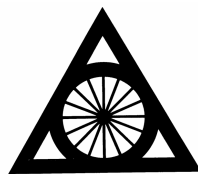


# **The Truth about the Spiritualism**

by

***SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE***

**edited by Yogi Ramanantata**



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**ДЕТЕКТИВНЫЙ РОМАН  
АВТОРА ШЕРЛОКА ХОЛМСА О СПИРИТИЗМЕ  
ДЛИНОЮ В ЖИЗНЬ**

«Человек, посвятивший себя этим  
исследованиям, занят в жизни делом, не  
заставляющим раскаиваться».

*Платон*

Наверное, нет человека, который бы не читал Конан-Дойля, но нет и человека, который бы прочитал всего Конан-Дойля. Это, при всём желании, невозможно даже в Англии.

Так уж повелось, что большинство российских читателей, заслышав имя Конан-Дойля, про себя радостно отметит: «А, это автор знаменитого Шерлока Холмса!». И только. Таким образом оказывается, что чуть ли не самая важная сторона духовной жизни писателя – его научные и философские искания, его бурная общественная деятельность – остаётся неведомой русскоязычному читателю. И действительно, произведения эти в русском переводе никогда не издавались, а в статье «брежневской» Б.С.Э., посвящённой Конан-Дойлю, об этом не сказано ни слова. И только в «сталинской» энциклопедии говорится, что он «в последние годы жизни проповедовал мистицизм и спиритизм». Причём сказано это таким тоном, который подразумевает, что на старости лет почтенный писатель «несколько умом тронулся». Оставим это смещение акцентов на совести авторов энциклопедии, ныне покойных, и поговорим об этой стороне жизни и творчества сэра Артура Конан-Дойля – человека, мыслителя, учёного и писателя.

Читатель, возможно, недоумевает: Конан-Дойль – тот самый Конан-Дойль, отец Шерлока Холмса, этого педантичного, скрупулёзно-точного детектива, который не верит ни во что, кроме анализа и доказательства, наблюдательности и дедукции, который соединяет материальные улики с логикой и здравым смыслом и преобразует в научное исследование романтическую погоню за ворами и убийцами? И это он-то вдруг поверил в спиритические сказки и принялся их популяризировать; возможно ли такое? Однако не будем спешить с выводами. Да, это тот самый Конан-Дойль, который, подобно своему герою, прежде чем притти к окончательному решению (т.е. примкнуть к спиритическому движению), накапливал и накапливал доказательства и улики в

течение терпеливого и кропотливого расследования, гораздо более длительного, чем самое сложное дело сыщика с Бейкер-стрит, поскольку расследование это продолжалось без малого пятьдесят лет.

Сэр Артур Конан-Дойль обладал блестящим, дедуктивным умом, острым, как бритва. Именно эти качества своего ума он использовал при критическом исследовании Спиритизма, а также, убедившись в его истинности и во всеуслышание заявив о своей горячей ему приверженности, – при дальнейшем его развитии. Сила анализа, тонкость и глубина его мыслей поражают современного исследователя своей актуальностью и всесторонним проникновением в предмет.

В целом же недоумение иных читателей вполне можно понять, ведь если они воспитывались и выросли в лоне материалистической и марксистской идеологии, то многие вещи должны были выпасть из круга их внимания или выглядеть суевериями. Поэтому вначале, по необходимости, немного коснёмся вопроса о том, что, собственно, такое «спиритизм».

«Спиритизмом» в XIX веке назвали религиозно-философско-научное движение, которое возникло в результате ознакомления людей с особым рода феноменами, так называемыми «спиритическими манифестациями». Надо однако признать, что такой взгляд весьма поверхностен и отдаёт марксистским подходом, который всякое возникшее в обществе явление пытается объяснить историческими причинами и вписать его во временной поток. По отношению к Спиритизму такой подход был бы совершенно неверен. Дело в том, что движение, возникшее в XIX веке, правильное было бы именовать не «спиритизмом», а «неоспиритизмом», «новейшим спиритизмом», ибо «спиритизм» не есть какое-то изобретение XIX века, с ним же и закончившееся. Спиритизм, строго говоря, существовал всегда по той простой причине, что природа человека всегда была тою же и, стало быть, связанные с нею явления и законы существовали всё то время, что существует человечество. Сведения об этих явлениях доносят дошедшие до нас древнейшие, древние и средневековые памятники письменности. Все эти явления естественным образом вписывались в жизнь людей и были одной из её естественных составляющих. Но понимание их природы было вотчиной магов, мистиков, оккультистов, жрецов и духовенства (вернее сказать, той части последнего, которая ещё владела эзотерическим знанием). Когда же наступил так называемый «век просвещения», то человечество просто почувствовало и осознало себя

в совершенно новом качестве. Но одной из особенностей этого ощущения и самосознания было нежелание со стороны передовых умов эпохи признать реальность, стоящую за мистикой и оккультизмом. Так им тогда было удобнее, и это ограничение, действительно, в какой-то мере было необходимо. Но тем не менее, из-за одного только игнорирования, явления, существующие объективно, исчезнуть не могли. И вот, когда они вновь заявили о себе, а случилось это в 1847 году, в Соединённых Штатах (феномен сестёр Фокс), тогда началось их рационалистическое осмысление и освоение, получившее название «спиритизма», от латинского слова *spiritus*, что значит *дух*.

В двадцатом веке к вещам этим изменился подход и сдвинулась точка отсчёта (как раз это обстоятельство вполне можно объяснить историко-социологическими причинами), однако явления изучаются – и это называется уже «парапсихологией». Сейчас, по завершении этого века механического суеверия, мы переживаем такую пору, когда всё становится на свои места и возможно будет также понята ошибочность парапсихологии и её методов, и тогда Спиритизм снова станет называться «спиритизмом» и наконец займёт в жизни человечества подобающее ему место. Такова история вопроса.

Сэр Артур Конан-Дойль впервые публично заявил о своей вере в общение с умершими в статье, которая появилась в журнале «Light» от 21 октября 1916 года. Это заявление для многих прозвучало тогда как гром среди ясного неба. Но первый спиритический сеанс, на котором он присутствовал – надо сказать, с сильно скептическим настроением ума – состоялся в конце 1886 года, когда Конан-Дойль был ещё только начинающим практиковать врачом. Интерес же его к психическим феноменам обозначился за несколько лет до этого первого опыта.

«Когда в 1882 году я закончил своё медицинское образование, то, как и большинство врачей, я оказался убеждённым материалистом во всём, что касалось нашей участи. И в то же время я никогда не переставал быть ревностным теистом, поскольку, на мой взгляд, никто ещё не дал ответа на вопрос, заданный звёздной ночью Наполеоном профессорам-атеистам во время его египетского похода: «Скажите-ка, господа, кто создал эти звёзды?»... Но когда я подходил к вопросу о наших хрупких личностях, переживающих смерть, мне казалось, что многие аналогии, наличествующие в природе, отвергали сохранение личности после смерти тела. Так, когда свеча

догорает, свет гаснет; когда провод обрывается, прекращается ток; и когда гибнет тело, сознание исчезает».\* Чтобы объяснить это противоречие между верой в Бога и отрицанием выживания души после смерти тела, он пользуется поэтическим образом: «Разбитая скрипка не издаст ни звука, хотя бы музыкант и остался прежним».\*\*

Однако природа его ума – научного по складу – была далека от того, чтобы замкнуть этот ум в пределах проторенных путей; она, напротив того, постоянно направляла и подстёгивала его любопытство и наблюдательность. И вместо того, чтобы отрицать пока для себя непонятное, он всегда стремится его понять и объяснить. Среди психических феноменов, которыми в ту пору увлекаются в Англии, он выделяет один, который считает нужным изучить лично. Речь идёт о телепатии. Можно вспомнить, что эта форма общения равным образом была близка и жильцу с Бейкер-стрит, 221Б, который как бы читал мысли своего собеседника с притворным равнодушием, только подчёркивавшим его мастерство.

«Помогать мне в моих исследованиях вызвался г-н Болл, весьма известный в городе архитектор. Множество раз, сидя позади него, я чертил графики, тогда как он, со своей стороны, чертил почти то же самое; так я констатировал, что, без сомнения, могу передавать свою мысль без посредства слов».\*\*\*

Это открытие несколько пошатнёт материалистические убеждения Конан-Дойля, и когда к концу 1886 года семья одного из пациентов предложит ему принять участие в «сеансе столоверчения», он это приглашение примет. И всё же против такого рода опытов он пока что останется весьма предубеждён. Тем более что проводились они в полумраке – условие, как понятно, способное облегчить медиумам любую мистификацию, а надо сказать, что некоторые из них к тому времени уже были пойманы на месте преступления с поличным.\*\*\*\* Феномены наблюдавшегося телекинеза повергают Конан-Дойля в смущение: он опасается, как бы его партнёры не приписали их его вмешательству, тогда как у него те же подозрения возникают в отношении их. По окончании этих первых попыток он

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\* “The New Revelation”, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1918.

\*\* “Memories and Adventures”, Boston, Little, Secker & Warburg, 1926.

\*\*\* Ibidem.

\*\*\*\* Однако в действительности, при манифестации спиритических явлений ни полумрак, ни время и место проведения сеанса, ни количество его участников или их позы не играют сколько-нибудь значительной роли. (И.Р.)

весьма близок к тому, чтобы думать, как то впоследствии напишет его друг д-р Эдмонд Локард: «Мир загробный, если рассматривать его только как пляску мебели, выглядит весьма похожим на детскую или на дом умалишённых».

Конан-Дойля, в частности, удручает незначительность, ничтожность получаемых сообщений, но он понимает, что это зачастую вызвано настроем ума участников сеанса. В этой связи он признаёт, что получил достойный урок в тот день, когда, спросив у стола, сколько у него с собой денег, в ответ услышал: «Мы приходим сюда, чтобы просвещать и возвышать души, а не за тем, чтоб решать детские загадки».

Он делится своими сомнениями с одним из знакомых, генералом Дрейсоном, страстно увлечённым астрономией и психическими исследованиями. Конан-Дойль восхищается им, но, уточняет он, не в связи с блестящими результатами, которых тот добился в ходе своих спиритических опытов, а в связи со смелостью его астрономических теорий, касающихся центра описываемого Землёю круга. Авторитет учёного – это единственный авторитет, который признаётся молодым врачом. Дрейсон, который в ту пору при содействии сильного медиума\* проводил удивительные опыты, объясняет бедность результатов, полученных Конан-Дойлем, неэффективностью его метода. «Заниматься психизмом без медиума – всё равно что заниматься астрономией без телескопа», – сурово изрекает он.

Заручившись услугами профессионального медиума Хорстеда, молодой врач и начинающий писатель организует у себя на дому, с 24 января по конец июня 1887 года, 6 сеансов. Здесь ему снова ассистирует архитектор Болл. На одном из них Конан-Дойль получает интересное сообщение, которое затем в избытке энтузиазма публикует в журнале «Лайт». Эта публикация от 2 июля 1887 года позволяет датировать первое публичное выражение интереса создателя Шерлока Холмса к Спиритизму. Сообщение, им полученное, давало ему совет: «Не читайте книгу Лея Ханта» – как раз в то самое время, когда он спрашивал себя, стоит ли ему браться за одну из работ этого автора, посвящённую комическому театру периода Реставрации.

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\* Читателю не следует пугаться слова «медиум». В переводе на *современный язык* это значит «экстрасенс». Так, например, пресловутая Ванга – типичный медиум. (И.Р.)

Однако, сбивый с толку хаотическим положением дел в Спиритизме и кажущейся неопределённостью его доктрины, поскольку в ту пору ему ещё не были известны работы Аллана Кардека и Леона Дени, Конан-Дойль на несколько лет предпочтёт ему структурно хорошо организованную систему теософии. Её основательница, русский медиум Е.П.Блаватская, учредила символический Ватикан теософии в Индии, в Адьяре. Но опровержения, вскоре последовавшие в адрес госпожи Блаватской даже из стана её друзей, побуждают Конан-Дойля искать доказательств, которые он надеялся у неё найти, в другом месте.

Всегда ведомый духом научности и критичности, широко открытым сомнению, но мало склонным преобразоваться в уверенность без наличия на то осязаемых и весомых доказательств, Конан-Дойль вступает в 1891 году в Общество Психических Исследований, организацию, возможно более досконально изучающую все «случаи, касающиеся проявления потусторонних сил». Анализ материалов, собранных О.П.И., открывает перед ним значительное количество случаев, не имеющих объяснения, и лишь довольно ничтожное число тех, которые оказались мистификацией.\* Получив полномочия от О.П.И., он выезжает изучать события на место происшествий и в компании с двумя другими наблюдателями проводит ночь в «непокойном доме», чтобы изучить очередное проявление полтергейста. Некоторое время спустя в подвале того дома будет найден человеческий скелет.

В 1893 году, в качестве руководителя Аппер-Норвудского литературного Общества, он приглашает Вильяма Баррэта, «пионера английского спиритизма», выступить с лекцией о психических явлениях. Хотя в данном случае Конан-Дойль и исполняет приятную и пассивную роль председателя собрания, тем не менее эта встреча оказывается прелюдией бесчисленных конференций по Спиритизму, в которых он позднее выступит в куда более активной роли лектора и рассказчика.

С терпением и настойчивостью Конан-Дойль продолжает собирать доказательства. Одно из наиболее интересных свидетельств было доставлено ему в ходе сеанса в 1896 году духом путешественника, встреченного им когда-то в Каире за несколько

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\* Что касается мистификаций и обманов, то любой род человеческой деятельности платит свою долю дани людской непорядочности. Разве не профанировались людьми, корысти или тщеславия ради, самые святыя вещи? И всё это с самых незапамятных времён. То же самое и здесь. (И.Р.)



недель до смерти этого человека. Подробности их последнего разговора, сообщённые в ходе этого сеанса, как подчёркивает Конан-Дойль, не могли быть известны другим его участникам. В том же году дух одной женщины связным и точным образом описывает ему жизнь в потустороннем мире. Накопившиеся свидетельства, а также работы Мейерса и Крукса, подтверждающие реальность определённых психических явлений, укрепляют его симпатии, но всё ещё не могут создать в нём убеждённости, и ещё менее – обратить его в новую веру.

Конан-Дойль полагает, что убедить и обратить его сможет какое-либо решительное событие интимного характера. Этого события он долго ждал. И вот, наконец, оно происходит где-то в период между январём 1916 года и публикацией его статьи в журнале «Лайт» от 21 октября того же года, в которой изложено его спиритическое кредо. К этой дате бесследно исчезла Лили Лодер-Саймондс, близкая подруга его жены, с которой он сотрудничал в опытах по криптестезии и автоматическому письму. Конан-Дойль остаётся весьма сдержан и немногословен по поводу природы этого события, послужившего ему толчком и ставшего причиной его уверенности в реальности потустороннего.

Спиритизм, если верить его хулителям, находит себе сторонников лишь среди людей, жестоко истерзанных разрывом сердечной привязанности и стремящихся найти компенсацию своей слабости в неясном мистицизме. Иначе говоря, он надежда тех, у кого более нет надежды. Есть и другой упрёк, быть может, ещё более серьёзный: Спиритизм, якобы, ущемляет, обедняет личность своих сторонников, которые, утратив всякую предприимчивость и инициативность, вверяют руководство своей жизнью тем, кто уже прожили собственную.

Так вот, едва ли можно найти какого иного человека, который был бы более ярким и впечатляющим опровержением этим расхожим обвинениям, нежели сэр Артур Конан-Дойль. Человек счастливый в личной жизни, имевший множество друзей, достигший благодаря своему писательскому таланту мировой известности, он ни в коей мере не искал в Спиритизме компенсации внутренним драмам. И та рациональность и определённость, с которыми он вступил в ряды его сторонников, никак не были у него продиктованы внезапным разрывом сердечной привязанности, но, напротив, зрели в нём в течение тридцати лет. Тем самым мы желаем сказать всем доморощенным и титулованно-дипломированным скептикам: если уж

столь логичный, взыскательный и методичный ум в результате своих многолетних исследований и размышлений признал реальность спиритических фактов и стал сторонником философии Спиритизма, то, значит, всё это не может быть «чудовищным суеверием» и бабушкиными сказками, но, напротив того, является выражением действительной природы вещей.

Спиритизм, по всей видимости, удесятерил, а не ослабил предприимчивость и инициативность этого великана, за благодушным обликом которого скрывалась кипучая энергия, неустанно ищущая себе выражения и предпочитающая дела трудные или безнадёжные. Если большинство знаменитостей, ушедших на покой, купаются в лучах славы и только и помышляют о том, как бы не позволить ей угаснуть, ревностно оберегая её от всего, что могло бы ей повредить, то Конан-Дойль в эту самую пору дополняет свой труд писателя апостольской деятельностью, которой он посвящает все минуты досуга, весь свой престиж, значительную долю состояния – порядка 750.000 фунтов стерлингов – и многие свои сочинения. Беря на себя ответственность за эти действия, вплоть до самых крайних последствий их, он не может избежать и того, что связано с примыканием к спиритическому движению. Обращённый в новую веру, он не может довольствоваться ролью простого сторонника, ему необходимо броситься ещё и на передний край борьбы, которую вело движение, подвергавшееся после мировой войны всё более резким нападкам. Сделавшись проповедником, он объезжает мир с апостольской миссией, содействуя делу как устным словом, так и пером.

В это время претерпевает серьёзные изменения и его художественное творчество. Отныне он не стремится пользоваться фантастическим, чтобы удивить, но лишь за тем, чтобы созидать. Он более не рассматривает фантастическое как повод, дабы рассказать чудесные сказки и блеснуть игрой воображения, но, напротив, силится включить сверхъестественное в реальность в том виде, в каком оно открывается ему *новой верой*.<sup>\*</sup> Постепенно он лишает сверхъестественное драматических и легкомысленных аксессуаров, чтобы зримее проступило его религиозное и нравственное содержание. Этот долгий путь от тревоги к миру, от сказки к аргументированной вере естественным образом выводит его к

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<sup>\*</sup> Термин «вера» мы используем здесь лишь по аналогии. На самом деле речь не идёт о *вере*, но о *знании*. (И.Р.)

«Стране туманов»<sup>\*\*</sup> – последней уступке издателям, которые умоляют его продолжить приключения старых героев. Напрасные мольбы. Слишком поздно. «Мне бы очень хотелось сделать то, о чём Вы просите, но, как Вам известно, моя жизнь отныне посвящена одной-единственной цели, и в настоящее время у меня не предвидится никаких литературных замыслов, которые могли бы представлять для вас малейший интерес. Я могу писать только то, что выходит у меня из-под пера». Да, другое время, другие нужды. Единственный мир, который он теперь желает описывать, – это мир иной. Единственные голоса, которые он слушает, – это голоса умерших, ибо они помогают ему слышать *музыку разбитой скрипки*.

В июне 1917 года, менее чем через десять месяцев после заявления в «Лайт», появляется первая его книга, посвящённая данной теме, – «Новое Откровение», заглавие которой, не любя (как и все англичане) термина «спиритизм», Конан-Дойль заимствует у почитаемого им французского автора, одного из апостолов учения – Леона Дени. В «Христианстве и Спиритизме» (1898г.) Дени анализирует проблему в четырёх ракурсах: «Неясности и искажения в Евангелии», «Эзотерическое учение Христианства», «Общение с духами умерших» и «Новое Откровение». Конан-Дойль, прекрасно сознавая важность темы, остановил свой выбор на последнем, объясняя в своей книге, как это откровение к нему пришло и как он его принял. Он излагает перед читателем свои сомнения и колебания, как бы приглашая его, в свою очередь, преодолеть их, как это сделал он сам.

«Жизненное Послание», появившееся в августе 1919 года, пронизано тоном убеждённости и намеренно полемично. Оно раскрывает достаточно широкое видение спиритического учения, которое противопоставляется летаргии общественного сознания, позволившей человечеству докатиться до жестокости, бреда и безразличия, в каковые мир был ввергнут катаклизмом 1914-18гг., оказавшимся лишь логическим её итогом. Конан-Дойль обличает коррупцию и грубость русской аристократии накануне большевицкой революции, непристойность и эгоизм британского империализма, заносчивость и хищность германской империи и колониализм в лице Леопольда Бельгийского, «этого демона во плоти, скаредность и алчность которого плодили убийства и пытки на значительной части

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<sup>\*\*</sup> «The Land of Mist» – роман, завершающий серию приключений профессора Челленджера. Другой вариант для перевода его названия – «Земля Туманная». Пропагандистский роман о Спиритизме. (И.Р.)

африканского материка и который, тем не менее, был принят при всех дворах мира и погребён после панегирика, произнесённого кардиналом католической церкви – церкви, ни разу не возвысившей голоса, чтобы осудить его дьявольские деяния».\* И прежде чем говорить о духовном возрождении, совершаемом Спиритизмом, Конан-Дойль восклицает: «Взгляните на всё это и скажите: представлялось ли когда человечество в более неприглядном виде?»\*

Между двумя этими произведениями, всё возрастающее воодушевление в которых позволяет судить о степени самоотдачи автора делу Спиритизма, он проводит ряд конференций в высшей степени успешных, средства от которых поступают в спиритические общества. Первая конференция состоялась 7 октября 1917 года. 25 числа того же месяца в Лондоне прошла вторая. Летом 1918 года Конан-Дойль выступает на юге Англии, затем в центральной Англии, осенью в Ноттингэме и Лидсе. С осени 1918 по весну 1919 он проводит не менее 60 встреч-бесед в различных городах Объединённого Королевства. Начиная с 1920 года Конан-Дойль старается вести проповедническую деятельность и в других странах. Объехав Австралию с сентября 1920 по февраль 1921 года, он предпринимает поездку по С.Ш.А. – с апреля по июль 1922 года. Для него эта поездка является своего рода паломничеством к первоисточкам. Приезд на родину неоспиритизма наводит его на мысль воздвигнуть монумент в память сестёр Фокс. Он высказывается на эту тему в статье, появившейся в «Прогрессив синкер» от 24 мая 1922 года. Эта идея была тут же с энтузиазмом воспринята. В итоге же было построено здание спиритической церкви, открытое в 1928 году. В её строительстве Конан-Дойль оказывает внушительную финансовую помощь.

В 1923 году он возвращается в С.Ш.А. для чтения нового ряда лекций и посещает также Канаду. Когда к концу 1923 года он на несколько лет прерывает свои поездки за границу, то оказывается, что к этому времени им с проповедью спиритического учения проезжено порядка 80.000 км, а это то же самое, что дважды объехать земной экватор. Но и отложив на некоторое время поездки за границу, Конан-Дойль не перестаёт служить делу духовного возрождения человечества, только теперь он делает это не столько голосом, сколько пером.

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\* «Le Message vital», Paris, Jean Meyer edit., 1925. (И.Р.)

\* Ibidem.

Восхищённый новой и смелой интерпретацией исторической легенды, которую Леон Дени предлагает в своей «Правде о Жанне д'Арк», он решает сделать перевод этой замечательной книги на английский. Его перевод появляется в 1924 году под заглавием «The Mystery of Joan of Arc» и сопровождается предисловием, в котором он воздаёт должное автору и святой врагине англичан в выражениях, благородство коих далеко выходит за рамки традиционной британской *fair play*. «Я настолько люблю эту книгу и ей восхищаюсь, что мне бы очень хотелось следовать её тексту как можно ближе. Изложение темы в ней настолько полно и совершенно, что мне ничего не остаётся добавить от себя, кроме разве только того, что, на мой взгляд, – и я совершенно в этом убеждён, – непосредственно после Христа, Жанна д'Арк является на этой земле наиболее высоким духовным существом, о котором у нас имеются достоверные сведения. Пред ней чувствуешь потребность преклонить колена».

В 1925 году Конан-Дойль открывает на Виктория-стрит спиритическую библиотеку, предназначенную также для издания его собственных работ в этой области. Он сам руководит библиотекой вместе с дочерью Мэри, и друзья нередко застают его там за переносом кипы книг или изготовлением пакетов для их пересылки.

Два тома его монументальной «Истории Спиритизма» появляются в 1926 и 1927 годах между двумя Международными спиритическими Конгрессами, на которых представители 27 стран всякий раз избирают его председателем. «История Спиритизма» – изумительная книга, свежесть её никак не померкла за годы, прошедшие со времени её написания. По свидетельству одного английского критика, «немногие книги, посвящённые исследованию оккультизма, могут выдержать сравнение с захватывающим повествованием, начертанным вдохновенным пером Конан-Дойля».

Во время Парижского Конгресса (6-13 сентября 1925 года) Конан-Дойль, по словам очевидца, был неразлучен с Леоном Дени, французским патриархом Спиритизма, для которого это публичное появление оказалось уже последним. «Добрый великан склонялся к почти слепому старцу, с трогательной заботливостью вёл его по лабиринту коридоров Зала учёных обществ, помогая занять место в президиуме. Добрейший учитель наш был этим сильно тронут: «Конан-Дойль, каков он из себя? Я плохо его вижу...» – «О, он очень высокий, – отвечали мы, – у него прекрасная большая голова, серые

глаза и усы à la gauloise. Это не англосакс. Взять хотя бы его имя. Конан – «вождь», ведь это бретонское имя!»\*

И Конан-Дойль был совершенно очарован превосходным приёмом, который Париж оказывал знаменитому писателю, равно как и блестящим успехом, какой он имел у парижан. Нет, то был не приём, не успех, – это был триумф. В тот день, когда создатель Шерлока Холмса и доктора Ватсона попросил слова, зал, в котором шло заседание, хотя организаторы и постарались выбрать достаточно просторное помещение, не смог вместить всех желающих, и тысячи людей стояли в дверях. Оратор энергично обрисовал научные основы спиритической веры, каковая, на его взгляд, является верой, подтверждённой ещё и фактами. «Есть нечто более сильное, чем просто вера, – это знание... Так вот, я утверждаю эти вещи, потому что у меня есть знание о них. *Я не верю, я знаю*».\*

Тремя годами позже, 13 сентября 1928 года, произнося заключительную речь на Лондонском конгрессе, Конан-Дойль выказывает ту же твёрдость, но теперь она направлена не против скептиков, но против политических деятелей и властей, преследующих Спиритизм. «От своего имени я написал главам некоторых политических групп в Англии и сказал им, что если всё это не прекратится к полному нашему удовлетворению, то я сделаю и невозможное для того, чтобы добиться восстановления справедливости. Если то будет нужно, я публично предстану перед какой угодно партией, которая вздумает творить над нами суд. (Аплодисменты). У нас пятьсот церквей в Англии, из которых четыреста объединены внутри Лондонского спиритического Альянса, а остальные сто – независимы. Пятьсот церквей! мы сможем преобразовать каждую из них в политический центр, мы прекрасным образом организованы, и я не знаю никакой другой группы, которая была бы способна объявить забастовку лучше, чем то можем сделать мы. (Аплодисменты). Я уверяю вас, что если только вы пожелаете это осуществить, вы добьётесь отмены преследующего нас законодательства. (Смех и аплодисменты)».\*\*

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\* Gaston Luce, «Léon Denis, l'apôtre du Spiritisme», Paris, Jean Meyer édit., 1928. (И.П.)

\* «Compte rendu du Congrès spirite international de 1925», Paris, Jean Meyer édit., 1928.

\*\* «Compte rendu du Congrès spirite international de 1928», Paris, Jean Meyer édit., 1929.

Конечно же, никто не стоял в дверях зала, как то было в Париже – ведь никто не пророк в своём отечестве, – но вечернюю конференцию в рамках Лондонского Конгресса Конан-Дойль посвящает психофотографии. И в конце концов конференция буквально завораживает его слушателей. Среди супранормальных снимков, которые проецирует сэр Артур, некоторые сделаны им самим, а другие присланы его корреспондентами и отобраны им после удостоверения в их подлинности. По большей части это были обычные фотоснимки эктоплазмы. Самым удивительным из всех показанных им снимков был тот, автором которого являлся фотограф из «Морнинг пост», бывший, кстати сказать, скептиком. Свой снимок он сделал по ходу сеанса у лондонского медиума миссис Дин в присутствии множества свидетелей, часть которых составляли журналисты; вслед за этим он сам же этот негатив проявил. «На данном снимке, – поясняет докладчик, – видно характерное лицо старика». Нам интересно было узнать, что единственный человек, которому можно было приписать это лицо, – это старый профессор, д-р Белл, тот самый, с которого Конан-Дойлем были срисованы некоторые черты его знаменитого детективного персонажа.\* Образ на экране являл характерные черты Джо Белла, всегда походившего на вождя краснокожих, но теперь он выглядел так, как должен был бы смотреться в старости.\*\*

На Конгрессе Конан-Дойль, как почётный Председатель, произнёс речь в память о Леоне Дени, где прославил его кельтскую духовность. «Это был, по моему мнению, отважный воин, настоящий борец. При взгляде на его прекрасную голову, я тут же представлял её себе увенчанной двурогим воинским шлемом. Когда-то прежде он сражался на поле брани, принося свою жизнь в жертву великому и чистому идеалу. В наши же дни он бился силою просвещения за самое благородное дело, какое только есть на земле. Работа над переводом его книги о великой французской героине, медиуме и мученице Жанне д'Арк была для меня почётной миссией. Я полагаю, что его понимание Жанны д'Арк более здраво, наконец, более истинно, чем те, что даны Бернардом Шоу или Анатолем Франсом»\*\*\*

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\* Речь, разумеется, идёт о Шерлоке Холмсе. (И.Р.)

\*\* «Compte rendu du Congrès spirite international de 1928», Paris, Jean Meyer édit., 1929.

\*\*\* Ibidem.

Переводчик «Правды о Жанне д'Арк», одарённый мягким юмором в той же мере, что и великодушием, проявил в ту пору незаурядную интуицию, питая мало симпатии к знаменитому английскому драматургу из-за ироничного и резкого скептицизма последнего. Так, некоторое время спустя, Шоу хвалился тем, что ему удалось на одном из спиритических сеансов устроить мистификацию, которая оказалась неразоблачённой. Тем самым он подрывал доверие и ко всем остальным зарегистрированным феноменам. Конан-Дойль обрушил на него своё негодование в предпоследнем своём произведении, «Наша африканская зима», появившемся в 1930 году. «Не приходится сомневаться, что я, в присутствии свидетелей, видел свою мать также и после её кончины. Но, похоже, люди уже не верят моему слову, поскольку Бернард Шоу обманул своих друзей. Можно ли придумать софизм более бессовестный?» Его реплика в адрес Шоу вписывается в ряд бесчисленных полемик, в которых Конан-Дойлю приходилось принимать участие: его миссионерская деятельность не всегда вызывала любопытство, соединённое с симпатией. Так с сентября 1921 по март 1922гг. в колонках «Санди экспресс» он ведёт долгую и жёсткую полемику с Джоном Дугласом по поводу статьи последнего, озаглавленной «А не сошёл ли Конан-Дойль с ума?».

Если тон сэра Артура остаётся учтивым в споре с его другом Джеромом К.Джеромом в июле 1921 года в «Каммен сенс» или с Бертрамом Расселом в «Санди экспресс», то он делается резким и почти саркастическим, когда противником Конан-Дойля оказывается с 1928 по 1930гг. Г.Дж.Уэллс. Автор «Человека-невидимки» и «Войны миров» в своём новом романе, «Самовластье мистера Пархема», вообразил, будто эктоплазмическое порождение одного персонажа, возникшее в ходе спиритического сеанса, приходит к власти в Великобритании, для того чтобы ввергнуть мир в войну. Статья «Чем раздражён Г.Дж.Уэллс?» говорит о всё возрастающем отчаянии Конан-Дойля перед непрекращающимися нападками и атаками, объектом которых служит Спиритизм. «Одно из двух: либо наблюдатели все суть лжецы и глупцы, либо же их наблюдения истинны. Если я, без тени сомнения, утверждаю, что в присутствии свидетелей одновременно видел свою мать и племянника, когда их обоих уже не было в живых, то вполне ясно, что я принадлежу или к той, или к другой из этих двух категорий. Заботу решать это я



предоставляю тем, кто меня знают и могут судить обо всём сделанном мною».\*

Как Парижский Конгресс стал последним, где появился Леон Дени, так и Лондонский Конгресс оказался последним, на котором присутствовал сэр Артур Конан-Дойль. Его «земная миссия», если говорить спиритическим языком, завершилась 7 июля 1930 года, но он исполнил её до конца. Едва закончился Лондонский Конгресс, как сэр Артур вновь взял в руки свой страннический посох: в 1928 году он проповедует в Южной Африке, Родезии и Кении, в 1929 объезжает Голландию, Бельгию, Данию, Норвегию и Швецию. Незадолго перед кончиной он намеревался отправиться в Рим, Афины и Константинополь, дабы принести в три великих духовных столицы мира свет Нового Откровения.

Спиритическое кредо сэра Артура Конан-Дойля покоилось на трёх главных постулатах.

Прежде всего, на необходимости этого Нового Откровения в связи с крушением религий и их беспомощностью перед бесчинствами материализма. Конан-Дойль обвиняет религии, и в особенности христианство, в том, что оне обращаются к изношенным и оскорбительным символам, не способным удовлетворить своих приверженцев. «Оне потеряли всякое соприкосновение с живой духовной реальностью и довольствуются тем, что увязывают всё с далёкой античностью, воздавая сугубо формальную дань уважения отмирающей системе, связанной с теологией настолько невероятной, что порядочный человек не может помышлять о ней без содрогания».\*

Во-вторых, спиритическое Откровение даёт ясный и простой ответ на вопросы, связанные с выживанием души после смерти тела и человеческим бессмертием. Оно принимает в расчёт необходимость искупления, ибо указывает, что духам дозволено очищаться, переходя из низших миров в миры высшие, но при этом оно исключает понятие «ада», «уже давно исчезнувшее из мыслей всякого разумного человека. Это одиозное представление, столь клеветническое на Создателя, возникло из-за сгущения красок цветистой восточной фразеологии и могло быть уместно только в первобытную эпоху, когда люди пугались огня так же, как дикие звери пугаются

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\* "Sunday Express", January, 8, 1928.

\* "History of the Spiritualism", (2 vols.), Cassell, 1926, 1927.

путешественника».<sup>\*\*</sup> В спиритическом видении, потусторонний мир не отдаёт никакого предпочтения одной религии перед другой. Умершие, какова бы ни была их прежняя вера, проходят через те же испытания и оказываются в том же самом положении, которое они принимают с чувством братской солидарности. Таким образом, Спиритизм, а именно этим он и привлёк к себе столь великодушного человека, каким был Конан-Дойль, осуществляет единство веры, которого никогда не удавалось добиться в мире материальном.

Наконец, согласно последнему постулату, Спиритизм – это единственная вера, примиряющая религию и науку. Через общение с умершими Спиритизм доказал выживание души после смерти тела и тем рассеял сумерки и мрак потустороннего мира. Откровения Спиритизма не приписываются древним пророкам или каким-либо очевидцам, жившим в глубокой древности и само существование которых представляется мифом и может быть законно взято под сомнение. Нет, его откровения даны нам самими нашими современниками. Его откровения были удостоверены не мистиками или поэтами, но учёными, чей авторитет не подлежит обсуждению. Единственная возможность стать убеждённым спиритом – это самому получить доказательства реальности тех явлений, на которых Спиритизм основывается и которые он утверждает. И если именно на собирание этих доказательств столь требовательный, строгий и педантичный ум, как сэр Артур Конан-Дойль, потратил более сорока лет своей жизни, то после этого всякому серьёзному человеку сомневаться в реальности этих явлений недозволительно. Во всяком случае, он может позволить себе это лишь в той же мере, в какой будет сомневаться в твёрдо установленных законах и истинах математики, физики, химии и других наук. «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».\*

Удостоверившись в реальности духовных истин, Конан-Дойль перестал интересоваться научной стороной психических явлений, для того чтобы целиком сосредоточиться на их религиозной и моральной стороне. Он говорит, что «время научных исследований прошло и наступила пора религиозного строительства». По его глубокому убеждению, психические явления были важны лишь постольку, поскольку они служили основанием «великому множеству

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<sup>\*\*</sup> “The New Revelation”.

\* “The New Revelation”.

знаний, призванных коренным образом изменить наши старые религиозные представления. При верном понимании и усвоении эти знания должны превратить религию в явление в высшей степени действенное, которое, однако, более не будет иметь предметом своим веру, но действительный опыт и истину».<sup>\*\*</sup>

Говоря о духовной эволюции и прогрессе, которые возможны для человечества лишь благодаря закону перевоплощения, Конан-Дойль предвещает, что «если предки наши смогли найти прибежище в теле обезьяны, то наши потомки смогут облачиться в тело ангелов».<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

Вскоре после смерти писателя 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.

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 итоге этих встреч в 1933г. была издана книга “Thy Kingdom Come”, или в русском издании – «Посмертное послание человечеству». Это записи (до известной степени фрагментарными) бесед, проведённых им уже не как обитателем нашего материального мира, а в качестве развоплощённого духа. Предваряя последующие беседы, Белый Орёл,<sup>\*</sup> 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».

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> “History of the Spiritualism”.

<sup>\*</sup> Высший Дух, направляющий деятельность общества английских спиритов, известного как *White Eagle Lodge*. Адрес английской штаб-квартиры общества: New Lands, Brewells Lane, Liss, Hampshire, England, GU33 7HY. Тел.: 01730 893300. (И.Р.)

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») – 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 семьюдесятью 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 Стед, 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, чья 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.

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!».

Свой рассказ о спиритуалистических изысканиях сэра Артура Конан-Дойля мы не могли бы, на наш взгляд, завершить лучше, нежели приведя слова итальянского писателя Курцио Малапарте:

«Chi ritorna vivo da quello straordinario viaggio nell'al di là, non può più guardare il mondo con gli occhi di prima. Non vede più le cose nei loro mutevoli aspetti, ma nella loro segreta natura. Tornerà mutato: tornerà libero, un uomo libero, nel senso più profondo. Poichè la libertà non è altro che la conoscenza del rapporto fra la vita e la morte, fra il mondo dei vivi e quello dei morti.»\*

*Йог Раманантата*

04.06.92.

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\* Безусловно чистыми источниками такого спиритизма являются творения Аллана Кардека и Леона Дени, создававшиеся ими в сотрудничестве с Духовной Иерархией. (Й.Р.)

\* Обрусим сказанное, дабы мысли эти ни для кого не оказались потерянными: «Кто возвращается живым из поразительного путешествия в мир потусторонний, тот не может уже взирать на мир физический прежними глазами. Ему становится зрима не изменчивая видимость вещей, но их сокровенная природа. Он вернётся из путешествия этого совершенно преображённым: он станет свободен, сделается свободным человеком в самом глубоком смысле слова. Потому что свобода – это не что иное, как знание взаимосвязи между жизнью и смертью, между миром живых и миром умерших.» (Й.Р.)



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## **СОЧИНЕНИЯ СЭРА АРТУРА КОНАН-ДОЙЛЯ О СПИРИТИЗМЕ**

THE NEW REVELATION, OR WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM. НОВОЕ ОТКРОВЕНИЕ, ИЛИ ЧТО ТАКОЕ СПИРИТИЗМ.

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THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM. РАННЕХРИСТИАНСКАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ И СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ СПИРИТУАЛИЗМ.

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**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*,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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*<sup>4</sup> 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 by 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 Jaccoliot upon occult phenomena in India. Jaccoliot 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.<sup>5</sup> 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*,<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.\*

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\* Vide Appendix III. (*A.C.D.*)<sup>8</sup>

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 true<sup>9</sup> – 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 experienced, 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."<sup>10</sup> 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*<sup>11</sup> – 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.

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## 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*.<sup>12</sup> 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?<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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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 mechanician 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,<sup>17</sup> 134 of such apparitions were actually at this moment of

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\* Vide Appendix II. (*A.C.D.*)

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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.

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## 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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup> 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."<sup>22</sup> 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,<sup>23</sup> 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*<sup>24</sup> or from Stainton Moses' *Spirit Teachings*. There is a whole library of such literature, of unequal value but of a high average.<sup>25</sup> 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;<sup>26</sup> 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. Jaques 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.\*

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\* Revenant au dernier cas dont je parlais, je dois dire que depuis que ce qui précède a été écrit, un troisième pasteur, pos sédant quelques notions de sciences occultes, est intervenu; il a obtenu par des raisonnements et des prières que les mauvais Esprits s'abstiennent de tourmenter désormais leurs victimes. Reste à savoir combien de temps les Esprits tiendront leur promesse! (A.C.D.)\*\*

\*\* The passage is extracted from the French edition of this work. (Y.R.)





## **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.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> 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 Philliphaugh, 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 hall-mark 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.

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## 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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

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\* "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena." "Experiences in Psychical Science." (Watkins.) (*A.C.D.*)

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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

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\* See Appendix C. (A.C.D.)

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.

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\* See Appendix D. (A.C.D.)

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.<sup>9</sup> 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

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\* The details of both these latter cases are to be found in "Voices from the Void" by Mrs. Travers Smith, a book containing some well weighed evidence. (A.C.D.)

company, walking about, addressing each person present, and taking delight in the children. She made no objection to photography or any other test.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup> 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 discernor 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,

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\* For Geley's Experiments, Appendix A. (*A.C.D.*)



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.<sup>13</sup> 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 tipling 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 clairsaudients, 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,<sup>14</sup> 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.

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## 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.<sup>15</sup>

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 Catacombs<sup>16</sup> 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 fulfillment of all desires, is passed in the presence of the Gods and employed in the fulfillment 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.

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## 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*.<sup>\*</sup> 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

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<sup>\*</sup> Published at sixpence by the Light Publishing Co., 6, Queen Square, London, W.C. The same firm supplies Dr. Ellis Powell's convincing little book on the same subject. (*A.C.D.*)

cabinets, one for the medium and one for each materialized form, would absolutely fulfill 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 blesser 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?<sup>17</sup> 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,

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\* The References are to Matthew, xxiii 35, and to Josephus, "Wars of the Jews," Book IV, Chapter 5. (*A.C.D.*)

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.<sup>18</sup> 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.

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## **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

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\* Dr. Geley writes to me that they are unknown either to him or to the medium. (*A.C.D.*)

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*<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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?<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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 Homoioustan 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 1870<sup>5</sup> – have been as bad as those of the Churches.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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 prophesy, 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 20<sup>th</sup>

**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.



Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex,  
February 10th

*Arthur Conan Doyle*

**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.<sup>10</sup>

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."<sup>11</sup> 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.Lyon, 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.Lyon 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.Lyon said, and ignoring all that Home said in refutation. He has omitted the fact that the judge decreed that Mrs.Lyon was guilty of gross perjury. This declaration he made when Mrs.Lyon 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.Lyon 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 tittle 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."<sup>12</sup>

*Arthur Conan Doyle*

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\* *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, reviewed by Joseph McCabe, 13 September 1921.

**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,<sup>13</sup> 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.

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\*\* In reply to a review of *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*.

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 psychograph<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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. Swedenborg<sup>17</sup> and Davis<sup>18</sup> 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.”<sup>19</sup>

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.Solal 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 Barries<sup>20</sup> and Stevensons<sup>21</sup>, 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.Solal 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*<sup>22</sup> are very convincing, but to me the Wilde case is even more so.

Yours faithfully,

*A. Conan Doyle*<sup>23</sup>

**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 Conjurer, 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,<sup>24</sup> 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."<sup>25</sup>

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*<sup>26</sup> 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 that 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,<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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 judgment. 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.<sup>31</sup>

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*<sup>32</sup>

**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*<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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."<sup>36</sup>

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 negated.

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.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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,<sup>41</sup> 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*,<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup>

*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”<sup>44</sup>**

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.,

November 20

*Arthur Conan Doyle*

**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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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 for ever 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. Osborn 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 <sup>47</sup>**

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,<sup>48</sup> Tyndall,<sup>49</sup> Darwin,<sup>50</sup> Herbert Spencer<sup>51</sup> and John Stuart Mill<sup>52</sup> 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,<sup>53</sup> or the six days of Creation,<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

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 Barrett<sup>56</sup> and others, even before the appearance of Myers' monumental work on *Human Personality*<sup>57</sup> – 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*<sup>58</sup> or *The Descent of Man*<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup> 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's<sup>62</sup> report upon this investigation into Madame Blavatsky's<sup>63</sup> proceedings at Adyar, which shook my confidence very much. It is true that Mrs. Besant<sup>64</sup> 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*<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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,<sup>68</sup> Barrett, Russel Wallace,<sup>69</sup> Victor Hugo<sup>70</sup> and Zöllner<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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 <sup>73</sup>

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 Foch<sup>74</sup> faced the German lines.

I trust that the record of my previous life<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> 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 uncounscious fraud, and it is the existence of the latter which complicates the question so badly. Consious 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,<sup>77</sup> 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,<sup>78</sup> with Madame d'Espérance,<sup>79</sup> and with Craddock<sup>80</sup> – 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 Besinnet<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> 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*.<sup>83</sup> 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,<sup>84</sup> 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,”<sup>85</sup> 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,<sup>86</sup> Schrenck-Notzing<sup>87</sup> and other great investigators are still in this midway position, and Flammarion<sup>88</sup> 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 Brewster<sup>89</sup>: "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.<sup>90</sup>

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

## 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 необузданным 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 Сабома, 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 нисколько 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.

<sup>1</sup> «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.

<sup>2</sup> См. «The Writings about the Spiritualism», статья «A Test Message».

<sup>3</sup> Намёк на библейские мифы.

<sup>4</sup> «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.

<sup>5</sup> Louis Jacolliot, «Le Spiritisme dans le Monde», Paris, A.Lacroix, 1875.

<sup>6</sup> “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».

<sup>7</sup> 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.»

<sup>8</sup> См. приложение III, «The Cheriton Dugout».

<sup>9</sup> 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 рассказов 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».

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> к числу коих принадлежу и я (*лат.*)

<sup>12</sup> “The Voices” by Usborne Moore. 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»).

<sup>13</sup> «Если Я сказал вам о земном, и вы не верите: как поверите, если буду говорить вам о небесном?» («Еванг. от Иоанна», III,12).

<sup>14</sup> Явный намёк на Россию и на марксистов, т.е. великие умы эпохи ясно понимали глупость большевицкого эксперимента.

<sup>15</sup> Об этом смотрите особо: Аллан Кардек, «Рай и Ад, или Божественная Справедливость в объяснении Спиритизма».

<sup>16</sup> 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?

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> Продолжение смотрите в «The Writings about the Spiritualism», январь 1919, «A Prophecy».

<sup>21</sup> Небольшое уточнение: не «леди могла», но духи, посредником (переводчиком) которых она являлась.

<sup>22</sup> Послание Св.Иоанна Богослова, I, гл.IV, ст.1.

<sup>23</sup> Снова намёк на библейские авторитеты.

<sup>24</sup> «Après la Mort» par Léon Denis.

<sup>25</sup> Такого рода библиотека-магазин, имеющая целью распространение спиритических знаний, была создана Конан-Дойлем и открыта им в 1925 году на Виктория-стрит в Лондоне.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> «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.

<sup>1</sup> Имеется в виду Первая Мировая война.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Здесь невольно приходят на ум слова Марка Аврелия: «Оглянись назад – там безмерная бездна времени, взгляни вперёд – там другая беспределность.»

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Мы же в данном случае вместо «духовной религии» предлагаем термин «карденизм», составленный из фамилий создателей *духоведения*, или новейшего спиритизма, – Аллана Кардека и Леона Дени.

<sup>6</sup> За подробностями отсылаем читателя к «Книге Медиумов» Аллана Кардека – непревзойдённому руководству по практическому Спиритизму.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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 многого-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*.»

<sup>10</sup> 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.»

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.»

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> «Новое Откровение»

<sup>15</sup> См. в этой связи наше примечание №27 к «Новому Откровению».

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Речь идёт об эпизоде, рассказанном в «Еванг. от Матфея», гл. XXIII, ст. 35 и в «Иудейской войне» Иосифа Флавия.

<sup>18</sup> Снова имеется в виду мировая война.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.»

<sup>2</sup> 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.»

<sup>3</sup> 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.»

<sup>4</sup> 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 гомиоусии, 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.»

<sup>5</sup> а в последующие годы и в России

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Такого рода опыт был сделан Лео Таксилем (1854-1907) в его «Забавном Евангелии». Весьма назидательное сочинение.

<sup>9</sup> 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 массою 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.

<sup>10</sup> См. по этому поводу также у Аллана Кардека: «Книга Духов», Введение, XII и «Книга Медиумов» конец параграфа 222.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Речь идёт о книге «The Wanderings of the Spiritualist». Рецензия на неё Джозефа Мак-Каба была опубликована 13 сентября 1921 года.

<sup>13</sup> Речь снова идёт о «Странствиях спиритуалиста».

<sup>14</sup> Не следует путать «психографию» (психическую разновидность фотографии) с «психографией» – одним из способов медиумического писания.

<sup>15</sup> 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».

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Эммануил Сведенборг (1688-1772) – шведский учёный и философ-мистик, теософ-спирит. Его наиболее часто читаемый труд – «Рай и ад».

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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 «Агсана» 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».

<sup>20</sup> Сэр Джеймс Мэтью Барри (1860-1937) – английский романист и драматург, автор, помимо прочего, «Питера Пэна» – двух знаменитых повестей для детей.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Автор имеет в виду свою книгу «Нашествие Фей»: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Coming of the Fairies”, New York, George H.Doran Company, 1922.

<sup>25</sup> «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).

<sup>26</sup> a priori – заранее, не зная дела, предубеждённо (*лат.*).

<sup>27</sup> «Царство Божие», которое, как сказано, Великим Учителем, обретается лишь «внутри нас».

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> Мы надеемся, читатель понимает, что наш автор имеет в виду. Конан-Дойль в отличие от Бернарда Шоу, Герберта Уэллса, Романа Роллана, Андре Жида и прочих западных писателей, никогда не строил себе иллюзий на счёт того, что творилось в России.

<sup>30</sup> Речь идёт о романе «The Land of Mist» – произведении пропагандистском; входит в серию «приключений профессора Челленджера».

<sup>31</sup> Библиотека-магазин, основанная и руководимая самим А.Конан-Дойлем.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> *bona fides* (лат.) – добросовестность (термин римского права); *здесь* – со знанием дела.

<sup>34</sup> Здесь в шуточной 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.

<sup>35</sup> Вот здесь-то вполне уместно вспомнить марксистское мерило истинности, гласящее, что критерий истины есть практика.

<sup>36</sup> По одному узнай и всё остальное. (лат.)

<sup>37</sup> 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.»

<sup>38</sup> 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 небесполезной 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.»

<sup>39</sup> Судя по всему, с освобождением России от большевицкого ига время это для человечества наступило.

<sup>40</sup> В Москве давно выходит газета, сама себя именующая «МК». Называться на большевицкий лад такой заикистой 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, кой, 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.

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> sub rosa (*лат.*) – по секрету, тайно

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> «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.

<sup>45</sup> Например у Лихтенберга читаем: «Die gefährlichsten Unwahrheiten sind Wahrheiten mäßig entstellt.» (Самая опасная ложь – это истина, слегка извращённая).

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> Фрагменты из книги «Воспоминания и Приключения» (“Memories and Adventures” by A.Conan Doyle, Boston, 1924, Little, Brown &Co.

<sup>48</sup> Томас Генри Гексли (1825-1895) – английский учёный-биолог, последователь учения Дарвина.

<sup>49</sup> Джон Тиндалль (1820-1893) – выдающийся английский физик.

<sup>50</sup> Чарльз Дарвин (1809-1882) – великий английский естествоиспытатель, основоположник эволюционной биологии.

<sup>51</sup> Герберт Спенсер (1820-1903) – английский учёный, философ, психолог и социолог, один из видных представителей позитивизма.

<sup>52</sup> Джон Стюарт Милль (1806-1873) – английский философ, логик и экономист, ещё один видный представитель позитивизма.

<sup>53</sup> 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.)

<sup>54</sup> Имеется в виду иудейско-христианский догмат о том, что мир был сотворён Богом за 6 дней.

<sup>55</sup> 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.»

<sup>56</sup> 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.»

<sup>57</sup> См. Примечание №7 к «The New Revelation».

<sup>58-59</sup> 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.

<sup>60</sup> См. ниже «The Psychic Quest».

<sup>61</sup> 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, перекочевали 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.

<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> 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.

<sup>64</sup> Анни Безант (1847-1933) – выдающаяся деятельница теософического движения, автор ряда работ, пропагандирующих идеи теософии, президент теософического общества (1907-33гг.).

<sup>65</sup> Имеется в виду «Современная жрица Изиды» – книга Всеволода Соловьёва, переиздана в 1994г. московским издательством «Республика».

<sup>66</sup> 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.

<sup>67</sup> 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.

<sup>68</sup> 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.

<sup>69</sup> Альфред Рассел Уоллес (1823-1913) – выдающийся английский натуралист, создавший одновременно с Дарвином теорию естественного отбора; один из основоположников биогеографии; воинствующий сторонник спиритизма, автор большого числа работ в различных областях знаний.

<sup>70</sup> Виктор Мари Гюго (1802-1885) – великий французский писатель, воинствующий сторонник спиритизма, обладал значительным медиумическим даром.

<sup>71</sup> Фридрих фон Цолльнер (1834-1882) – профессор физики и астрономии в Лейпцигском университете.

<sup>72</sup> Правда нисколько и не нуждается в правдоподобию. Правдоподобие как раз совершенно необходимо для лжи, а правда вполне может им пренебречь.

<sup>73</sup> Заключительная глава из книги «Memories and Adventures».

<sup>74</sup> Фердинан Фох (1851-1929) – маршал Франции, выдающийся полководец времён Первой Мировой войны.

<sup>75</sup> Напоминаем, что речь идёт не о нашей книге, а о «Воспоминаниях и приключениях».

<sup>76</sup> 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'Эперанс, Крэдок, мисс Безиннэ – знаменитые медиумы. Пространное описание их деятельности Конан-Дойль даёт в своей «Истории Спиритизма».

<sup>82</sup> Об этом см. выше, стр. 176.

<sup>83</sup> Не правда ли, курьёзное словосочетание? Курсив наш.

<sup>84</sup> Имеется в виду чудо «сошествия Духа Святого» на апостолов в день Пятидесятницы.

<sup>85</sup> «Всё в единодушии.»

<sup>86</sup> Шарль Рише (1850-1935) – французский физиолог и иммунолог, лауреат Нобелевской премии (1913г.), автор книг по оккультизму.

<sup>87</sup> 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”).

<sup>88</sup> Камиль Фламарион (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.

<sup>89</sup> Давид Брюстер (1781-1868) – выдающийся английский физик, воинствующий материалист.

<sup>90</sup> 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?

*Йог Раманантáта*