – all human life – can be divided into rays of certain vibration. We say that life is ruled by such rays. We cannot tonight detail more than a limited number. We are tempted to suggest twelve definite rays; and leave it at that. If we desire, we may alter this number later. Shall we say that all humanity vibrates to one or other of these twelve rays or vibrations? Therefore, if a healer attempt to treat a man vibrating on, say, no. 7 ray with no. 5 method of treatment he will most certainly fail, and in all probability do harm rather than good. If, however, he treat no. 7 with no. 7, a complete cure will be effected.

“Vibration is expressed by colour: that is to say, colour is the outward and visible symbol of vibration. We will endeavour to enumerate the colours corresponding to the numbers, as follows:

- 1: the Red Ray
- 2: the Green Ray
- 3: the Blue Ray
- 4: the Pink Ray
- 5: the Yellow Ray
- 6: the Purple Ray
- 7: the Violet Ray
- 8: the Lavender Ray
- 9: the Pearl Ray
- 10: the Silver Ray
- 11: the Golden Ray

12: the pure White Ray.

“It will be the first task of the colour healer to discover the ray-colour to which his patient vibrates. It will be found that, according to the colour and number of the ray under which the patient is grouped, so he will be liable to certain weaknesses, and will need either a stimulating or sedative ray to balance the vibration and create harmony throughout his being.

“To point our meaning, it will be found that the yellow ray is a particularly fine colour for treating tuberculosis. The blue ray gives the best results in nervous diseases. The red ray is useful for all poisonous conditions of the blood. The violet and the green rays are both curative of cancer.

“Let us proceed. In certain patients the psychic centres to be treated will vary. This is important, and in due course we shall specify those psychic centres. For instance, in some cases the throat is the most receptive and sensitive spot on which to direct the green ray. In others, the heart centre gives the most powerful response to the violet ray, and will prove the most efficacious centre for the cure of blood diseases, or for one suffering from blood-poisoning. The violet light cleanses and purifies all poison from the bloodstream as it flows to the heart.

“We repeat that we cannot claim that this light-ray treatment will prove effective for every person. Nevertheless, we give the table of colours and their corresponding numbers, to lay a plan for allocating the various diseases. We are suggestive, you will see, rather than dogmatic.

“We repeat: disease is the result of disturbance in the vibrations, whether it originate through the preconscious or through the emotional or subconscious mind of the patient.

“A prevalent cause of disease is the inability to relax. Most of you, uncsciously or consciously, live and sleep – mark you, live both in your waking and sleeping hours – taut and tense. You fall asleep with a tense mind and, uncsciously, your knee, elbow, and finger joints, and particularly the neck joints, the spinal column, and all such bony parts, retain a corresponding tenseness. In daily life much the same conditions prevail. This tension of the physical body is due to a mental condition: fear, worry, suppressed emotion or suppressed desire. Hence, sleeping or waking, there occurs at certain parts of the psychic bodies a hold-up of the psychic flow.

“If people would but learn from childhood the importance of relaxation, making it a habit, and thus going through daily life at rest, dwelling in harmony with themselves, with God, and with the universal powers, then they would retain that vital and perfect rhythmic flow round

and through their psychic and physical bodies. That flow, by its very nature, carries away all waste, which is cast off, shed, eliminated, caught up by the 'Universal', and so absorbed and transformed into fresh power. In breathing you exhale poison. To exhale and inhale is the continual casting-away of waste physical and psychic matter and an in-drawing of the pure *prana*, the universal life-force which maintains the body in rhythmic motion and perfect health.³⁴

"There again we give you the secret of ease or dis-ease. It is futile to state that disease entirely originates in that which Christian Science calls the 'mortal mind'. Disease lies deeper than the mortal consciousness or mortal mind of the Christian Scientist. Nevertheless, as soon as the individual can relax his mortal mind, and reach forth to draw upon the fresh universal life-force, he automatically sets that inflow in motion which will create in time a perfect body.

"Is it possible for a man or woman sustaining a severe accident to find healing? Does the cause of this accident also lie in that preconscious mind, or is the sufferer a victim to cruel mischance?

"We say that even accidents result from a previous creation of disharmony deep within the preconscious or subliminal self. (Terms are very difficult, but if I am not satisfied I shall substitute other words. At all events you will get the idea.) This seems a hard doctrine, and yet on examination it is not so. The soul who falls victim knows in that preconsciousness or through that preconsciousness that it has a lesson which can only be learned through such an experience.

"The inevitable question next arises, what about children? There are poor little sufferers, children born obviously as the result of drunken lust or of diseased parents. Are we to conclude these innocents are doomed by fate? What of souls imprisoned in the body of a lunatic; souls whose bodies are corrupt with disease? What of *their* fate? The same law applies. The soul possesses *always* foreknowledge and power of choice. Thus it is impossible for man with his limited insight to estimate or judge the motive or suffering of any other soul. Still more must man refrain from judgment of that omnipotent power which, when appalled by some horror, he still tries to call 'good': God, the First Great Cause – 'He who must see little children suffer and heedeth not'?

"Over here we do not judge *anyone*; with broader vision we do not see a God vindictive or cruel, but an infinite love, a divine and compassionate intelligence. We see an all-wise Fatherhood ever giving to His children freewill to choose their path; a path which by suffering, by sorrow or by joy, and by joy of conquest ever wends its way upward, back into that supreme consciousness of the Cosmos wherein dwells perfection.

"The sentimentalist witnessing a cat playing with an innocent

mouse shudders with horror. 'How cruel! How awful! Nature is full of cruelty!' he declares. So it may seem to one whose vision is limited. Not so! Behind the outer semblance, this love, this understanding, permeates all. The suffering so apparent cloaks but a means and method of bringing God's supreme harmony, love, and beauty into the consciousness of God's creatures.

"I have described the effect of the preconscious mind in relation to disease, in the hope that this will help you to understand why apparently good and saintly people contract painful or mortal complaints. For instance, a person might protest, 'My mother was sweet in nature and kindness: my father loved by all. For what reasons should either contract diseases painful and terrible?'

"The cause lies deeper than sweet personality or saintliness of character. It reaches far beyond this span and its roots lie not in the here and now. Like a fever, suffering heralds a cleaning up, a clearing out, a finishing. Such sufferers might be compared by the agnostic to some mouse under the cat's paw. *Man* sees but physical torture, the days and nights of pain, reckoning nothing of the root and flower which that sufferer's tree of life will bear, so accordingly remains ignorant of that which germinates within, what is springing from the soul thus ploughed and harrowed. *Man knows but the surface* of the true life of the soul!

"Another interesting point, if you are not weary. The outer emotions of anger, greed, jealousy, and so on, create definite diseases. These are, however, the 'simple' diseases as distinct from those deeply rooted. Self-pity proves one of the prevalent causes of back and kidney troubles. It will also affect the liver, although any violent emotions cause disturbance in this quarter. As a result, poison is driven into the bloodstream. Fear and worry do much the same thing, and if prolonged eventuate in cancer. If one could analyze many cases of cancer one would discover that deep-rooted fear – and worry is a form of fear – is holding the body in a tense condition, closing in or shutting up the etheric body, and thus causing a hold-up in that psychic flow previously described.

"Does diet affect the well-being of man? In some cases, but not all. The man, however, who has reached that condition of peace and harmony and understanding of the divine laws refrains from the abuse of the physical body by overeating or by wrong choice of food. Indigestion is caused rather by the mental, the conscious mind and thought-life of the patient.

"It is of great interest to see from this side the source of inspiration for some of our prominent writers. I am reminded of that play, *The Blue Bird*, by Maeterlinck. In one scene the children assembled await their call to the earth: each carries, slung about his shoulders, a bag containing not

only the gifts and accomplishments he will bring to earth, but the diseases he must experience. Some of them bear, you will recall, whooping-cough, measles, and scarlet fever, all packed before the sail on the ship of Old Father Time across the starry seas to their waiting earthly mothers.

“A tremendous truth is here told. A fairy story, we may say; nevertheless, that truth filtered through the writer’s mind from the Universal or rose from the preconscious level of his own inner knowledge.

“The psychic healer accomplishes a valuable work in that he can relieve the congestion of the psychic bodies. Some cases he cannot touch, because he cannot probe deep enough into the patient’s history. He can help best when the patient will also help himself. In psychico-spiritual healing it is often noticed that when the disease has been apparently cured, when the patient’s house is left clean and garnished, as it were, if the patient fall again from contact with the higher forces, he will relapse. The condition of that man will then be worse than before. Thus the parable of the man dispossessed of a devil, whose house was cleaned and garnished, and who then went away, and on his return found his house occupied by seven other devils each worse than the original tenant, well illustrates my meaning.”

18th May 1932

“The many methods of healing now employed by man must be classified and understood; that is to say, it is futile for one group of healers to claim power to heal every condition of disease.

“We touched last week on the twelve rays, and would direct your minds to the twelve ‘signs’ of the zodiac, to the twelve ‘tribes’ of Israel, to the mystery and significance of this number ‘twelve’, suggesting that here is a reference to the twelve rays under which the human family can be grouped. Many herbs can also be grouped beneath these twelve rays. The sage of old found that for every disease there could be gathered a corresponding herb, which vibrated to the same number and same colour, a herb which would produce a magical effect upon the diseased body. Thus can be traced many ancient customs, the origin of many a potion, and so on, used long ago by the so-called medicine man.

“Now, take your mind to the number twelve, and divide that twelve into four sections. In each you will find three distinct rays; so in the whole twelve you get a division of four consisting of three rays apiece. Here we wish to interpolate: the number four and the number three are very powerful numbers which affect the human family. That is, they are numbers which influence the earth plane in all affairs of the physical life.

The basis of the world's calculation and civilization was set upon the symbol of the square and triangle in the dim past. As an illustration, ponder the significance of the Great Pyramid, standing as it does as a mathematical symbol of life.

"Now the twelve 'houses' of the 'children of Israel' (that is, the twelve rays upon which the human family vibrates) must be again divided into four. These are Fire, Earth, Air, Water. When the physician of the future desires to treat a patient he must as a preliminary measure cast the patient's horoscope. A fantastic suggestion? We are in deadly earnest! We are endeavouring to give a chart, a rule, by which man may, if he cares, discover the cause of every disease. He will learn by the casting of the horoscope (not the usual kind of horoscope, note, but that which covers the life of the ego and not merely this one life, revealing the rays upon which the ego has vibrated during his many incarnations) that all diseases can be classed into one or other of these four groups.

"Thus, when it transpires that the patient vibrates to the earth sign, or the fire sign, the air or the water signs, there will be found an appropriate curative method, in place of the one remedy now given to all and sundry. It will be also learnt that those vibrating under one or other of these signs become prone to certain diseases and against these same complaints can be safeguarded.

"To touch briefly upon the twelve psychic points of contact – the twelve rays of vibration, mark you, and the twelve points of their contact, they are these. Starting from the heart centre as the central point, we number them thus:

- 1: The heart
- 2: The throat
- 3: The pineal gland
- 4: The pituitary gland
- 5: The spleen
- 6: The base of the spine
- 7: The solar plexus
- 8: The organs of generation
- 9 & 10: The two hands
- 11 & 12: The two feet.

"It can and will be proved some day by an instrument that these twelve psychic centres are very susceptible to certain rays of vibration. It is true that the human body and the spirit of man, without outside aid, is sufficient in its curative power; it can moreover so attract rays as to pass on magnetic or spiritual treatment to its fellow. In effect, man can heal the

diseases of his brother man. As we explained, however, there exist conditions of the body so superficial and trivial that they can be more speedily dealt with by physical application. It would require too much spiritual or vital force to put through the necessary ray, for instance, to cure a boil, and it seems obviously simpler to employ hot fomentations rather than to treat by spiritual or magnetic means.

“With regard to the centres of psychic contact, it will be found that a corresponding organ of the body is linked to each individual centre. For instance, by the application of a certain colour ray – which is itself but vibration, you understand – to the throat, there will follow reaction not in the throat so much as in the digestive organs or stomach.

“The pituitary gland must be the centre treated in cases of obsession and mental derangement. Epilepsy has baffled medical science. It may not surprise you to hear that this disease originates from a maladjustment of the psychic bodies, caused by some spiritual and psychic disharmony of the parents at the conception of the sufferer’s physical body.

“Have we any conception of the responsibility of parenthood? It has been said: *the sins of the fathers shall visit the children unto the third and fourth generation*. Even so, that saying holds a deeper meaning and more truly might be interpreted ‘the sins of man shall revisit him unto the third and fourth incarnation.’ Surely an earlier incarnation is ‘father’ to that which follows?

“Now comes the question, how is epilepsy to be cured? Must it remain one of those obscure diseases which afflict the whole life-period of the sufferer? Epilepsy is curable only if there can be effected a readjustment of the psychic bodies, and this can follow through making a connecting link between the pineal and pituitary glands. There will later be discovered a serum, which, injected into the gland at the base of the head, will readjust the psychic bodies by drawing them closer, so that the ‘gap’ is closed. When this ‘gap’ opens the epileptic fit occurs. To put it more plainly, may we suggest that there is a screw loose? The screw being loose, the apparatus slips and at that moment there follows an epileptic fit. Tighten up the screw, get a perfect alignment of the psychic bodies, and you cure the epileptic.

“We would now like to group diseases under their respective signs of fire, earth, air and water, and suggest appropriate treatment, bearing in mind that we must also consider the three sections within each sign, namely the mineral, animal and vegetable; we will turn to these later.

“*The Fire Sign*. Here patients will be emotional, and are likely to suffer from obsession, mental trouble, inflammations and fevers. The treatment in all these cases will be by the pituitary gland and the pineal

gland. These statements can be tested and proved.

“The Earth Sign. In this class should be grouped the phlegmatic, or the type which accumulates poison because of general sluggishness, and lack of the perfect flow and rhythm of which I spoke. There will follow catarrhal conditions and subsequent poisons in the blood, and many diseases which originate from such causes.

“The Air Sign. Those who fall under the air group will often suffer from nervous diseases which act through the psychic centres. The head and the back will be the most frequently affected. The psychic centre to treat will be the base of the spine, because such diseases will bear relation to the nervous system generally.

“The Water Sign. Strange as it may seem, the watery sign affects the lower part of the body, the feet, the legs.

“This is a fluidic sign, and those coming under this division can be most readily helped by magnetic treatment; whereas those under the fiery sign respond more readily to colour-ray treatment; those under the airy sign respond to the spiritual and sacramental treatment; and those under the earthy sign react best to dietetic treatment, and mental treatment also such as Christian Science and methods of similar character. If man will but follow our hints, will apply but a tenth of the experiment and research hitherto poured forth upon inexact and speculative medicine, there will result an exact and scientific method of universal healing, based upon true knowledge of man’s physical, psychic and spiritual natures. If man so desires, healing can become a precise science.

“You will learn that there grow herbs corresponding in vibration and colour to each and all of these twelve sections, which can be selected for the treatment of those under the fire, the water, or the earth or air signs; herbs which will prove beneficial in each case, whereas those under other signs might be harmful or even dangerous.”

1st June 1932

“We have scantily touched upon the subject of herbal remedies. Herbs grow under very definite laws; that is, their growth is neither the result of accident, nor of climate or position, but takes its form and character from rays which govern all growth. Such rays rule life upon the earth plane, in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom. It is essential therefore for the healer to have knowledge of his patients’ astrological aspects; for every medicinal herb can be grouped under its own particular sign of the zodiac. Only in accordance with the subject and the nature of

his disease should these herbs be applied.

“For instance, the patient who falls under, shall we say, ray number seven, of the rising sign of Leo (governed by the Sun), must be prescribed a herb grouped under that number and ray, and forbidden any herb under a foreign ray. Following these hints it should be possible to classify and catalogue herbal remedies with some exactitude and precision, and such classification will be found of considerable efficacy. We have explained however that herbal treatments do not fulfil every requirement. The patient should rather be treated by his healer according to his sign and particular temperament.

“Asthma is a disease caused, as you may know, through the nervous system, and such form of nervous reaction, or broken rhythm, can be most efficaciously treated by the colour-ray treatment – preferably by the blue and the green ray. Although certain herbs in the past have been thought desirable, from our side we state that asthma falls into line with other psychic diseases. Sometimes magnetic treatment will cure. The psychic centre upon which the colour ray should be directed is that of the solar plexus. In this disease you will also find a great deal of digestive derangement. Great care must first of all be given to correct diet. Many attacks of asthma are brought on by indiscretions, while worry or mental trouble will frequently herald its appearance. Remove the mental cause and asthma disappears. Hence you will readily recognise the reason for the application of the blue ray, the calming, peace-restoring ray. To breathe or to inhale certain herbs is merely to scratch the surface. Attack the root cause, the derangement of the psychic system, the most important centre of which is the solar plexus. Children who suffer from this complaint may inherit their tendency from and through the overwrought system of the mother.”

18th May 1932

“Cancer comes under the earth sign in some cases but not all. It occasionally originates in the breaking of a very sacred law in a previous incarnation; and is one of the methods chosen by the subject to wipe out that ‘sin’. This [suggestion] will doubtless be rejected. It is, however, true, albeit there is this one consoling thought; it never recurs when once a soul has passed through that particular form of experience.

“Medical science will yet discover that the cure for cancer lies in the direct treatment of the etheric and not the astral body. Treatment will consist in a persistent action on the etheric body of a certain drug. We

mention gentian as being one of the most powerful [herbs in the cure of cancer]. Light-ray treatment has a distinct value, the pearl ray described being one of the most efficient, cleansing and perfecting rays for the etheric body. When the 'electrons' composing the etheric body become loosened and relaxed by the action of the drug or the light ray, there will follow a dispersal of the cancer seat in the physical body, although cancer, albeit it shows itself in a particular part, is not localized. When cancer is removed by operation, it proves only an irritant to the disease, which rapidly chases through the bloodstream and speedily forms another little township. Cancer objects to an uprooting, and shows irritation by a more vicious attack upon its victim. The only way – and you will find this knowledge dawning on medical scientists – the only way to treat cancer effectually is by the light-ray treatment and by drugs which act upon the etheric body.

“To answer a question here which will arise: if diseases are brought over from a preconscious condition; if in some cases the ego definitely decides to bear that burden in the life to come, how can we reconcile that belief – that truth, not a belief – with the methods of healing now outlined? If men are predestined to suffer, how is it that the spirit world is permitted to give such information as will cure disease?

“We answer that there exists a law of redemption by suffering. As man evolves and becomes spiritually conscious, however, such cruder conditions, the outworking of 'sin' through so stern a discipline, can be transmuted. Through the higher and finer channel, through spiritual conquest over the baser, man may eradicate the past and build the future.

“Sometimes we watch a healer at work on a patient. The patient does not respond, the treatment proves futile. In some cases even the great ones who hold humanity in their care dare not interfere. Only by effort, by striving to attain a height of self-mastery and self-conquest can that soul transmute his own inheritance. Remember these words: *Thy sins are forgiven; go thou and sin no more*. Even thus can the power and presence of Christ accomplish, if man seek Christ through victory over self.

“All diseases can be healed, and will be eradicated when humanity, of its own freewill choice and character, will come to the temple of the living God to receive that pure white light, that truth, that love, which flows from the heart of the eternal. Then there will be no more weeping nor wailing, but man perfected.

“As happiness has to be earned, so also must perfect harmony, perfect health of the bodies, be earned. Remember, no man need trail through fires of pain and suffering to learn of God. Man can find God through joy, through happiness. This is rather the ultimate path, since it first involves self-conquest, self-denial, but the way lies open. Here again

we touch on good and evil, positive and negative, suffering and joy, pleasure and pain; man can take either way, left or right hand, by aspiration or by bitter transmutation, but ever the arms of the Father wait ready for His Son.

“Has the grouping of humanity into the four divisions of fire, earth, air and water been made clear? The horoscope will enable the healer to place his patients. One might, of course, allocate them by instinct or sensing, but the more scientific method would be to cast the horoscope, thus finding the exact ray of birth. You received some months ago a description of the rays under which I, myself, was born, an unusual combination which caused difficulty for me both during life and immediately following death.

“We could almost state that *all* disease is caused through broken rhythm, by broken vibrations. These twelve vibrations hold humanity poised, as it were, in a grip. Here is the secret of man’s well-being. When more becomes known of these vibrations, the whole of life will be simplified, its strain and stress disappear. Obscure diseases which baffle medical science *are* traceable to broken vibration and rhythm, an inharmonious relation to the magnetic forces and universal powers which surround man.

“Some may jeer, saying, ‘Nonsense! We understand and treat only the body.’ My friends, you do not, you have not begun to understand the physical body of man! Medical science must get further afield. Surgery certainly has become a fine art and remarkable cures follow. For accidents, in case of torn and broken bodies, surgery has an undoubted place. Even so, surgery will someday be supplanted.”

1st June 1932

“So far we have dealt with diseases common to all humanity, with the exception of those classified as infectious. It must seem confusing, in view of what we have said about the preconscious origin of many diseases, to find that infection can spread like wildfire through a community without apparent reason. Yet numbers of people prove immune to it. Among these will be those who practise Christian Science, thus demonstrating that man’s conscious mind holds a measure of control.

“True; the Christian Scientist protects himself not only through mental action, but because he has arrived at a point in his spiritual evolution where he has erased the need of this particular form of experience. So we suggest that people subject to contagious diseases prove

themselves thereby ripe for such an experience and have a lesson to learn there from. With this few will agree. Why indeed should little children become so afflicted? To discover the underlying cause of physical disease we must cover a wide area; but again we suggest the child comes prepared for certain experiences which take form as illness and suffering, or health and happiness, and all the fluctuations which go to mould a human life.

“We state that contagious disease is not a necessary evil. In the course of time, when spiritual laws are better understood there will remain no such thing as infection. Nor is there need for anyone to suffer, if he but know how to protect himself against this invasion.

“The conscious cell-life of the body, which is controlled by both the conscious and subconscious mind, can be held responsible for the invasion of germs. If sufficient resistance is put up through healthy conscious and subconscious thought-action, the cell-consciousness of the physical will not be overcome by the onslaught of the enemy. From the first a child should be trained in right thinking. The child’s education commences, not at the age of seven and onwards, but from the first day of earthly life. The mother or nurse must realise that the infant absorbs from the atmosphere, from conditions around it, from the aura of the nurse, mother and friends, either good or ill, positive or negative vibration, into its very being. The child surrounded by positive thought is fed with the very breath of health, and such a child will thrive physically, mentally and spiritually, and prove resistant to ill from every source.

“These truths of health and being will gradually dawn. At no distant date the human family must realise its responsibility with regard to the young souls entrusted to its care, and through this realisation awake to the duty and responsibility it bears to the whole community.

“As we have spoken of the broken rhythm, the broken vibrations of man’s physical bodies which cause disease and death, so may you apply that same law of broken rhythm and broken vibration to the human family and to the world as a whole. Reflect: must not a broken harmony bring disease to physical creation as surely as to the physical body of man?”

[And so we pass to the subject of the next chapter.]

Chapter X

THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS

1st June 1932

“We emphasise again and yet again the need for the light of a common brotherhood, because only when humanity realises and understands this universal spiritual force, in which humanity lives and moves and has its being, can it save itself. Yes, yes: it is true that the values of life will be altered, and conditions on the earth plane entirely changed; and mankind will be forced through sheer suffering and privation to seek a greater truth.

“How simple it would seem! Yet such a complicated conundrum to present to the worldly, for what words can bring home that *man must love his brother*? Words, alas, mean so little, so little. Yet over here in the spirit all are brought at the last to understanding, only too thankful to believe and live within the fold of a universal brotherhood.

“The only way for the world! The nations subsist upon suspicion, distrust and fear. None give way, because each is afraid. In the business world, each scratches and fights to hold his own particular grain of corn. Whither is this leading? Surely to neither security nor prosperity, but the fast tearing down of all that civilization has established.

“In days to come we see an ennobled humanity. There dawns a wonderful vision of true brotherhood. Man will then know that all life is contained as in one stupendous spiritual pulse, and recognise even the physical life as pulsating within one universal spiritual brotherhood. He will know he cannot hurt his brother without corresponding injury, for to war with man or nation is to war with himself, *to slay is spiritual death to the slayer*. Those who draw the sword shall surely by the sword die. He will know that no breath can he breathe, no thought think without the reaction of a world. He will know that death can never be in God’s universe; that with understanding neither earth nor heaven can hold aught of death. There can be neither beginning nor ending, for man will see life as one great cycle, ever evolving, ever revolving, which holds in its embrace every soul born of man. If he violate one law, one truth, he affects the happiness and well-being of all.

“Adversity must bind each soul to his fellow before the world shall find salvation.

“We witness on your earth today the havoc of death, death through materialism – and, incidentally, death to materialism. Hence the suffering

of mankind! Materialism dies hard – how else, when men have worshipped Mammon so often and so long? We herald a new birth! Through earth's birth-pangs will be born a new, a glorious day, a day of spiritual realisation, spiritual recognition, and a spiritual base for communal life. In science, politics, religion, art, in every avenue, man will be inspired and directed from the spiritual realms of wisdom.

“Of universal brotherhood much is said, yet few indeed understand the meaning of the word; for all are taught from childhood to fight for themselves, to assert themselves at the expense of others. Erroneously man has thought the object of life to be enhancement of his personality. At all costs he must become a man superior – that is, if he desires to equal or master his brother man. This sins against the cosmic law of brotherhood. The man searching and seeking only for himself breaks every law, and while humanity thus continues can result only disease, chaos, and war.

“The truly great is he who recognises, not his own desires, but the infinite and eternal power of love. Each must lose himself to find himself. No man will ever find God whilst encompassed by the error that power and accomplishment come by and through himself. The greatest test through which a soul must eventually pass when it has arisen and thrown off its grave-clothes is to let all sense of self and personality fall away. That soul must then face an abyss of darkness and extinction, so it would seem. One desire only sustains the fainting soul – to yield, to surrender, to be bared utterly of self, to sacrifice every vestige ere the soul can merge into the infinite and eternal love – God.

“Such is not extinction; it is expansion. If he reach the point where his love of God become so great, so overwhelming that he desires nothing but to be with God, then his love may enfold even God; then every man to him becomes Godlike, and God dwells in every man....

“The man who would understand universal brotherhood must indeed *Leave all and follow Me*. He must render up – must efface himself, must lose self to find the universal selfless: God! In this supreme moment that man becomes at one, not only with God, but with each and every man.

“Such is the meaning of the Brotherhood of Man.

“All men are travelling, progressing, evolving to such spiritual aim and end – to the time when there will be but one harmonious self, one brotherly thought, one beating desire, one pure love. Never, never, never will man become established in aught but sin and sorrow while seeking for personal and individual worth alone. The former spells both absorption and expansion, by growth of the spirit; and the latter but a spiritual negation and rejection.

“There exists only one religion, one reality behind all form, belief and ceremony: a religion universal, neither bound nor circumscribed by

geographical limits. It bears but one name. It can be understood by every man, of whatever colour: every man, woman, and child; by every animal; by every bird; by tree and flower, by all instinct with the breath of life; it has but one meaning, one name – the religion of true brotherhood... LOVE!

“Love must surely come, and love will teach that forms and ceremonies, creeds and dogmas avail nothing without the spirit. There is not a creature living that does not bear witness and response to spiritual power. Forms may differ, there may be racial diversities, and many a diverse belief. Let each man have his due, but all must ultimately recognise and bow to the infinite love of the Creator. Even so will each learn that he worketh for all, and all for each.

“Not until then will the earth be freed from death. With the dawning of that day when all men recognise and live in harmony, bowing to and yet worshipping the supreme law, death will indeed be swallowed up in victory. Then will the flesh yield no longer to the overlordship of death, its very fabric will become transmuted. Sin in very truth is death, death the result of sin. We mean that exactly as it is said. Sin assuredly brings death, *but love giveth eternal life!*

“Truly, truly, every word uttered by the Great Master rings with truth, unsullied by the centuries, eternal and absolute.”

1933

КОММЕНТАРИИ И ПОЯСНЕНИЯ

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Сэр Артур Конан-Дойль (1859-1930гг.) – крупнейший английский писатель, тонкий мыслитель, общественный деятель, публицист, доктор медицины и доктор права – более 40 лет жизни посвятил изучению спиритизма. Всем предубеждённым в данном вопросе скептикам следует понять, что если человек столь рационального и аналитического склада ума изучал предмет этот до такой степени серьёзно, то, стало быть, тема эта не может быть отнесена на счёт иллюзии или фигурировать под вывеской «самого дикого из всех суеверий», как считают марксисты, или «наиболее безумного и губительного из предрассудков», как то полагают теософы. И сам Конан-Дойль, и другие приверженцы спиритической философии были прекрасно знакомы с такого рода критикой, но тем не менее имели свои причины не признавать её правомерности.

Касательно сомнений в самой реальности этих явлений Конан-Дойль писал: «Мы достигли теперь такой точки, когда дальнейшие доказательства становятся излишними и когда вся тяжесть сомнений и опровержений целиком ложится на тех, кто отрицает существование этих явлений. Но как раз те люди, которые требуют доказательств, как правило, никогда не дают себе труда ознакомиться с теми многочисленными доказательствами, которые уже есть. Похоже, каждый считает, будто весь предмет должен быть пересмотрен заново потому только, что лично ему требуются какие-то сведения».

Практически нет таких логических, зрительных, слуховых и осязательных доказательств продолжения жизни и сохранения нашей личности после смерти этого физического тела, которые бы не были получены сэром Конан-Дойлем в ходе его исследований. «Если бы человек мог видеть, слышать и чувствовать всё это и тем не менее оставаться неубеждённым в реальности незримых разумных сил вокруг себя, то у него были бы веские причины сомневаться в

здравии собственной психики. Тот, кто видел, хотя бы смутно, сквозь покров, руки, протянутые ему из загробного мира, и кто касался их, хотя бы слегка, тот действительно победил смерть. Есть нечто более сильное, чем просто вера, и это – знание... Так вот, я утверждаю эти вещи, потому что у меня есть знание о них. Я не *верю*, я *знаю*».

Таким образом, исследования прогрессивно мыслящих медиков последнего времени (Рэймонда Моуди, Элизабет Кюблер-Росс, Майкла Сабомы, Джорджа Ритчи и других) находят своё подтверждение в исследованиях, проделанных в этой области ранее на совершенно иной методологической основе, поскольку между средствами и приёмами спиритизма и реаниматологии нет ничего общего. Учение спиритизма, стало быть, является могучим союзником современных исследователей посмертного опыта, ибо оно объективно показывает, что впечатления и переживания реанимированных не являются, как то пытаются утверждать критики, иллюзией, вызванной действием медицинских препаратов или субъективным восприятием процесса распада сознания.

Говоря о чрезвычайной важности спиритизма, Конан-Дойль, как и другие серьёзные представители данной школы, в то же время указывает на нежелательность чрезмерного увлечения материальной стороной этих явлений, так называемым «психизмом» или «медиумизмом», ибо не в этом состоит действительное назначение спиритизма: «Мне думается, однако, что культом спиритических сеансов сильно злоупотребляют. Если вы уже имели раз возможность убедиться в истинности этих явлений, то физические сеансы сделали своё дело, и тот, кто тратит время на то, что бежит от одного сеанса к другому, подвергает себя опасности стать всего лишь простым охотником за острыми ощущениями. Здесь, как и во всяком культе, есть опасность, что форма заслонит собою суть, и в погоне за физическими доказательствами человек может забыть, что настоящая цель этих сеансов, как я пытаюсь в данной работе показать, состоит в том, чтобы дать нам уверенность в ожидающем нас будущем и духовные силы в настоящем, для того чтобы достичь должного понимания преходящей природы материи и всезначимости того, что нематериально».

Обращаясь ко всем этим любителям вертеть блюдца, подсчитывать удары и крутить столы, Конан-Дойль вопрошает: «Удовлетворимся ли мы тем, что будем созерцать эти явления, не обращая никакого внимания на то, что эти явления значат, словно группа дикарей, изумлённо глядящих на радиоаппарат и несколько не интересующихся содержанием и смыслом передаваемых им сообщений, или же мы со всей решимостью возьмёмся за осмысление

этих тонких и едва уловимых высказываний, пришедших к нам из загробного мира, и за построение такой религиозной концепции, которая будет основана на посюстороннем человеческом разуме и на потустороннем духовном вдохновении? Эти явления уже переросли пору детских игр, они покидают возраст спорных научных новшеств и принимают, *или примут*, очертания фундамента, на котором будет построено вполне конкретное здание религиозной мысли, в некоторых своих частях воссозданное из материала старых зданий, в других же строящееся из совершенно нового материала».

Спиритическое Учение не было понято и признано земным человечеством в ту пору, когда оно было предложено ему Космическими Силами (вторая половина XIX века – первая четверть XX),* и претерпело значительные искажения (отсюда и правомерная критика такого выродившегося спиритизма со стороны г-жи Рерих). И в результате этого человечество в XX веке погрузилось во мрак материалистического и безбожного варварства, закономерно приведшего к чудовищному геноциду.

Как бы то ни было, но есть и иной, истинный Спиритизм, к знакомству с которым мы предлагаем читателю обратиться в том числе и через многолетние искания такого человека, как сэр Артур Конан-Дойль. Ещё и сегодня не поздно, и если идеи Третьего Откровения будут человечеством признаны и претворены в жизнь, то участь нашей планеты может ещё измениться к лучшему. Не забудем, что главный принцип такого спиритизма – ЖИТЬ ПО СОВЕСТИ, и главный девиз его: «Без любви к Богу и любви к ближнему – нет спасения!»

The New Revelation

Новое Откровение

Первое издание этой работы было издано за счёт автора нью-йоркской фирмой *George H. Doran Company*, в 1918г.

¹ «Лайт» – знаменитый английский журнал, специализировавшийся на публикации материалов, посвящённых «психическим» и спиритическим исследованиям. Выходил в течение нескольких десятков лет. Среди прочих авторитетов этой области на его страницах часто публиковался и А. Конан-Дойль.

² См. «The Writings about the Spiritualism», статья «A Test Message».

³ Намёк на библейские мифы.

⁴ «Рэймонд» – название книги сэра Оливера Лоджа (1851-1940), выдающегося английского физика и проповедника Спиритизма. Рэймонд – имя сына учёного, который был военным инженером и погиб во время Первой Мировой войны. В книге содержится большой объём фактического и теоретического материала, касающегося проблем Спиритизма. Особенность книги заключается в том, что основу её составляют спиритические послания Рэймонда Лоджа своим родителям.

⁵ Louis Jacolliot, «Le Spiritisme dans le Monde», Paris, A.Lacroix, 1875.

⁶ “Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death” by F.W.H.Meyers. «Человеческая Личность и её Сохранение после Смерти Тела». Помимо английского оригинала существует переработанный французский перевод, который во многих отношениях предпочтительней своего прототипа: Frédéric Meyers, «La Personnalité humaine; sa survivance; ses manifestations supranormales».

⁷ Это фундаментальное исследование издано Фредериком Мейерсом (1843-1910), профессором из Кембриджа, в 1903 году. В том же году профессор Ф.Флурнуа из Женевского Университета, известный скептик в такого рода вопросах, о важности этого сочинения высказался в следующих выражениях: «Доказательства и рассуждения, выдвинутые Мейерсом в пользу сверхъестественных психических феноменов, представляют собой, по численности своей и весомости, слишком серьёзное и объёмное досье для того, чтобы теперь можно было его игнорировать, если только нарочно не закрывать на него глаза, и было бы явным сумасбродством пытаться ныне отрицать его всё целиком под тем фальшивым предлогом, будто подобный предмет не заслуживает внимания науки».

⁸ См. приложение III, «The Cheriton Dugout».

⁹ Тем более нельзя отрицать этого в случае с «Библией», каковая представляет собой сумбурное собрание медиумических записей. И только безнадежно наивные, доверчивые и

легкомысленные люди могут поверить, будто этот свод противоречивых, нелепых и часто мерзостных рассказней продиктован «Духом Святым».

Двести лет назад великий духовидец и философ Сведенборг также состоял в общении с миром духов. И один из постоянных его собеседников представился ему Господом Богом (что, надо сказать, не редкость в подобных случаях). Он продиктовал доверчиво внимавшему Сведенборгу множество хороших вещей, но также немало и небылиц, достойных не Всезнающего Бога, но духа, не очень высоко взошедшего в Духовной Иерархии. И хотя в писаниях Сведенборга нет глупостей и гнусностей, которыми так богата «святая» Библия, никому тем не менее не пришло тогда в голову признать его откровение за Божественное. Так случилось по той простой причине, что в умах тогдашних европейцев это место было безраздельно занято «Библией».

Эта книга, уже имевшая достойных критиков со стороны житейского здравого смысла в лице Болингброка, Вульстона, Вольтера, Гольбаха, Таксиля и других, ещё дожидается своего критика со стороны здравого спиритуализма. Основу этой критики уже заложил Аллан Кардек. См. его «Книгу Бытия, чудеса и предсказания в объяснении Спиритизма».

¹⁰ Синодальный русский перевод в этом месте, как и во многих других, неточен. На самом деле речь идёт здесь не о «болезни», но о боли, которая, по замыслу авторов «Библии» всегда сопровождает роды. Им было совершенно невдомёк, что это правило отнюдь не является всеобщим.

¹¹ к числу коих принадлежу и я (*лат.*)

¹² “The Voices” by Usborne Mooge. Речь идёт о так называемом феномене «прямого голоса», когда в воздушной среде звучит голос духа, или умершего, наделённый всеми акустическими, артикуляционными и т.п. особенностями, отличавшими его при жизни на земле. Если на сеансе присутствуют люди, хорошо знавшие этого человека прежде, у них не возникает каких-либо сомнений касательно тождественности, а стало быть, и реальности звучащего голоса, который в этом случае может быть воспринят звукозаписывающей аппаратурой. Разговор между духом и присутствующими ведётся в таком случае как обычная беседа между людьми. Для проявления «прямых голосов» необходим медиум, обладающий способностью к производству именно этого

спиритического феномена. Помимо указанной Конан-Дойлем книги, смотрите также книгу Г.Д.Брэдли «К звёздам» и Г.ди Бони «Прямые голоса» (“Towards the Stars” by H.D.Bradley; Gastone di Boni, «Voci Dirette»).

¹³ «Если Я сказал вам о земном, и вы не верите: как поверите, если буду говорить вам о небесном?» («Еванг. от Иоанна», III,12).

¹⁴ Явный намёк на Россию и на марксистов, т.е. великие умы эпохи ясно понимали глупость большевицкого эксперимента.

¹⁵ Об этом смотрите особо: Аллан Кардек, «Рай и Ад, или Божественная Справедливость в объяснении Спиритизма».

¹⁶ Надо сказать, что, действительно, «чудеса» Христа находятся все в пределах, в коих действуют силы, управляемые психическим законом в том его виде, понимание которого нам даётся теперь Спиритизмом, и что даже в самых мельчайших своих подробностях чудеса эти соответствуют природе этого закона. Согласно философии карденистского Спиритизма, «чудес» в Природе не существует и не смогло бы существовать, есть только законы, нами не познанные, и действия, на их основе совершаемые знающим, воспринимаются профанами как чудо. По мнению спиритов, величие Божеское заключается отнюдь не в том, что с помощью каких-то чудес Бог постоянно вмешивается в нормальный ход вещей и произвольно его поворачивает в ту или иную сторону, но в том, что Он изначально создал такие законы, которые направляют развитие Вселенной в нужное русло без всякого последующего и могущественного вмешательства извне. Создание таких законов и является самым величайшим из Божьих чудес.

Христианская Церковь, запрещая вызывание духов, осуждая Спиритизм, формально опирается на запрет Моисея. Но этот запрет у него находится в той части его законов, каковые имеют временный, т.е. переходный и исторически-обусловленный характер, и связан с конкретной исторической обстановкой, в какой жили руководимые им евреи. В самом же «Евангелии», созданном в совершенно иных исторических условиях, нет не только ни одного запрета на всё это или хотя бы какого намёка на запрет, но и недвусмысленно указывается на важность этого дела, и вся последующая деятельность апостолов и святых, как ясно всякому знающему предмет, связана с применением Спиритизма, о чём они сами недвусмысленно и говорят в оставленных ими сочинениях. И подводя итог сказанному об этом

запрете, можно спросить, неужели Церковь ставит закон Моисеев выше закона Евангелического, т.е., иными словами, неужели же Церковь православных, католиков и протестантов есть Церковь более иудейская, нежели христианская?

¹⁷ Эдмунд Герней – основатель О.П.И., крупнейший авторитет своего времени в области гипноза, один из авторов альманаха «Иллюзии жизни» (1886г.), опубликованного через два года после его смерти.

¹⁸ На первый взгляд, вопрос об одежде может показаться странным. Но ничего странного в этом нет. Так, на сеансах с материализацией души, которых мы знали людьми, являются в том костюме, в каком мы видели их при жизни в материальном мире. Но что касается духов, отрешившихся от всего земного, то их одеянье состоит большей частью из драпировки с длинными развевающимися складками, и они представляются, помимо того, с распущенными длинными волосами.

¹⁹ Сегодня есть основания полагать, что второе предположение гораздо ближе к истине, хотя и превосходные библиотеки там также имеются, и в них хранится множество сочинений, не известных здесь у нас, на земле, либо потому, что они у нас материально не сохранились, либо потому, что были созданы авторами уже после перехода их туда.

²⁰ Продолжение смотрите в «The Writings about the Spiritualism», январь 1919, «A Prophecy».

²¹ Небольшое уточнение: не «леди могла», но души, посредником (переводчиком) которых она являлась.

²² Послание Св.Иоанна Богослова, I, гл.IV, ст.1.

²³ Снова намёк на библейские авторитеты.

²⁴ «Après la Mort» par Léon Denis.

²⁵ Такого рода библиотека-магазин, имеющая целью распространение спиритических знаний, была создана Конан-Дойлем и открыта им в 1925 году на Виктория-стрит в Лондоне.

²⁶ Здесь и несколько выше имеется в виду главным образом перевоплощение. Умы, сформированные в традициях протестантского мировоззрения, не понимают идеи перевоплощения и её отвергают. Характерно, что даже после перехода, став духами, такие люди продолжают игнорировать закон реинкарнации – один из главнейших законов жизни. Поэтому и в посланиях духов, в странах протестантских, идея перевоплощения обыкновенно отрицается. В этом причина огромного превосходства французского спиритизма (или карденизма) над англо-американским спиритуализмом.

²⁷ «Возвращаясь к этому последнему случаю, должен сказать, что по прошествии некоторого времени, после того как были написаны данные строки, случаем этим занялся третий пастор, обладающий некоторыми познаниями в области оккультных наук. Рассуждениями и молитвами он добился того, что злые духи наконец оставили свои жертвы в покое. Сколько-то времени духи будут держать своё слово?» (А.К.Д.) /франц./

The Vital Message

Жизненно-важное послание

Первое издание этой работы было издано за счёт автора нью-йоркской фирмой *George H. Doran Company*, в 1919г.

¹ Имеется в виду Первая Мировая война.

² Эти факты потрясли Конан-Дойля, и он занялся подробным изучением данного вопроса, в итоге чего возникла его знаменитая монография «Преступление в Конго» (“The Crime of the Congo”), опубликованная в 1909 году и имевшая огромный международный резонанс.

³ Здесь невольно приходят на ум слова Марка Аврелия: «Оглянись назад – там безмерная бездна времени, взляни вперёд – там другая беспредельность».

⁴ Это не совсем так. Такая фигура появилась в своё время: то был Дух Истины, слова которого явлены миру в книгах Аллана

Кардека. Сказанного в них достаточно, чтобы преобразовать не только наши религиозные воззрения, но и наполнить всю нашу жизнь на земле новым смыслом.

⁵ Мы же в данном случае вместо «духовной религии» предлагаем термин «карденизм», составленный из фамилий создателей *духоведения*, или новейшего спиритизма, – Аллана Кардека и Леона Дени.

⁶ За подробностями отсылаем читателя к «Книге Медиумов» Аллана Кардека – непревзойдённому руководству по практическому Спиритизму.

⁷ Конан-Дойль в данном случае имеет в виду позицию, занимаемую христианской Церковью. Несколько раньше Карл Дюпрель по этому же поводу писал, что господа церковники признают оккультно-мистические факты, лишь когда они датированы первыми веками Христианства, и считают такую мистику белой, т.е. идущей от светлых сил; аналогичные же факты дней нынешних, будучи произведены нашими современниками, у них причисляются к мистике исключительно чёрной, т.е. идущей от злых сил, словно бы Бог заботился об этом мире только в первые века новой эры, а после целиком предоставил его в распоряжение дьявола – точка зрения, напрочь лишённая логики; помимо того, как мы показали в других наших работах, сама вера в существование дьявола и тёмных сил является плодом логической ошибки и невежества, соединённого с большой фантазией.

⁸ Здесь необходимо указать на полную бессовестность критиков Спиритизма: объяснять одну неизвестную вещь при помощи другой, ничуть не более известной, значит не давать объяснение, а морочить людям голову, рассчитывая на их наивность и легковерие.

⁹ Речь, повидимому, идёт о книге: “Psychic Force and Modern Spiritualism” by Sir William Crookes, New York, 1871. Следует назвать также и другую работу Вильяма Крукса, посвящённую данному предмету: “Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism”, 1874.

Сэр Вильям Крукс (1832-1919), великий английский физик и химик, открывший посредством спектрального анализа химический элемент таллий, много занимавшийся изучением физических явлений

при прохождении электрического тока через разрежённые газы, открывший радиометрические силы и построивший измерительный прибор – радиометр, сконструировавший спинтарископ – прибор, позволяющий обнаружить присутствие отдельных альфа-частиц, работавший также в области астрономии, аналитической химии, свёклосохарного производства, крашения тканей и много-многого другого, посвятил долгие годы своей исследовательской деятельности изучению спиритических явлений. В своей работе «Исследования в области Спиритизма» Крукс анализирует различные виды наблюдаемых феноменов: передвижение тяжёлых тел в пространстве, исполнение музыкальных произведений без контакта человеческих пальцев с клавишами рояля, пневматографию, «прямое письмо», появление рук при дневном свете, появление фигур и лиц и т.д.

Леон Дени, рассказывая об исследованиях Крукса, сообщает: «Для того, чтобы строго по-научному проконтролировать спиритические явления, он сконструировал особые приборы небывалой чувствительности и неслыханной точности. Ассистируемый замечательным медиумом мисс Флоренс Кук и другими учёными, проявлявшими столь же строго методичный подход, как и он сам, сэр Крукс проводил эти исследования в своей лаборатории в окружении специальной аппаратуры, которая делала невозможной всякую попытку мошенничества и подлога, о которых так любят твердить наши оппоненты. – Сэр Вильям Крукс писал по поводу спиритических фактов: «После того, как я убедился в реальности спиритических феноменов, с моей стороны было бы малодушием и низостью отказать им в своём свидетельстве».

На седьмом году своих спиритических исследований, создав за это время ряд новых приборов и аппаратов, предназначенных либо для того, чтобы обеспечить возможность строго научного контроля, либо же для того, чтобы регистрировать наблюдающиеся явления, учёный, говоря о реальности спиритических явлений и материализаций духов утверждает: «Я не говорю, что это возможно; я говорю, что это *есть*».

¹⁰ По данному поводу Леон Дени в своей книге «После Смерти» писал: «Вечерами, в течение ряда месяцев, перед глазами исследователей появлялся дух молодой и миловидной женщины по имени Кэти Кинг, который приобретал на некоторое время все качества и свойства человеческого тела, наделённого органами и способностью ощущения, беседовал с Круксом, его супругой и со всеми присутствующими, позволял проводить с собою все

необходимые опыты, давал до себя дотронуться, себя аускультировать и фотографировать, после чего эта дама растворялась в воздухе, как лёгкий туман».

¹¹ Данный выпад, в частности, может быть адресован и Ф.Энгельсу, который по поводу опытов Крукса сделал вполне партийные, но совершенно несообразные, алогичные выводы. Его суждения по вопросу о Спиритизме, написанные именно в связи с опытами Крукса, в советские времена стали классикой, казённым советским философам виделось, что в них проблема Спиритизма решена раз и навсегда, а фраза о «самом диком из всех суеверий» при всей её нелепости сделалась крылатой.

¹² Здесь Конан-Дойль предельно ясно объясняет суть ясновидения и яснослышания – двух способностей чувственного восприятия, которые отличают наделённых ими медиумов от обычных смертных. По сути дела такого рода зрение и слух полностью соответствуют зрению и слуху, каковыми обладают развоплощённые духи. Зная это, нетрудно понять смысл древнеиндийского изречения: «На самом деле смерть не разрушает человека, она лишь делает его невидимым».

¹³ Конан-Дойль объясняет здесь механизм нравственной деградации некоторых медиумов, что позволяет теперь людям, изучающим сей предмет, не впадать в недоумение. Не секрет, что сёстры Фокс, с именем которых связано возникновение новейшего Спиритизма, также сделались горячими приверженицами Бахуса и в конце жизни позволяли себе заявления, порочащие дело, которому оне положили столь блестящее начало. Даваемое Конан-Дойлем объяснение очень важно и само по себе, но человеку, стремящемуся самостоятельно разобраться в сложностях медиумических проявлений, оно позволяет понять, как могли произойти те прискорбные скандалы, которые в конце карьеры постигали многих ранее вполне заслуженных медиумов.

¹⁴ «Новое Откровение»

¹⁵ См. в этой связи наше примечание №27 к «Новому Откровению».

¹⁶ Раннехристианские захоронения в Италии и на территории

прочих провинций Римской Империи. Ранние христиане были вынуждены прятаться от преследователей в пещерах, и тела умерших хоронили в нишах, выдолбленных в стенах скалы.

¹⁷ Речь идёт об эпизоде, рассказанном в «Еванг. от Матфея», гл. XXIII, ст. 35 и в «Иудейской войне» Иосифа Флавия.

¹⁸ Снова имеется в виду мировая война.

¹⁹ способ, методы или механизм действия кого-либо или чего-либо (*лат.*)

The Writings about the Spiritualism

Записки о Спиритизме

Основу данной нашей подборки составляют случайно попавшие в поле нашего зрения разрозненные статьи-письма писателя, напечатанные при его жизни в различных газетных изданиях. Стало быть, данная подборка никоим образом не является лучшим, что им было написано по данному поводу. А значит, очень может быть, что как раз самые интересные из его коротких публикаций и не попались нам на глаза. Тем не менее, настоящей подборкой статей и писем сэра Артура Конан-Дойля мы надеемся привлечь внимание читающей публики к этой не известной ей ранее стороне творчества замечательного английского писателя.

¹ Здесь хочется привести и слова Дж.Конрада: «Каждый шаг – поступок: за него неизбежно приходится отвечать. И тщетны слёзы, скрежет зубовой и сожаления слабых, кто мучается, объятый страхом, когда приходит миг оказаться лицом к лицу с последствиями собственных действий».

² Имеется в виду пресловутое чудо Иисуса Навина, остановившего движение солнца и луны на небе, чтобы у израильтян было больше времени для расправы над врагами. Как сказано в «Библии» («Книга Иисуса Навина», гл. X, ст. 13): «Стояло солнце среди неба, и не спешило к западу почти целый день».

³ Любопытными в этой связи представляются нам и

соображения немецкого писателя И.Г.Зейме. В своей книге «Mein Sommer 1805» он пишет: «Ничто более не свято, и всюду с религией обходятся презрительно. Причина сего явления лежит главным образом в том, что людям повсеместно навязывают в качестве сути религии вещи, каковые состоят с ней лишь в весьма отдалённом родстве, а то и не имеют к ней вовсе никакого отношения. Холодная, зачастую противоречивая и рассудку противная догматика, пустые формулы и ничего не значащие церемонии повсюду вменяются людям как нечто существенное и неоспоримо важное в то самое время, как первейшие и святейшие принципы разума, действительно составляющие прочнейшее основание, на котором покоится религия, остаются в небрежении. Учение о Боге и Провидении, о добродетели и пороке, равно как о праве и долге, о счастье и страдании затрагивается теологами лишь в той мере, в какой они это находят нужным для обоснования своих целей. То, что человеку всего важнее и вечно должно быть важнее всего – его обязанности и права – об этом его намеренно держат в неведении и показывают ему лишь вещи, в коих он совершенно ничего не может понять и каковые недолго смогут представляться ему достойными уважения, потому как разум их не одобряет. И так ведут себя все христианские секты».

⁴ Учения о гомоусии и гомиоусии – единосущие и подобосущие (*греч.*). Ариане утверждали, что Бог-Сын в Троице всего лишь подобен Богу-Отцу, их противники, – что Отец и Сын одинаковы по самой своей сущности. В другом месте Конан-Дойль по этому поводу пишет:

«В середине четвёртого века состояние христианской религии было возмутительно и позорно. В бедах кроткая, смиренная и долготерпеливая, она сделалась, познав успех, самонадеянной, агрессивной и безрассудной. Язычество ещё не умерло, но быстро угасало, находя самых надёжных приверженцев либо среди консервативной знати из лучших родов, либо среди тёмных деревенских жителей, которые и дали умирающей вере её имя. Меж двумя этими крайностями заключалось громадное большинство рассудительных людей, обратившихся от многобожия к единобожию и навсегда отвергших верования предков. Но вместе с пороками политеизма они расстались и с его достоинствами, среди которых особенно приметны были терпимость и благодушие религиозного чувства. Пламенное рвение христиан побуждало их исследовать и строго определять каждое понятие в своём богословии; а поскольку центральной власти, которая могла бы проверить такие определения, у них не было, сотни враждующих ересей не замедлили появиться на

свет, и та же самая пламенная верность собственным убеждениям заставляла более сильные партии раскольников навязывать свои взгляды более слабым, повергая Восточный мир в смуту и раздор.

Центрами богословской войны были Александрия, Антиохия и Константинополь. Весь север Африки тоже был истерзан борьбою; здесь главным врагом были донатисты, которые охраняли свой раскол железными цепями и боевым кличем "Хвалите Господа!". Но мелкие местные распри канули в небытие, когда вспыхнул великий спор между католиками и арианами, спор, рассекший надвое каждую деревню, каждый дом – от хижины до дворца. Соперничающие учения о гомоусии и гомеоусии, содержавшие в себе метафизические различия настолько тонкие, что их едва можно было обнаружить, поднимали епископа на епископа и общину на общину. Чернила богословов и кровь фанатиков лились рекою с обеих сторон, и кроткие последователи Христа с ужасом убеждались, что их вера в ответе за такой разгул кровавого буйства, какой ещё никогда не осквернял религиозную историю мира. Многие из них, веровавшие особенно искренне, были потрясены до глубины души и бежали в Ливийскую пустыню или в безлюдье Понта, чтобы там, в самоотречении и молитвах, ждать Второго пришествия, уже совсем близкого, как тогда казалось. Но и в пустынях звучали отголоски дальней борьбы, и отшельники из своих логовищ метали яростные взоры на проходивших мимо странников, которые могли быть заражены учением Афанасия или Ария».

⁵ а в последующие годы и в России

⁶ А если мы добавим сюда все зверства, которые совершили над верующими «коммунистические» режимы в России и других странах социалистического лагеря, то всё, соделанное атеистами ранее, о чём говорит здесь Конан-Дойль, представится нам лишь робкой репетицией в преддверии той чудовищной бойни, которую человеческие нетерпимость и недомыслие устроили в нашем XX веке.

⁷ Похоже, этот день, если ещё и не пришёл, то уже грядёт. И наша нынешняя наука действительно собирается доставить себе умиротворение, о котором идёт речь, называя вещь эвфемистическими и неточными именами «новой психологии», «парапсихологии», «экстрасенсорики» и т.п., вместо запретного, но зато настоящего имени, которое звучит коротко и ясно – Спиритизм.

⁸ Такого рода опыт был сделан Лео Таксилем (1854-1907) в его «Забавном Евангелии». Весьма назидательное сочинение.

⁹ Отдавать должное, так отдавать. Если говорить о бескорыстии в этой войне, то нельзя умолчать и о подвиге России, которая, верная своим союзническим обязательствам, в невыгодных для себя военных условиях, открыла второй фронт и, отвлекши тем на себя основные силы Германии, спасла Францию от окончательного разгрома. Ставки с самого начала были сделаны так, что выиграть в этой войне Россия ничего не могла, а могла лишь потерять. И она потеряла всё, когда в больной, изнурённой мучительной войною стране власть захватили тлетворные микробы – большевики. По своей сути это были полчища трусливых шакалов, дерзнувших всей массой наброситься на быка лишь после того, как он был изранен и обескровлен в ничейной схватке с тигром. Но после того, как он пал под их натиском, он уже не мог рассчитывать на пощаду. Не могла рассчитывать на пощаду и израненная Россия, попавшая в цепкие лапы большевиков. Россия потеряла всё. И когда весь мир сравнительно благоденствовал, она была лобным местом, была Голгофой, на которой распинали человеческий дух и убивали человеческую мысль. Вот цена благородства царской политики. По-прежнему прав Пушкин: в отношении России Европа всегда была столь же невежественна, сколько и неблагодарна. Всё это, впрочем, ни в коей мере не умаляет тех дифирамбов, которые наш автор поёт своему отечеству.

¹⁰ См. по этому поводу также у Аллана Кардека: «Книга Духов», Введение, XII и «Книга Медиумов» конец параграфа 222.

¹¹ В английском официальном языке слово «сэр», стоящее перед именем и фамилией, является титулом и указывает на то, что данное лицо принадлежит к рыцарскому сословию. По английскому обычаю в рыцари посвящает король или королева за выдающиеся военные или государственные заслуги. Но за последние столетия стало также традицией производить в рыцари за чрезвычайные заслуги в науке, искусстве и других областях. Так Оливер Лодж и Вильям Крукс были произведены в рыцари: английское государство тем показало, что оно ценит их высокие научные достижения. Конан-Дойль также был произведён королевой в рыцари в знак высокой оценки его литературной деятельности – имелось в виду создание им образа Шерлока Холмса, одной из страстных почитательниц которого была английская королева. (По другой версии рыцарское

звание писателю было пожаловано за его выдающиеся усилия в попытке довести до мирового общественного мнения британский взгляд на войну в Южной Африке.) Равным образом в рыцари был посвящён и другой беллетрист, а также оккультный мыслитель – Генри Р.Хаггард.

¹² Речь идёт о книге «The Wanderings of the Spiritualist». Рецензия на неё Джозефа Мак-Каба была опубликована 13 сентября 1921 года.

¹³ Речь снова идёт о «Странствиях спиритуалиста».

¹⁴ Не следует путать «психографию» (психическую разновидность фотографии) с «психографией» – одним из способов медиумического писания.

¹⁵ В Рочестере жила семья Фокс. Установленный ими в середине XIX века контакт с духом, послужил мощным толчком к возрождению Спиритизма. Подробнее смотрите об этом «История Спиритизма» А.К.Д. или нашу статью: «Спиритизм – Учение о Духе».

¹⁶ Речь идёт о книге Конан-Дойля «Факты в пользу спиритической фотографии»: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Case for Spirit Photography”, *George H.Doran Company*, New York, 1922.

¹⁷ Эммануил Сведенборг (1688-1772) – шведский учёный и философ-мистик, теософ-спирит. Его наиболее часто читаемый труд – «Рай и ад».

¹⁸ Эндрю Джексон Дэвис (1826-1910) – американский медиум, автоматически, т.е. под водительством духов написавший ряд прекрасных философско-спиритических книг, среди которых: «Век нынешний», «Великая Гармония», «Философия духовного общения», «Внутренняя жизнь» и др.

¹⁹ Приводим целиком этот курьёзный пассаж, спровоцированный присутствием на одном из этих сеансов г-на Дингуолла, бывшего тогда одним из руководителей О.П.И. Дух Оскара Уайльда не преминул написать весьма занимательную речь, в которой в присущей писателю манере высмеял этого деятеля, много

вредившего делу Спиритизма. Текст даём в переводе с итальянского, так как заимствуем его в одном из номеров итальянского журнала «Arcana» за 1972 год:

«Быть мёртвым – самое скучное занятие в жизни, если только не считать семейную жизнь или обед в компании школьного учителя. У Вас есть сомнения по поводу того, что это действительно я? Ничуть не удивительно, я и сам порой сомневаюсь в этом. Но в ответ на Ваши сомнения в мой адрес я мог бы сказать: а в себе, простите, Вы нисколько не сомневаетесь? Я всегда восхищался Обществом Психических Исследований. Это самые невероятные скептики на свете. Их кредо – всегда во всём сомневаться. Они ни за что не удовлетворятся, пока не исследуют вас на свой лад: тип-видимость-образ-форма. Настоящее привидение должно было бы сильно их испугаться. Я иногда подумываю о создании здесь, у нас, некой Академии Райских Скептиков, которая могла бы стать для нас своего рода аналогией Общества Психических Исследований, бытующего среди живых. Туда бы не принимался никто моложе шестидесяти, и мы могли бы называться Обществом Теней Бездеятельных в связи с дряхлостью. Нашей первой задачей могло бы стать исследование, является ли, скажем, г-н Дингуолл тем, за кого он себя выдаёт? А также, фантазия он или реальность? Истина или выдумка? И если бы вдруг было решено, что он реальность, то мы, естественно, очень сильно бы в этом усомнились».

Дух Оскара Уайльда неспроста издевается над этим председателем О.П.И. и спрашивает, тот ли он в действительности, за кого себя выдаёт. Дело в том, что главной задачей О.П.И. было доскональное изучение всех спиритических явлений и содействие распространению идей Спиритизма. Однако при этом председателе Общества Психических Исследований стало на позиции, откровенно враждебные задачам Спиритизма. Председатель и его окружение открыто вредили делу Спиритизма и подвергали осмеянию все сколько-нибудь серьёзные исследования в этой области. Это обстоятельство и вынудило Артура Конан-Дойля (тогда старейшего члена Общества) незадолго перед смертью выйти из О.П.И. и призвать всех других серьёзных изыскателей последовать его примеру – факт красноречивый и дающий пищу для размышлений. Подробнее об этом смотрите ниже: «Отречение от Общества Психических Исследований».

²⁰ Сэр Джеймс Мэтью Барри (1860-1937) – английский романист и драматург, автор, помимо прочего, «Питера Пэна» – двух знаменитых повестей для детей.

²¹ Роберт Льюис Стивенсон (1850-1894) – выдающийся английский писатель, представитель неоромантизма. Его перу принадлежат романы «Остров сокровищ», «Чёрная стрела», «Похищенный» и целый ряд других, фантастическая повесть «Странная история доктора Джекиля и мистера Хайда», пьесы, сборники новелл, очерков, статей и стихов.

²² Здесь имеются в виду две книги: «О некоторых феноменах транса» Ричарда Ходсона и «Дионисово ухо» Джеральда Бальфура. Русским текстом первой мы располагаем и надеемся опубликовать её со временем.

²³ Ориентация в этом вопросе сегодняшнему читателю затруднена тем, что фамилии главного медиума и одного из главных критиков в этом случае совпадают: С.Дж.Соул и, соответственно, К.У.Соул.

²⁴ Автор имеет в виду свою книгу «Нашествие Фей»: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Coming of the Fairies”, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1922.

²⁵ «Нужно стремиться лишь к тому, чтобы мыслить и говорить согласно истине, без всякого желания привить наши вкусы и убеждения другим: предприятие сие и без того грандиозно». (*франц.*) Афоризм, принадлежащий перу французского писателя и моралиста Жана Лабрюйера (1645-1696).

²⁶ *a priori* – заранее, не зная дела, предубеждённо (*лат.*).

²⁷ «Царство Божие», которое, как сказано, Великим Учителем, обретается лишь «внутри нас».

²⁸ Напомним древнее изречение: кого Бог хочет наказать, того Он лишает разума. И разума оказались лишены Германия, Россия, а вслед за ними и вся Европа, ибо то, что творилось в Европе и России с 1914 года, весь этот кровавый апофеоз глупости, можно объяснить только массовым ослеплением и помешательством.

²⁹ Мы надеемся, читатель понимает, что наш автор имеет в виду. Конан-Дойль в отличие от Бернарда Шоу, Герберта Уэллса,

Ромена Роллана, Андре Жида и прочих западных писателей, никогда не строил себе иллюзий на счёт того, что творилось в России.

³⁰ Речь идёт о романе «The Land of Mist» – произведении пропагандистском; входит в серию «приключений профессора Челленджера».

³¹ Библиотека-магазин, основанная и руководимая самим А.Конан-Дойлем.

³² Считаю нужным предупредить читателя, что данная статья, равно как и две предыдущие, не является непосредственным произведением нашего автора: их текст представляет собой «композицию», т.е. составлен нами из подлинных высказываний и фраз Конан-Дойля, встречающихся на страницах его книг (исключением является только вставленная нами цитата из Лабрюйера), после чего получившийся текст и был переведён на русский язык. Возможно, кто-нибудь решит, будто данная акция – приписывать крупному писателю произведения, которых он никогда не писал, да ещё при этом умудриться целиком составить их из его же подлинных фраз – есть с нашей стороны неслыханная дерзость и акт вандализма. Не берёмся судить – дерзость это, акт вандализма или дань большого уважения: нам было попросту обидно пройти мимо столь важных мыслей, не обратив на них внимание читателя. Тем не менее, смеем надеяться, что полученный результат с лихвой извиняет проявленную нами некоторого рода вольность.

³³ *bona fides* (лат.) – добросовестность (термин римского права); *здесь* – со знанием дела.

³⁴ Здесь в шутливой форме автор выдвигает довольно серьёзную мысль. Избрать эту форму его, видимо, вынуждает отношение читателей и поклонников, благоговейно внимающих Шерлоку Холмсу и мало интересующихся тем, что говорит сам Конан-Дойль. Отожествив себя с Шерлоком Холмсом, он приписывает тому высказывание, не встречающееся в рассказах о его приключениях, и предлагает ссылаться на него как на самую важную мысль, когда-либо высказанную этой загадочной личностью. К сожалению, эта мысль Холмса-Дойля сегодня столь же чужда людям, как и в те дни, когда она была высказана.

³⁵ Вот здесь-то вполне уместно вспомнить марксистское мерило истинности, гласящее, что критерий истины есть практика.

³⁶ По одному узнай и всё остальное. (*лат.*)

³⁷ Фредерик Мейерс говорит: «Дьявол не есть существо, признаваемое наукой. Даже явление одержания ставит нас лицом к лицу всего лишь с духами, которые были когда-то людьми, подобными нам, и которые всё ещё движимы теми же мотивами, какие вдохновляют и нас».

³⁸ Мы бы вполне согласились с этой оценкой, если бы наш автор говорил здесь не о глине, а о навозе. Собственно, здесь вполне уместно употребить и более энергичное слово, ибо по части мерзостей и жестокостей, в ней собранных, эта книга может состязаться только с сочинениями маркиза де Сада и перечнем преступлений против человечности, совершённых германскими нацистами. Что же до глупостей, несоответствий и противоречий, вписанных в её строки, то здесь она и вовсе не знает равных.

И всё-таки главная гнусность этой книги не в том и не в этом, а в том, что она клеветает на Бога, наделив Его самыми скверными человеческими несовершенствами.

Не спорим, есть на этих страницах золотые истины, но оне несколько не выигрывают от того, что окружены ветхозаветными мерзостями. В высшей степени бесполезной работой было бы собрать эти истины в одной небольшой книге, а всё прочее предать забвению. Пусть эту отверженную часть читают только специалисты.

Лорд Болингброк говорит о «Библии»: «Было бы хулой Богу и обидой людям серьёзно смотреть на это жалкое сплетение небылиц, в которых каждое слово есть или верх смешного, или верх ужасного».

³⁹ Судя по всему, с освобождением России от большевицкого ига время это для человечества наступило.

⁴⁰ В Москве давно выходит газета, сама себя именующая «МК». Называться на большевицкий лад такой закистой аббревиатурой, право, стыдно, а расшифровывать её – сегодня к тому же и неприлично. Как бы то ни было, в одном из февральских за 92 год номеров этого МК была помещена пространная статья «Король Цепей, или Судный день для спиритов», посвящённая Гарри Гудини. Гудини действительно был «королём цепей», великим фокусником и иллюзионистом, но увы, весьма бледным мыслителем, что довольно

наглядно показано той неловкой травлей, каковую он учинил Спиритизму. Последнему, впрочем, всегда доставалось и всё достаётся от множества людей, не имеющих к нему никакого отношения и очень смутно себе представляющих, в чём он (Спиритизм), собственно, заключается. Тем не менее это собственное их невежество в отношении критикуемого и высмеиваемого ими предмета, по видимости, является для гонителей Спиритизма как раз аргументом в пользу правомерности их поведения. Такая вот логика. Непонятно, какие счёты с учением о бессмертии человеческой души имеет и автор названной статьи, некто Виктор Травин, и чем это учение лично ему мешает, что он так торопится вылить на него ведро помоев. «Разоблачительная» часть его статьи составлена сплошь из неточностей, недоговорок, умолчаний, за каждым словом проглядывает лукавство автора, коий, пользуясь неискущённостью нынешнего русскоязычного читателя в затронутой теме, злоупотребляет его (читателя) доверием и любознательностью. Чувствуя, что концы с концами у него всё-таки никак не сходятся, автор прячет их (причём буквально!) в воду, благо сюжет это позволяет.

Не останавливается автор статьи и перед тем, чтобы бросить тень на самого Конан-Дойля, полагая, повидимому, что тот теперь не сможет сказать ничего в свою защиту. И тем автор опять-таки злоупотребил доверием читателя, потому что как раз Конан-Дойль может за себя постоять в этом вопросе, как и во многих других.

Г-н Трав(л)ин в частности влагает в уста Гудини такую фразу: «Если бы можно было запереть меня вместе со всеми вашими спиритами и дамами, их поддерживающими, в железный сундук и сбросить его на дно морское, то из всех выбрался бы один я, и то – лишь благодаря моим фокусам». По словам автора, «духовный отец находчивого Шерлока Холмса на этот раз не нашёл, что сказать...»

Полноте, уважаемый! Можете быть уверены, такой остроумный человек, как сэр Артур Конан-Дойль, уж нашёл бы, что ответить на подобную глупость. И им немало было сказано и написано о такого рода критике, в частности, ведётся у него речь и о Гудини. Все эти вещи, разумеется, никогда не переводились на русский язык, да и на английском сегодня малодоступны – вот и ловят некоторые любители дешёвых сенсаций рыбку в мутной воде. Желая внести в дело ясность, мы пользуемся случаем предоставить слово самому Конан-Дойлю, опубликовав эту и другие его статьи, а уж читатель, думаем мы, сумеет из их контекста получить дополнительные сведения и сделать соответствующие выводы.

⁴¹ Гибель Гудини сегодня окутана таинственностью и овеяна легендами. И он вполне мог бы в конце концов погибнуть, не сумев выбраться из того самого «железного сундука», который был «сброшен на дно морское», хотя до этого и проделывал данный фокус вполне успешно. На этом печальном примере можно было бы видеть, что нельзя испытывать терпение судьбы бесконечно долго: кто намерен постоянно подвергать свою жизнь бессмысленной опасности, неизбежно оказывается обречён расстаться с нею.

⁴² *sub rosa* (лат.) – по секрету, тайно

⁴³ В письме говорится о случае, произошедшем с писательницей в 1926 году. Как писала сама Агата Кристи впоследствии, она пережила нервный срыв после изнурительной работы над романом «Убийство Роджера Акройда». В это же время умерла её мать, а муж – полковник Арчибальд Кристи – предложил ей разойтись с ним. Дело кончилось тем, что однажды зимним вечером писательница бросила свою машину где-то в поле, а сама скрылась в неизвестном направлении. Через несколько дней полиция – её привело сообщение анонимного информатора – нашла А.Кристи в небольшом отеле в Хэрроугейте, где она поселилась под чужим именем и выступала с маленьким оркестром, играя на фортепиано. Врачи расценили её состояние как приступ амнезии, то есть частичной потери памяти, а пресса обвинила её в саморекламе.

⁴⁴ «Эдвин Друд» – роман Чарльза Диккенса, который он не успел завершить при жизни, – обстоятельство, как рассказывают очевидцы, сильно омрачившее его последние минуты. Однако, ему удалось сделать это впоследствии, и этот роман стал самой настоящей литературной проблемой. Он был завершён, насколько мне известно, медиумом Джеймсом, человеком совершенно необразованным (чтобы не сказать неграмотным) – об этом факте рассказывает, например, Карл Дюпрель в своей книге «Открытие души потайными науками». (Между прочим, этот вариант концовки романа был переведён на русский язык Е.П.Блаватской.) Конан-Дойль же говорит здесь о своём общении с духом Диккенса на спиритическом сеансе, где они обсуждали эту проблему.

⁴⁵ Например у Лихтенберга читаем: «Die gefährlichsten Unwahrheiten sind Wahrheiten mäßig entstellt.» (Самая опасная ложь – это истина, слегка извращённая).

⁴⁶ Речь идёт соответственно об английском переводе «Библии». В русском синодальном переводе этот персонаж именуется не «ведьмой» и не «женщиной», но «волшебницей», хотя в действительности это обычный ясновидящий медиум или, говоря более современно, «экстрасенс» в роде знаменитой Ванги.

⁴⁷ Фрагменты из книги «Воспоминания и Приключения» (“Memories and Adventures” by A.Conan Doyle, Boston, 1924, Little, Brown &Co.

⁴⁸ Томас Генри Гексли (1825-1895) – английский учёный-биолог, последователь учения Дарвина.

⁴⁹ Джон Тиндалль (1820-1893) – выдающийся английский физик.

⁵⁰ Чарльз Дарвин (1809-1882) – великий английский естествоиспытатель, основоположник эволюционной биологии.

⁵¹ Герберт Спенсер (1820-1903) – английский учёный, философ, психолог и социолог, один из видных представителей позитивизма.

⁵² Джон Стюарт Милль (1806-1873) – английский философ, логик и экономист, ещё один видный представитель позитивизма.

⁵³ Речь идёт о евангельском эпизоде «изгнания бесов» из человека и вселении их в стадо свиней. («Еванг. от Матф.», VIII, ст.28-34; «Еванг. от Марка», V, ст.1-20; «Еванг. от Луки», VIII, ст.26-39.)

⁵⁴ Имеется в виду иудейско-христианский догмат о том, что мир был сотворён Богом за 6 дней.

⁵⁵ Нелишне, думается нам, процитировать здесь и мнение Зейме, который говорит о «Библии» следующее: «Покуда чистейшим источником божественной истины и святейшей нормы совершеннейшей морали будет признаваться книга, коей содержание темно и противоречиво, редко соотносится с реальной жизнью и полно нравственных несообразностей, книга, коей действительное и общеупотребительное благо покоится на непрочных основаниях

сурового теософического энтузиазма, до тех пор подлинная и благотворительная просвещённость не сможет укорениться ни в Церкви, ни в государстве. Я сам знаю сейчас многих, чей и без того невеликий ум оказался безвозвратно погублен пророческой теологией. Нет ничего легче и обыкновеннее того превращения, которое совершается с кардиналом и делает его атеистом. И как показывает история, одно с другим прекрасно уживается.»

⁵⁶ Профессор Вильям Ф.Баррэт (1844-1925) – английский учёный, один из пионеров английского спиритизма. Среди его трудов, посвящённых исследованию явлений спиритизма можно назвать такие работы, как «Загадочные явления человеческой психики» и «На пороге нового мира мысли». Ему принадлежит знаменитое изречение: «Скептицизм, в высокомерии своём отказывающийся признать существование множества фактов, происходящих у него перед глазами, никак не может претендовать на звание здорового. Такой скептицизм нуждается во вмешательстве врача.»

⁵⁷ См. Примечание №7 к «The New Revelation».

⁵⁸⁻⁵⁹ Имеются в виду сочинение Фрэнсиса Бэкона «Новый Органон» (1620г.), в котором автором была предложена новая классификация наук, и книга Чарльза Дарвина «Происхождение человека и половой отбор» (1871г.), где впервые высказана мысль о происхождении человека от обезьяноподобных предков.

⁶⁰ См. ниже «The Psychic Quest».

⁶¹ Здесь необходимо небольшое уточнение. В действительности понятия о карме и реинкарнации были присущи не Теософии, а Индуизму, Буддизму и Спиритизму, откуда они уже после, если быть хронологически точными, перебрались в Теософию. Далее, вызывает недоумение утверждение нашего уважаемого автора, будто «Спиритизм во всём, что касалось философии, представлялся в то время полнейшим хаосом.» Это ни в коей мере не так. Уже давным-давно были написаны книги Аллана Кардека, и благодаря только им одним Спиритизм стал стройной и продуманной, рациональной системой философии, с которой до сего дня не может сравниться никакая иная.

⁶² Д-р Ричард Ходсон (1855-1905) – американский учёный, один из крупнейших авторитетов американского спиритизма, член Общества психических явлений, выдающийся исследователь. Действуя по поручению научной комиссии, разоблачил «оккультные феномены и дары» мадам Блаватской в Адьяре. Ходсон нанёс сокрушительный удар по теософии; многие из теософических обществ распались.

⁶³ Блаватская Елена Петровна (1831-1891) – в девичестве фон Ган-Роттерштерн. Дочь полковника, родилась в городе Екатеринославе. Путешествовала по Европе, Америке, Индии и Египту. Во время кочевой жизни развила способности медиума. В 1875 году вместе с полковником Олкоттом основала в Нью-Йорке Теософическое общество (вскоре центр его переместился в Индию, в Адьяр, где существует и поныне). Основы своей теории она изложила в трудах: «Разоблачённая Изида» (1877г.), «Тайная доктрина» (1887г.) и «Ключ к теософии» (1889г.). Была уличена мистером Ходсоном в шарлатанстве.

⁶⁴ Анни Безант (1847-1933) – выдающаяся деятельница теософического движения, автор ряда работ, пропагандирующих идеи теософии, президент теософического общества (1907-33гг.).

⁶⁵ Имеется в виду «Современная жрица Изиды» – книга Всеволода Соловьёва, переиздана в 1994г. московским издательством «Республика».

⁶⁶ Совершенная правда. Г-жа Блаватская и её «махатмы», по сути дела, знать не знают философии Спиритизма в лице Аллана Кардека и его школы, а потому ни слова и не говорят о ней, чем и объясняется вся их критика в адрес Спиритизма, а также и критика со стороны их последователей (Рерихи и все иные). Теософы, рассуждая о Спиритизме, говорят всего лишь о спиритическом дилетантизме, который, спору нет, был действительно вредоносен. Но таковой дилетантизм имелся и имеется и среди теософов, причём последствия его также никоим образом нельзя приветствовать. Вообще же, вопрос о взаимоотношениях Спиритизма и Теософии весьма сложен и заслуживает совершенно особого рассмотрения.

⁶⁷ Эта резкая критика со стороны Конан-Дойля в адрес г-жи Блаватской объясняется тем, что он, в отличие от рьяных поборников

Е.П.Б. и мадам Рерих, был хорошо знаком с предметом и ничего не желал принимать на веру; как и всякий серьёзный исследователь, изучая оккультизм, он не поддавался массовому психозу и моде, а проявлял здоровый и умеренный скептицизм.

⁶⁸ Сэр Вильям Крукс (1832-1919) – выдающийся английский химик и физик, крупнейший исследователь и авторитет английского спиритизма, автор большого числа научных работ в различных областях знаний, в том числе и автор нескольких работ, посвящённых изучению спиритических явлений. Опыты, проводимые в его лаборатории, отличались особо изощрённой защитой от вероятностей подлога и обмана.

⁶⁹ Альфред Рассел Уоллес (1823-1913) – выдающийся английский натуралист, создавший одовременно с Дарвином теорию естественного отбора; один из основоположников биогеографии; воинствующий сторонник спиритизма, автор большого числа работ в различных областях знаний.

⁷⁰ Виктор Мари Гюго (1802-1885) – великий французский писатель, воинствующий сторонник спиритизма, обладал значительным медиумическим даром.

⁷¹ Фридрих фон Цолльнер (1834-1882) – профессор физики и астрономии в Лейпцигском университете.

⁷² Правда нисколько и не нуждается в правдоподобию. Правдоподобие как раз совершенно необходимо для лжи, а правда вполне может им пренебречь.

⁷³ Заключительная глава из книги «Memories and Adventures».

⁷⁴ Фердинан Фох (1851-1929) – маршал Франции, выдающийся полководец времён Первой Мировой войны.

⁷⁵ Напоминаем, что речь идёт не о нашей книге, а о «Воспоминаниях и приключениях».

⁷⁶ Ничего удивительного. Герцог Ларошфуко говорит: «Люди часто пользуются своим большим умом, чтобы делать ещё большие глупости.» И английская пословица гласит: «У кого много ума, тому

надо иметь его ещё больше, чтобы уметь управлять им.»

77-78-79-80-81 Эвзапия Паладино, миссис Корнер, мадам д'Эсперанс, Крэдок, мисс Безиннэ – знаменитые медиумы. Пространное описание их деятельности Конан-Дойль даёт в своей «Истории Спиритизма».

⁸² Об этом см. выше, стр. 176.

⁸³ Не правда ли, курьёзное словосочетание? Курсив наш.

⁸⁴ Имеется в виду чудо «сошествия Духа Святого» на апостолов в день Пятидесятницы.

⁸⁵ «Всё в единодушии.»

⁸⁶ Шарль Рише (1850-1935) – французский физиолог и иммунолог, лауреат Нобелевской премии (1913г.), автор книг по оккультизму.

⁸⁷ Барон Альберт фон Шренк-Нотцинг (1862-1929) – немецкий учёный. Проводил первые исследования эктоплазмы в 1908-13гг., работал вместе с мадам Биссон. Ими написана совместная книга – «Явления материализации» (“Phenomena of Materialisation”).

⁸⁸ Камиль Фламмарион (1842-1925) – крупнейший французский астроном, автор большого числа научно-популярных книг; исследователь спиритических явлений. В молодости обладал выдающимся медиумическим даром и был одним из медиумов в кружке Аллана Кардека.

⁸⁹ Давид Брюстер (1781-1868) – выдающийся английский физик, воинствующий материалист.

⁹⁰ Так оно и оказалось. Повидимому, здесь идёт речь о Второй Мировой войне. Сегодня мы можем сказать, что это прозорливое предупреждение людям в своё время пропало всуе. Что такое «великий октябрь», две мировые войны, геноцид в ленинско-сталинской России, гитлеровской Германии и других местах – как не разнузданная игра звериных инстинктов, не знающих удержу? И это – то человек, претендующий на цивилизованность и культуру?

The Posthumous Message to the World

Посмертное послание человечеству

Уведомляем читателей, что уже сделан перевод «Посмертного послания человечеству» на русский язык. Выпуск книги подготовлен издательством «Менеджер».

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Сэр Артур Конан-Дойль, создатель великого сыщика Шерлока Холмса и других незабываемых литературных героев, теперь уже достаточно хорошо известен как чрезвычайно энергичный сторонник и проповедник Спиритизма – многогранного и уникального Учения, которое, сочетая в себе приёмы и методы философии, науки, религии, морали и искусства, стремится донести до людей правду о природе человеческой души, о её бессмертии и, в частности, о жизни после смерти.

Конан-Дойль уже известен читателям (в том числе и русскоязычным) как автор «Нового Откровения», «Записок о Спиритизме», «Жизненноважного послания», «Страны туманов» и «Истории Спиритизма». Теперь читатель имеет наконец возможность познакомиться и с его «Посмертным посланием человечеству» – записями (до известной степени фрагментарными) бесед, проведённых им уже не как обитателем нашего материального мира, а в качестве развоплощённого духа.

Вскоре после его смерти в 1930г. произошли события, повествование о которых само по себе представляло бы захватывающий рассказ, и в итоге их на спиритических сеансах в кругу родных и друзей писателя проявился дух, сообщивший, что он – Конан-Дойль и что он вернулся, дабы довести до конца свои спиритические исследования, начатые при жизни. Предваряя последующие беседы, Белый Орёл,^{*} говоря о Конан-Дойле, заметил: «Это гораздо более великая душа, чем могут полагать даже те, кто его лучше всего знали. И ему предстоит исполнить ещё одну благородную миссию на земле.»

Первое потустороннее сообщение от Артура Конан-Дойля пришло 27 января 1931г. и положило начало длинной серии посланий, в которых он, как и при жизни, полностью подтверждает высокое назначение Спиритизма, раз и навсегда показывая, что смерть и сохранение души после смерти тела, равно как и

возможность при определённых обстоятельствах общения между мирами, являются нормальным и естественным процессом, составляющим такую же часть человеческой жизни, как и любовь между мужчиной и женщиной или рождение ребёнка.

В данной книге собрана примечательная серия спиритических посланий Конан-Дойля, полученных на тех сеансах при посредстве медиума Грейс Кук. Чтобы получить эти послания участники кружка в том или ином составе (разумеется, при неизменном присутствии г-жи Кук) собирались в течение 18 месяцев. Ими и их последователями была проделана огромная работа, чтобы подготовить книгу к публикации. Не обошлось и без досадных обстоятельств.

Дело в том, что Конан-Дойль говорил, естественно, по-английски. Но эта версия текста была утеряна, сохранился лишь перевод с неё на французский, выполненный французскими участниками сеансов и изданный ими в своём бюллетене, называвшемся «Bulletin des Polaires». Этот текст и является теперь оригиналом. С него был сделан обратный перевод на английский, который и издавался впоследствии. К сожалению, достать французский оригинал нам не удалось, и мы были вынуждены иметь дело с этим «рюкьюберзетцунгом». Естественно, что копия с копии, которая опять-таки является лишь копией безвозвратно утраченного оригинала, даёт лишь самое приблизительное представление об изначальном изображении. Неслучайно здесь приходит на ум любопытная параллель: та же участь, как известно, постигла в своё время «Евангелия», оригинальным текстом которых теперь (об этом говорит и само их название – *евангелие*) является греческий, хотя изначальный текст должен был быть на каком-то диалекте древнееврейского языка (причём даже неизвестно, на каком именно).

И всё же «Послание» Конан-Дойля рисует нам поразительную по своим масштабам живую картину посмертной жизни. Она включает полное описание уровней сознания, через которые эволюционирует человек и на которых, как утверждает и Артур Конан-Дойль (вслед за йогами и спиритами-карденистами), человек может находиться также при своей жизни в материальном мире. В итоге этих бесед возник по сути дела Новейший Завет, который дарит читателю огромный заряд надежды и веры в мир Духа, равно как и более глубокое знание своей природы и возможностей.

Английский оккультист Шоу-Десмонд писал: «*Приидет Царствие Твое* (так по-английски называлось «Посмертное послание человечеству», выпущенное отдельной книгой в начале 30-х годов) – наиболее точное и достоверное из всех когда-либо данных описаний потусторонней жизни.» Нисколько не умаляя достоинств и значения

этой книги, мы не можем однако согласиться со столь категоричной оценкой. Ведь ещё более поразительные и ничуть не менее достоверные описания потусторонней жизни были даны семьдесятю годами раньше в книгах Аллана Кардека, особенно в его «Рае и Аде в разъяснении Спиритизма». Более того, после смерти Кардек также сообщался со своими последователями, и некоторые из его посланий приводятся в книгах Леона Дени.

Чего мы вправе ожидать от умерших, когда они возвращаются, чтобы говорить с нами? Только ли новых воспоминаний и каких-то подробностей об их прошедшей жизни? Или, быть может, чего-то ещё? Если они действительно живы, мы можем с полным правом ожидать от них рассказа об их новых переживаниях и ощущениях. Если прежде ушедший обладал глубоким, бесстрашным умом и открытым, прямым характером, презирал всё, что считал мелким и лживым, то от такого человека вполне естественно ожидать точного рассказа о его новой жизни. Если при жизни он был также проповедником Спиритизма и, более того, в чём-то заблуждался относительно некоторых положений Учения, то разве не постарается он дать необходимые разъяснения людям, которые всё ещё разделяют его былые взгляды?

По прямоте характера, по манерам и учтивому обхождению, по знакомой энергичности и мужественности, по добросердечному энтузиазму и исходившей от говорившего симпатии люди, знавшие Конан-Дойля лично – его семья, мисс Эстель Сед, г-н У.Р.Брэдбрук (секретарь Мемориального Фонда имени Артура Конан-Дойля), – без труда узнали его в говорившем. Он оставался таким же, как и при жизни, хотя теперь его характер ещё более сублимировался благодаря приобретению новых познаний и опыта. С другой стороны, ни медиум, ни её муж или друзья никогда не встречались с Конан-Дойлем до его кончины. Личность, говорившая через медиума, обладала знанием и силой выражения, а манера речи и литературный стиль записей были совершенно чужды медиуму. Изменения, произошедшие в наружности медиума (как в лице, так в манерах и жестах) были замечены всеми присутствующими. Не могло быть речи и о телепатии: человек говорил, вдаваясь во всевозможные подробности, в конце выступления обращался к слушателям с вопросом, всё ли им понятно, и при надобности давал дальнейшие пояснения. Не возникло мысли и что это высшее «я» медиума или кого-то из присутствующих. В действительности ощущалось, что сила характера у говорившего духа значительно превышает нравственную силу любого из присутствовавших на сеансе живых людей, в нём чувствовалась не только целостность, но и огромная

широта человеческого понимания и симпатии. Это уже был не больной, усталый и старый Конан-Дойль, который умер в 1930г., но человек, чьи сила и жизненность наполняли каждого, кто был в комнате. Личность Конан-Дойля ощущалась собравшимися вполне явственно, также как и само его присутствие, его характер, духовная сила и чувство необыкновенного подъёма, исходившего от передаваемого им послания. Более того, встречи продолжались в течение двух лет, т.е. всего того времени, которое было необходимо для исполнения работы, задуманной духом сэра Конан-Дойля. Понятно, что это потребовало огромных усилий не только от него, но и от всех участников сеансов по обе стороны занавеса, разделяющего наши миры.

Таким образом, тогда вернулся сам Конан-Дойль, полный нового опыта, возвышенно настроенный и в полном смысле слова живой; хотя некоторые его взгляды изменились, но сам характер его, прекрасно знакомый всем, кто знал его прежде, не изменился, а лишь ещё более усовершенствовался. Для своей семьи он всё ещё оставался отцом, но он желал (и был исполнен в этом отношении большой решимости), чтобы его послание было обращено не к одним только родным и близким, а более широко – ко всему человечеству. Он считал, что характер его послания таков, что, недвусмысленно удостоверяя его, Конан-Дойля, авторство, одновременно служит гарантией того, что с участниками кружка говорит именно он.

Какие, в самом деле, ему ещё оставались средства, чтобы удостоверить свою личность? Не обращаться же было через своего медиума к суду присяжных или какой-то государственной комиссии? Он предпочёл гораздо более действенный путь: обратиться ко всему миру, или по крайней мере к тем, кто пожелают выслушать его свидетельство.

Своим посланием он как бы говорил нам:

«Это я, Конан-Дойль. Я не могу явиться вам в материальном теле, подобном вашему; но определёнными средствами я всё же могу представить доказательства своей аутентичности. Пусть моё доказательство будет записано и прочитано. Моё письменное показание даётся в присутствии тех, кто знали меня при жизни и кто удостоверили бы мою подлинность, будь я теперь в материальном теле. Доказательство, представляемое мною вам, убедительно и разумно. И если вы признаёте, что это я, тогда с беспристрастным и открытым умом выслушайте моё свидетельство:

Свидетельствую, что умершие живут и остаются самими

собой. Я, естественно, не мог дать подобное свидетельство, пока находился в материальном теле. Но теперь обстоятельства таковы, что позволяют мне сделать это. Может ли это быть делом рук фокусника или мошенника, судите сами. С другой стороны, если утверждаемое мною не соответствует представлениям людей о жизни после смерти (равно как и отсутствию у них таких представлений) или их религиозным предубеждениям и предрассудкам, вы всё равно не можете ожидать от меня, чтобы я предложил в качестве моей единственной улики свод фактов, которые уже были известны мне и другим при моей жизни. Нужно на самом деле что-то новое, если я и вправду приобрёл новые знания и опыт. И всё-таки любое новшество, которое я принесу, вы можете в принципе увидеть, если в должном ключе изучите Священные Писания мировых религий и сочинения мистиков. Или если откроете себя для осознания той истины, что Бог есть Бог Любви и что гармония, порядок и разумность присутствуют во всей Вселенной. И тогда вы увидите, что прогресс человека в его движении через смерть к последующей жизни основывается на природе самого человека и его заслугах; что его последующее состояние – логичный результат его собственного роста и развития, и оно позволяет дальнейшее совершенствование его внутренней жизни, и что, в конце концов, после смерти вы продолжаете жить в рациональной, а не сказочной вселенной, где факты всё ещё остаются фактами.»

Таким образом, читатель, перед Вами всё ещё жизненноважное послание, но теперь уже дающее необходимую завершённость всему Новому Откровению. Характерно, что здесь Конан-Дойль ещё более отдаляется от англо-американского спиритуализма, так как взгляды, развиваемые им здесь, целиком соответствуют учению Йоги и Карденизма. Так что те, кто с умом и внимательно прочитают «Послание» сэра Артура Конан-Дойля, не только освободятся от страха смерти, но и наконец действительно поймут смысл жизни, который откроет перед ними лишь перспектива бессмертия.

¹ Это послание было написано на фотографической пластине неподражаемым почерком сэра Артура и подписано им. Запись на фотопластине была получена медиумом г-ном Уильямом Хоупом из Кру, одним из наиболее достойных доверия медиумов, специализировавшихся на получении спиритических фотографий. Большую часть своих паранормальных снимков он получал, либо

просто держа в своих руках нераспечатанную пачку фотопластин, либо помещая меченую пластину в свой фотоаппарат; пластина предварительно вытаскивалась контролёром из новой пачки, помечалась им и обрабатывалась Хоупом в его присутствии, что, таким образом, исключало всякую возможность ошибки или подлога.

Фотография с данным посланием была опубликована в одном из номеров лондонской «Ньюс кроникл» за апрель 1931 года. Последующие послания записаны по ходу спиритических сеансов со слов медиума, погружённого в транс.

² Слова духа, в соответствии со спиритической традицией даём в кавычках.

Здесь и далее дух сэра Артура Конан-Дойля общается с участниками сеанса посредством трансовой инкорпорации. Перед этим через данного медиума говорил другой дух. После того, как сэр Артур занял его место, с медиумом произошла трудноуловимая, но вполне реальная перемена, обусловленная заменой личности. Когда медиум заговорила, её голос изменился, хотя и продолжал оставаться мужским. Черты лица также изменились; жестикуляция, перед тем энергичная и выразительная, стала скупой и сдержанной. Фразировка также изменилась, чувствовалось, что говорящий владеет искусством выбирать слова. Поначалу речь была прерывистой, рубленой, предложения короткими и неполными, словно говоривший находился в крайнем изумлении и растерянности; но постепенно речь стала приобретать плавность и размеренность, предложения удлинились, а в произношении появилась заднеязычная окраска, характерная для севера Англии.

³ Очевидно, в этой реплике содержится указание на присутствие большого числа благих и светлых духов по ту сторону завесы, пришедших помочь сэру Конан-Дойлю впервые вступить в общение с землянами в новом для него качестве – развоплощённого духа.

⁴ Леди Конан-Дойль

⁵ Быть может, это относится ко множеству сообщений, претендовавших на принадлежность сэру Конан-Дойлю, которые в ту пору почта чуть ли не каждый день доставляла г-же Конан-Дойль.

⁶ Здесь связь прервалась, и духу Конан-Дойля, несмотря на все

усилия, восстанговить её не удалось. И тогда снова проявился Уайт-Игл («Белый Орёл»), Высший Дух, содействовавший Конан-Дойлю, – и сказал следующее: (см. текст).

⁷ Прозвище, в согласии с индейскими обычаями данное Белым Орлом Конан-Дойлю.

⁸ Здесь дух Конан-Дойля даёт обещание представить более материальное доказательство своей идентичности – запечатлеть своё изображение на фотографической пластине, что и было им исполнено на следующий день при содействии двух медиумов – г-жи Миллер и г-жи Дин – и духа, которого он называет Мудрым Рыцарем. Фотография не раз публиковалась впоследствии. Об этой фотографии речь пойдёт ниже.

⁹ В этом месте трансовый медиум поворачивается к г-же Миллер – знаменитому медиуму для производства спиритических фотографий, также присутствовавшей на данном сеансе.

¹⁰ К этому времени спиритическая фотография сэра Артура, о которой говорилось выше, уже была участниками сеансов получена.

¹¹ Имеется в виду г-жа Грейс Кук – трансовый медиум, через посредство которой Конан-Дойль сейчас общается с присутствующими.

¹² 13 Нетрудно себе представить, сколь плачевна и незавидна на том свете участь тех, кто у нас сочиняют всякого рода триллеры и мерзости или снимают по ним фильмы; сколь незавидна участь тех, кто с вождением потребляют подобную продукцию, не говоря уже о деятельных носителях зла. Воистину: Мне отмщение, и Аз воздам!

¹³ Различные формы спиритических явлений, служащие для общения духов с людьми нашего мира. Подробности см. в «Книге Медиумов» Аллана Кардека (Москва, из-во «Ренессанс», 1993г.).

¹⁴ «Сублиминальный» ум Конан-Дойля соответствует «духовному» или «интуитивному» уму по терминологии Йога Рамачараки, тогда как под термином «подсознательный» ум здесь понимается просто хранилище мыслепродуктов памяти и интеллекта (не следует путать с «инстинктивным» умом по терминологии

Рамачараки).

¹⁵ Более подробные сведения о посмертном состоянии души вы можете почерпнуть в книге Аллана Кардека «Рай и Ад в разъяснении Спиритизма».

¹⁶ «Страна вечного лета» – один из тонких миров с чрезвычайно комфортными условиями жизни, куда после смерти попадают души землян, не имеющих нужды в искуплении.

¹⁷ Напоминаем, что речь идёт о кружке французских спиритов, участвовавших в проведении этих сеансов с Конан-Дойлем.

¹⁸ Слегка изменённые строки из гимна кардинала Ньюмена «Веди нас, Кроткий Свет».

¹⁹ В согласии со словами Свами Абхедананды, «время есть не что иное, как последовательность мыслей».

²⁰ Из Теннисона, «Высокий Пантеизм».

²¹ Или, как писал ещё Платон: «Зло неистребимо, ибо непременно всегда должно быть что-то противоположное добру».

²² В этом месте участники сеанса отмечают, что А.К.Д., неудовлетворённый словесным выражением своей мысли, попытался жестом показать идею о двух колёсах, в совершенном ритме вращающихся в противоположные относительно друг друга стороны. Этим ритмичным вращением, по его мысли, поддерживается нравственное равновесие во Вселенной подобно тому, как центробежная и центростремительная силы поддерживают планету в Солнечной системе.

²³ Как гласит йогическая мудрость: «Зло – это железная цепь, а добро – золотая. И то, и другое – цепи. Будь свободен и знай, что для тебя – нет цепей! Возложи на себя золотую цепь, чтобы сбросить железную, а потом сбрось обе!»

²⁴ Дело не во «множестве критических замечаний», а попросту в том, что словесное выражение решения данной проблемы никоим образом нельзя признать удачным. Впрочем, более подробно мы

прокомментируем это по окончании главы.

²⁵ Духи, которых древние греки называли «богами», а древние индийцы – «дэва», повелевают групповыми душами в царствах природы, самым ярким примером чего являются пчёлы и муравьи, но их власть распространяется не только на насекомых, но на все царства природы: на все растения и всех животных.

²⁶ Конечно, если говорить о добре и зле в повседневном человеческом понимании (по сути, это – детское понимание проблемы), когда добро одного оказывается злом для другого, то автор прав, говоря, что эти вещи равно исходят от Бога и служат для поддержания равновесия. Но только по существу дела здесь и нет речи о зле: в этой системе координат лекарство и лечение могут субъективно ощущаться больным как зло из-за их неприятности или болезненности, но объективно они являются добром и служат добру. Точно так же низвержение в океанскую пучину острова, подавляющее большинство населения которого составляют люди порочные и преступные, ими субъективно расценивается как зло, но объективно является добром, так как способствует нравственному очищению земного человечества. Число таких примеров и ситуаций может быть продолжено до бесконечности. Но если мы будем говорить о добре и зле нравственных, то здесь наш автор будет не прав. Нравственное зло и силы, преданные ему, не идут от Бога. Они являются лишь выражением нравственного несовершенства, недоразвитости, которые не исполняют в гармоничной Вселенной никакой функции. Именно так эта проблема решается в Спиритизме. Благо, Добро есть высший закон Вселенной и цель эволюции всех существ. Зло не имеет самостоятельной сущности, оно лишь эффект контраста, свойство оттенения; это состояние неполноценности, несовершенства, переходная ступень, на которую становятся все существа в своём восхождении к лучшему состоянию. Именно всё это и имеет в виду наш автор.

²⁷ При жизни Конан-Дойль по этому поводу писал: «Закрытый ум – это признак, по которому узнаётся душа, прикованная к земле, а это последнее обстоятельство неизбежно означает мрак и страдания в будущем. Закрытость ума, узость кругозора, фанатизм, материализм – словом, грехи не тела, но духа, гораздо более серьёзные пороки, ибо они действительно постоянны и обрекают человека на пребывание в самых низших слоях и самых низших мирах, пока он не извлечёт в них свой урок».

²⁸ Здесь же Конан-Дойль добавил, обращаясь к Айвэну Куку, английскому издателю и составителю этой книги: «А вы, брат мой, можете говорить и задавать вопросы по мере нашего продвижения.» Впоследствии, работая над книгой, Кук говорил, что «часто ощущал присутствие и влияние А.К.Д.».

²⁹ Или как это формулируется в Йоге: Aham-sah, so-aham («Я есмь Он, Он есть Я»).

³⁰ Имеется в виду христианское учение о том, что Христос умер за наши грехи.

³¹ По-гречески Христос значит «помазанник Божий».

³² Айвэн Кук впоследствии полностью применил на практике идеи о лечении, изложенные в настоящей главе, и развил их в своей книге «Лечение Духом» (“Healing by the Spirit” by Ivan Cooke, White Eagle Publishing Trust, 1955).

³³ Т.е. английское слово «болезнь» – *disease* – раскладывается как *dis-ease* – «неудобство», «затруднённое, стеснённое состояние», «недомогание».

³⁵ Необходимо отметить, что данное учение о поддержании здоровья и причинах возникновения болезней, излагаемое Конан-Дойлем, целиком и полностью соответствует учению йогов. См. «Хатха-Йогу» Йога Рамачараки и другие работы авторов данной школы.

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