



THE NEW  
REVELATION  
&  
THE VITAL  
MESSAGE

Arthur Conan Doyle

To all the brave men and women, humble or learned,  
who have had the moral courage during seventy years  
to face ridicule or worldly disadvantage in order to  
testify to an all-important truth. March 1918



I am indebted to Mr. Don Galloway who sent me this book.

Here ACD puts forward the case for Spiritualism.

Much of what he says at that time – early 1920's – is as relevant today as it ever was. There seems to be a need to re-invent the wheel for every generation and every person in that generation.

The human race is evolving and part of that should be an understanding of who we really are and what we are doing on this planet.

The instruction to 'use your brains' remains the same and each person who cares to read the words of ACD will come to a different conclusion; and that is how it should be as we are all different people here for different reasons.

I have kept to the spelling and style of the book.

J.H.H. February 2002

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.

Arthur Conan Doyle

1918.

## 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*, 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. 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 realize 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 puts the question one degree farther 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 farther 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 affect 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, derided 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 conjurer 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 a man of good family - 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.

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 some 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 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 Poslethwaite," a name unknown to any of us. She said she died at Melbourne five years before, at the age of sixteen, that she was now happy, that she had work to do, and that she had been at the same school as one of the ladies. On my asking that lady to raise her hands and give a



succession of names, the table tilted at the correct name of the head mistress of the school. This seemed in the nature of a test. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures - music was among them. It was a place of light and of laughter. She added that they had no rich or poor, and that the general conditions were far happier than on earth.

This lady bade us good-night, and immediately the table was seized by a much more robust influence, which dashed it about very violently. In answer to my questions it claimed to be the spirit of one whom I will call Dodd, who was a famous cricketer, and with whom I had some serious conversation in Cairo before he went up the Nile, where he met his death in the Dongolese Expedition. We have now, I may remark, come to the year 1896 in my experiences. Dodd was not known to either lady. I began to ask him questions exactly as if he were seated before me, and he sent his answers back with great speed and decision. The answers were often quite opposed to what I expected, so that I could not believe that I was influencing them. He said that he was happy, that he did not wish to return to earth. He had been a free-thinker, but had not suffered in the next life for that reason. Prayer, however, was a good thing, as keeping us in touch with the, spiritual world. If he had prayed more he would have been higher in the spirit world.

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

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

He had work to do. He was aware of the Fall of Dongola, but had not been present in spirit at the banquet at Cairo afterwards. He knew more than he

did in life. He remembered our conversation in Cairo. Duration of life in the next sphere was shorter than on earth. He had not seen General Gordon, nor any other famous spirit. Spirits lived in families and in communities. Married people did not necessarily meet again, but those who loved each other did meet again.

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

I continued to read many books upon the subject and to appreciate more and more what a cloud of witnesses existed, and how careful their observations had been. This impressed my mind very much more than the limited phenomena which came within the reach of our circle. Then or afterwards I read a book by Monsieur Jacolliot upon occult phenomena in India. Jacolliot was Chief Judge of the French Colony of Chandernagur, with a very judicial mind, but rather biased 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 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. 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 inquire 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 but 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*, 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. 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 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 body, then it was a thing to that extent separate from the body. Why then should it not exist on its own when 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 one of the 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 every 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.\*

\*Vide Appendix III

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 that if you cut out the mediums who got into trouble you would have to cut out nearly your evidence. That is not so at all. Up to the time of incident I had never sat with a professional medium at all yet I had certainly accumulated some evidence. The greatest medium of all, Mr. D. D. Home, showed his phenomena broad daylight, and was ready to submit to every test and no charge of trickery was ever substantiated against him. So 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, 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 one 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 have been proved up to the hilt for all who care to the evidence, are in themselves 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 when properly understood and digested, make religion a very real thing, no longer a matter of faith, but 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 personal experiences that, since the War, I have had some 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 auto 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 here writing, or is there, as she avers, a power that controls her, even as the chronicler of the Jews in the Bible averred that was controlled? In the case of L. S. there is no denying some messages proved to be not true - especially in 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 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 experiences, 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 inquirer.

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 forbidden ground and should come off it and leave it alone. As I started from a position of comparative materialism, objection has never had any meaning for me, but to others 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 against every advance of human knowledge. It was 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." 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 began to make public my own views, one of the first letters sympathy which I received was from the late Archdeacon Wilberforce.

These are some theologians who are not only opposed such a cult, but who go the length of saying that the phenomena and messages come from fiends 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* - who without any reserves 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.

## 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*. 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-paper-basket 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? 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 Barrett - that psychical research is quite distinct from religion. Certainly it is so, 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 crystallise 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 no 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 organized 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 old 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 ape-like 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 broadminded 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 show just annoyance 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. 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. 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 outstretched 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 now say, 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 materialization of the two prophets upon the mountain was extraordinarily accurate when judged by psychic law. There is the fact that Peter, James and John were taken (who formed the psychic circle when the dead was restored to life, and were presumably the most helpful of the group).

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 materializations). 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 (1 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.

## THE NEW REVELATION

## 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. Messages 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 preexisting scheme of thought, then I think the presumption of truth is very strong. It is difficult to think that some fifteen or twenty messages from various sources of which I have personal notes, all agree, and yet are all wrong, nor is it easy to suppose that spirits can tell the truth about our world but untruth about their own.

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

\*Vide Appendix II.



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 counterpart of his old one, save that all disease, weakness, or deformity he 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, 134 of such apparitions were actually at this moment of dissolution, when one could imagine that the new spirit body was possibly so far material as to be more visible to a sympathetic human eye than it would later become.

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

This is a definite statement, and this is the story told by one after the other with a consistency which impels belief. It is already very different from any

old theology. The spirit is not a glorified angel or goblin damned, but it is simply the person himself, containing all his strength and weakness, his wisdom and his folly, exactly as he has retained his personal appearance. We can well believe that the most frivolous and foolish would be awed into decency by so tremendous an experience, but impressions soon become blunted, the old nature may soon reassert itself in new surroundings, and the frivolous still survive as our séance rooms can testify.

And now, before entering upon his new life, the new spirit has a period of sleep which varies in its length, sometimes hardly existing at all, at others extending for weeks or months. Raymond said that his lasted for six days. That was the period also in a case of which I had some personal evidence. Mr. Myers, on the other hand, said that he had a very prolonged period of unconsciousness. I could imagine that the length is regulated by the amount of trouble or mental preoccupation of this life, the longer rest giving the better means of wiping this out. Probably the little child would need no such interval at all. This latter point 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 from 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 products 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 "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 get 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 preeminently 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. 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 analysed 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. 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, are 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 of 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 cases. 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 to what we desire, but they exist none the less. But when we come to examine this charge of materialism and to 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.

## THE NEW REVELATION

## 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 is 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, 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, (WW1) 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.

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 are all gone. In short, the higher is palpably gone, and the lower, the sense of fear, of sensual impression, of self-preservation, are functioning all the more vividly because they are 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 materialising 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 (telephone) 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. 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." 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, Chas, Richet, Lodge, Barrett, Lombroso, Generals Drayson and Turner, Sergeant Ballantyne, W. T. Stead, Judge Edmunds, Admiral Usborne Moore, the late Archdeacon Wilberforce, and such a cloud of other witnesses, can be dismissed with the empty "All rot" or "Nauseating drivel" formulae. 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, 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 - and 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 rearrangement 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 - 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 continually to 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 reunited. 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 know, 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. This 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 tittle 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 to 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* or from Stainton Moses' *Spirit Teachings*. There is a whole library of such literature, of unequal value, but of a high average. Broaden and spiritualize 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 a 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."

## 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 recommend 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; 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 realization, 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."

I would add to this recent testimony yet another little book, *Do Thoughts Perish?* which has just passed through my hands. Although anonymous, the writer is clearly a lady of much experience and character. The dates of her communications show that they must have been written at the same time as Raymond and quite independently of it. Yet the main description of the feelings and experience of the young soldiers just passed over are quite identical with those of Raymond. How does the hostile critic account for this absolutely independent agreement between unconnected witnesses?

## SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS - 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 of Glastonbury have recently been located. He says: "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,

### SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS - III

#### THE CHERITON DUGOUT

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. Jacques, 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. Jacques 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 re-opened the door and saw them lying there upon the floor. Sir William Barrett had meanwhile come down, but had seen nothing. His stay was a short one. I afterwards made four visits of about two hours each to the grotto, but got nothing direct, though I saw the new brickwork all chipped about by the blows which it had received. The forces appeared to have not the slightest interest in psychical research, for they never played up to an investigator, and yet their presence and action have been demonstrated to at least seven different observers, and, as I have said, they left their traces behind them, even to the extent of picking the flint stones out of the new cement which was to form the floor, and arranging them in tidy little piles. The obvious explanation that the boy was an adept at mischief had to be set aside in view of the fact that the phenomena occurred in his absence. One extra man of science wandered on to the scene for a moment, but as his explanation was that the movements occurred through the emanation of marsh-gas, it did not advance matters much. The disturbances are still proceeding, and I have had a letter this very morning (February 21st, 1918) with fuller and later details from Mr. Hesketh, the Engineer.

What is the real explanation of such a matter? I can only say that I have advised Mr. Jacques to dig into the bluff under which he is constructing his cellar. I made some investigation myself upon the top of it and convinced myself that the surface ground at that spot has at some time been disturbed to the depth of at least five feet. Something has, I should judge, been buried at some date, and it is probable that, as in the case cited in the text, there is a connection between this and the disturbances. It is very probable that Mr. Rolfe is, unknown to himself, a physical medium, and that when he was in the confined space of the cellar he turned it into a cabinet in which his magnetic

powers could accumulate and be available for use. It chanced that there was on the spot some agency which chose to use them, and hence the phenomena. When Mr. Jacques went alone to the grotto the power left behind by Mr. Rolfe, who had been in it all morning, was not yet exhausted and he was able to get some manifestations. So I read it, but it is well not to be dogmatic on such matters. If there is systematic digging I should expect an epilogue to the story.

Whilst these proofs were in the press a second very marked case of the 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.

Since the above was written a third clergyman, with some knowledge of occult matters, has succeeded by sympathetic reasoning and prayer in obtaining a promise from the entity that it will plague the household no more. It remains to be seen how far the cure will be permanent.

## 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 civilisation 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.

## THE VITAL MESSAGE

## CHAPTER I

### THE TWO NEEDFUL READJUSTMENTS

It has been our fate, among all the innumerable generations of mankind, to face the most frightful calamity that has ever befallen the world. (1<sup>st</sup> World War)

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 to-day, 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, 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 civilisation, as apart from religion, has built up necessities for the community, such as hospitals, universities, and organized 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, 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 have 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, thirty-three 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 secondhand 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 to-day! 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 minimized, 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 "childlike 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. 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 have 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 life-time, so that while mankind is hardly aware of the change the heresy of to-day will become the commonplace of to-morrow. 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.

## 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. 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 an 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 high 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 Reality of Psychic Phenomena. Experiences in Psychical Science* (Watkins).

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 influence. 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. The automatic writer, the clairvoyant, the crystal-seer, the trance speaker, the photographic medium, the direct voice medium, and others, are all, when genuine, the manifestations of one force, which runs through varied channels as it did in the gifts ascribed to the disciples. The unhappy outburst of roguery was helped, no doubt, by the need for darkness claimed by the early experimenters - a claim which is by no means essential, since the greatest of all mediums, D. D. Home, was able by the exceptional strength of his powers to dispense with it. At the same time the fact that darkness rather than light, and dryness rather than moisture, are helpful to good results has been abundantly manifested, and points to the physical laws which underlie the phenomena. The observation made long afterwards that wireless telegraphy, another etheric force, acts twice as well by night as by day, may corroborate the general conclusions of the early Spiritualists, while their assertion that the least harmful light is red light has a suggestive analogy in the experience of the photographer.

There is no space here for the history of the rise and development of the movement. It provoked warm adhesion and fierce opposition from the start. Professor Hare and Horace Greeley were among the educated minority who tested and endorsed its truth. It was disfigured by many grievous incidents, which may explain but does not excuse the perverse opposition which it encountered in so many quarters. This opposition was really largely based upon the absolute materialism of the age, which would not admit that there could exist at the present moment such conditions as might be accepted in the far past. 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 oxy-hydrogen 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 inquirer. 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 after the lapse of all these 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 voices 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.\* See Appendix.

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. Only one hypothesis can cover every branch of these manifestations, and that is the system of extraneous life and action which has always, for seventy years, held the field for any reasonable mind which had impartially considered the facts.

I have spoken of the need for careful and cool-headed analysis in judging the evidence where automatic writing is concerned. One is bound to exclude spirit explanations until all natural ones have been exhausted, though I do not include among natural ones the extreme claims of far-fetched telepathy such as that another person can read in your thoughts things of which you were never yourself aware. Such explanations are not explanations, but mystifications and absurdities, though they seem to have a special attraction for a certain sort of psychical researcher, who is obviously destined to go on researching to the end of time, without ever reaching any conclusion save that of the patience of those who try to follow his reasoning. To give a good example of valid automatic script, chosen out of many which I could quote, I would draw the reader's attention to the facts as to the excavations at Glastonbury, as detailed in *The Gate of Remembrance*, by Mr. Bligh Bond. Mr. Bligh Bond, by the way, is not a Spiritualist, but the same cannot be said of the writer of the automatic script, an amateur medium, who was able to indicate the secrets of the buried abbey, which were proved to be correct when the ruins were uncovered. I can truly say that, though I have read much of the old monastic life, it has never been brought home to me so closely as by the messages and descriptions of dear old Brother Johannes the earth-bound spirit - earth-bound 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 half-way 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.

### 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 but 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, Zollner, 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, run 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 reoccupy 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 recognising 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. --- to-day. 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. --- to-day, 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 affairs 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 results. Another 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.\* \* See Appendix D.

I have dwelt upon these results, which could be matched by other mediums, to show that we have solid and certain reasons to say that the verbal reports are not from the mediums themselves. Readers of Arthur Hill's *Psychical Investigations* will find many even more convincing cases. So in the written communications, I have in a previous paper pointed to the *Gate of Remembrance* case, but there is a great mass of material which proves that, in

spite of mistakes and failures, there really is a channel of communication, fitful and evasive sometimes, but entirely beyond coincidence or fraud. These, then, are the usual means by which we receive psychic messages, though table tilting, ouija boards, glasses upon a smooth surface, or anything which can be moved by the vital animal-magnetic force already discussed will equally serve the purpose. Often information is conveyed orally or by writing which could not have been known to anyone concerned. Mr. Wilkinson has given details of the case where his dead son drew attention to the fact that a curio (a coin bent by a bullet) had been overlooked among his effects. Sir William Barrett has narrated how a young officer sent a message leaving a pearl tie-pin to a friend. No one knew that such a pin existed, but it was found among his things. The death of Sir Hugh Lane was given at a private séance in Dublin before the details of the Lusitania disaster had been published.\*

\*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.

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. In these wonderful experiments, which extended over several years, Miss Florrie Cook, who was a young lady of from sixteen to eighteen years of age, was repeatedly confined in Prof. Crookes' study, the door being locked on the inside. Here she lay unconscious upon a couch. The spectators assembled in the laboratory, which was separated by a curtained opening from the study. After a short interval, through this opening there emerged a lady who was in



all ways different from Miss Cook. She gave her earth name as Katie King, and she proclaimed herself to be a materialised spirit, whose mission it was to carry the knowledge of immortality to mortals. She was of great beauty of face, figure, and manner. She was four and a half inches taller than Miss Cook, fair, whereas the latter was dark, and as different from her as one woman could be from another. Her pulse rate was markedly slower. She became for the time entirely one of the company, walking about, addressing each person present, and taking delight in the children. She made no objection to photography or any other test. 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. 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 not 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 ministrations? 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. 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 inquirers in different stages of its evolution, and which seems to possess an inherent quality of shaping itself into parts of 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 flashlight 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.

\* For Geley's Experiments, *vide* Appendix A.

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

As to the personality of mediums, they have seemed to me to be very average specimens of the community, neither markedly better nor markedly worse. I know many, and I have never met anything in the least like "Sludge," a poem which Browning might be excused for writing in some crisis of domestic

disagreement, but which it was inexcusable to republish since it is admitted to be a concoction, and the exposure described to have been imaginary. The critic often uses the term medium as if it necessarily meant a professional, whereas every investigator has found some of his best results among amateurs. In the two finest séances I ever attended, the psychic, in each case a man of moderate means, was resolutely determined never directly or indirectly to profit by his gift, though it entailed very exhausting physical conditions. I have not heard of a clergyman of any denomination who has attained such a pitch of altruism - nor is it reasonable to expect it. As to professional mediums, Mr. Vout Peters, one of the most famous, is a diligent collector of old books and an authority upon the Elizabethan drama; while Mr. Dickinson, another very remarkable discerner of spirits, who named twenty-four correctly during two meetings held on the same day, is employed in loading canal barges. This man is one of the most gifted clairvoyants in England, though Tom Tyrrell the weaver, Aaron Wilkinson, and others, are very marvellous. Tyrrell, who is a man of the Anthony of Padua type, a walking saint, beloved of animals and children, is a figure who might have stepped out of some legend of the Church. Thomas, the powerful physical medium, is a working coal miner. Most mediums take their responsibilities very seriously and view their work in a religious light. There is no denying that they are exposed to very particular temptations, for the gift is, as I have explained elsewhere, an intermittent one, and to admit its temporary absence, and so discourage one's clients, needs greater moral principle than all men possess. Another temptation to which several great mediums have succumbed is that of drink. This comes about in a very natural way, for overworking the power leaves them in a state of physical prostration, and the stimulus of alcohol affords a welcome relief, and may tend at last to become a custom and finally a curse. Alcoholism always weakens the moral sense, so that these degenerate mediums yield themselves more readily to fraud, with the result that several who had deservedly won honoured names and met all hostile criticism have, in their later years, been detected in the most contemptible tricks. It is a thousand pities that it should be so, but if the Court of Arches were to give up its secrets, it would be found that tippling and moral degeneration were by no means confined to psychics. At the same time, a psychic is so peculiarly sensitive that I think he or she would always be well advised to be a life-long abstainer as many actually are.

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

It has been stated in a previous book by the author, 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.

## THE VITAL MESSAGE

## 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.

Before entering upon the substance of the messages I should wish to emphasize the second of these two 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 quickstep 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 realize 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 powers be 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 childbirth, 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, (1920's thinking?) 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, make 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 medieval

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 further to 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 make-up 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 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 matters, 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 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 realize 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 RIG. VEDA, he said, epitomizing the beliefs of the first Aryan conquerors of India: "Before, however, the unborn part" (that is, the etheric body) "can complete its course to the third heaven it has to traverse a vast gulf of darkness, leaving behind on earth all that is evil, and proceeding by the paths the fathers trod, the spirit soars to the realms of eternal light, recovers there his body in a glorified form, and obtains from God a delectable abode and enters upon a more perfect life, which is crowned with the fulfilment of all desires, is passed in the presence of the Gods and employed in the fulfilment of their pleasure." If we substitute "angels" for "Gods" we must admit that the new revelation from modern spirit sources has much in common with the belief of our Aryan fathers.

Such, in very condensed form, is the world which is revealed to us by these wonderful messages from the beyond. Is it an unreasonable vision? Is it in any way opposed to just principles? Is it not rather so reasonable that having got the clue we could now see that, given any life at all, this is exactly the line upon which we should expect to move? Nature and evolution are averse from sudden disconnected developments. If a 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 civilized 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 Zollner, 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 realize 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 materialization, 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.

## 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 results 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 self-same 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," "I 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 of 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 - 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 medieval 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 gifts 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 pre-existing photograph.

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

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

least two cases they were pairs of brothers, as though some family gift or peculiarity might underlie the choice.

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

The close connection which appears to exist between the Apostles and the miracles has been worked out in an interesting fashion by Dr. Abraham Wallace, in his little pamphlet, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Certainly, no miracle or wonder working, save that of exorcism, is recorded in any of the Evangelists until after the time when Christ began to assemble His circle. Of this circle the three who would appear to have been the most psychic were Peter and the two fellow-fishermen, sons of Zebedee, John and James. These were the three who were summoned when an ideal atmosphere was needed. It will be remembered that when the daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead it was in the presence, and possibly with the cooperation, of these three assistants. Again, in the case of the Transfiguration, it is impossible to read the account of that wonderful manifestation without being reminded at every turn of one's own spiritual experiences. Here, again, the points are admirably made in *Jesus of Nazareth*, and it would be well if that little book, with its scholarly tone, its breadth of treatment and its psychic knowledge, was in the hands of every Biblical student. Dr. Wallace points out that the place, the summit of a hill, was the ideal one for such a manifestation, in its pure air and freedom from interruption; that the drowsy state of the Apostles is paralleled by the members of any circle who are contributing psychic power; that the transfiguring of the face and the shining raiment are known phenomena;



above all, that the erection of three altars is meaningless, but that the alternate reading, the erection of three booths or cabinets, one for the medium and one for each materialized form, would absolutely fulfil the most perfect conditions for getting results. This explanation of Wallace's is a remarkable example of a modern brain, with modern knowledge, throwing a clear searchlight across all the centuries and illuminating an incident which has always been obscure.

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

There are many other small points which seem to bring the story of Christ and of the Apostles into very close touch with modern psychic research, and greatly support the close accuracy of some of the New Testament narrative. One which appeals to me greatly is the action of Christ when He was asked a question which called for a sudden decision, namely the fate of the woman who had been taken in sin. What did He do? The very last thing that one would have expected or invented. He stooped down before answering and wrote with his finger in the sand. This He did a second time upon a second catch-question being addressed to Him. Can any theologian give a reason for such an action? I hazard the opinion that among the many forms of mediumship which were possessed in the highest form by Christ, was the power of automatic writing, by which He summoned those great forces which were under His control to supply Him with the answer. Granting, as I freely do, that Christ was preternatural, in the sense that He was above and beyond ordinary humanity in His attributes, one may still inquire how far these powers were contained always within His human body, or how far He referred back to spiritual reserves beyond it. When He spoke merely from His human body He was certainly open to error, like the rest of us, for it is recorded how He questioned the woman of Samaria about her husband, to which she replied that she had no husband. In the case of the woman taken in sin, one can only explain His action by the supposition that He opened a channel

instantly for the knowledge and wisdom which was preterhuman, 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 heads, declared that such occurrences were outside their own experience, and possibly pointed to the local conjurer 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-arguments in which He excelled. The same two classes of opponents, the scoffers and the diabolists, face us to-day. Verily the old world goes round and so do the events upon its surface.

There is one line of thought which may be indicated in the hope that it will find development from the minds and pens of those who have studied most deeply the possibilities of psychic power. It is at least possible, though I admit that under modern conditions it has not been clearly proved, that a medium of great power can charge another with his own force, just as a magnet when rubbed upon a piece of inert steel can turn it also into a magnet. One of the best attested powers of D. D. Home was that he could take burning coals from the fire with impunity and carry them in his hand. He could then - and this comes nearer to the point at issue - place them on the head of anyone who was fearless without their being burned. Spectators have described how the silver filigree of the hair of Mr. Carter Hall used to be gathered over the glowing ember, and Mrs. Hall has mentioned how she combed out the ashes afterwards. Now, in this case, Home was clearly able to convey a power to another person, just as Christ, when He was levitated over the lake, was able to convey the same power to Peter, so long as Peter's faith held firm. The question then arises if Home concentrated all his force upon transferring such a power how long would that power last? The experiment was never tried, but it would have borne very directly upon this argument. For, granting that the power can be transferred, then it is very clear how the Christ circle was able to send forth seventy disciples who were endowed with miraculous functions. It

is clear, also, why new disciples had to return to Jerusalem to be "baptised of the spirit," to use their phrase, before setting forth upon their wanderings. And when in turn they desired to send forth representatives would not they lay hands upon them, make passes over them, and endeavour to magnetize them in the same way - if that word may express the process? Have we here the meaning of the laying on of hands by the bishop at ordination, a ceremony to which vast importance is still attached, but which may well be the survival of something really vital, the bestowal of the thaumaturgic power? When, at last, through lapse of time or neglect of fresh cultivation, the power ran out, the empty formula may have been carried on, without either the blessing or the blessed understanding what it was that the hands of the bishop, and the force which streamed from them, were meant to bestow. The very words "laying on of hands" would seem to suggest something different from a mere benediction.

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

\*The References are to Matthew, xxiii 3 5, and to Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book IV., Chapter 5.

This makes it very clear that this particular Gospel, in its present form, was written after that event, and that the writer fitted into it at least one other incident which had struck his imagination. Unfortunately, a revision by general agreement would be the greatest of all miracles, for two of the very first texts to go would be those which refer to the "Church," an institution and an idea utterly unfamiliar in the days of Christ. Since the object of the insertion of these texts is perfectly clear, there can be no doubt that they are forgeries, but as the whole system of the Papacy rests upon one of them, they are likely to survive for a long time to come. The text alluded to is made further impossible because it is based upon the supposition that Christ and His fishermen conversed together in Latin or Greek, even to the extent of making puns in that language. Surely the want of moral courage and intellectual honesty among Christians will seem as strange to our descendants as it appears marvellous to us that the great thinkers of old could have believed, or at least have pretended to believe, in the fighting sexual deities of Mount Olympus.

Revision is, indeed, needed, and, as I have already pleaded, a change of emphasis is also needed, in order to get the grand Christian conception back into the current of reason and progress. The orthodox who, whether from humble faith or some other cause, do not look deeply into such matters, can hardly conceive the stumbling-blocks which are littered about before the feet of their more critical brethren. What is easy for faith is impossible for reflection. Such expressions as "Saved by the blood of the Lamb" or "Baptised 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 of 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 analysed, 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 fellowmen. I have myself lived during the seven most impressionable years of my life among Jesuits, the most maligned of all ecclesiastic 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 civilized 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. 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 institutions 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 consider seriously, 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.

## 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 before the Institut Général Psychologique in Paris, in January 1918, 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 entirely to 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.\*

Dr. Geley writes to me that they are unknown either to him or to the medium.

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 middleclass 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 repellent 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 Schrenk-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 materialization 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. Doctor Geley mentions, as an analogous phenomenon on the material side, the presence of dermoid cysts,

those mysterious formations, which rise as small tumours in any part of the body, particularly above the eyebrow, and which when opened by the surgeon are found to contain hair, teeth or embryonic bones. There is no doubt, as he claims, some rough analogy, but the dermoid cyst is, at least, in the same flesh and blood plane of nature as the foetus inside it, while in the ectoplasm we are dealing with an entirely new and strange development.

It is not possible to define exactly what occurs in the case of the ectoplasm, nor, on account of its vital connection with the medium and its evanescent nature, has it been separated and subjected to even the roughest chemical analysis which might show whether it is composed of those earthly elements with which we are familiar. Is it rather some coagulation of ether which introduces an absolutely new substance into our world? Such a supposition seems most probable, for a comparison with the analogous substance examined at Dr. Crawford's séances at Belfast, which is at the same time hardly visible to the eye and yet capable of handling a weight of 150 pounds, suggests something entirely new in the way of matter.

But setting aside, as beyond the present speculation, what the exact origin and nature of the ectoplasm may be, it seems to me that there is room for a very suggestive line of thought if we make Geley's experiments the starting point, and lead it in the direction of other manifestations of psycho-material 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 requires 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* 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 materialization 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 "ideo-plastic."

Here we have, I think, some attempt at a generalization, 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 farther 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.

## APPENDIX

## 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 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 were seated opposite. Such script could not possibly be written by the lady herself. Upon making inquiry 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.

## 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 recognizable 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 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 scaled packet of plates to the Crewe circle without exposure, endeavouring 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 1 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 materialization 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 McKenzie, I am allowed to publish another example of spirit photography. The circumstances were very remarkable. The visit of Mr. McKenzie to Crewe was unproductive and his plate a blank. Returning disappointed to London he and his wife 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 a month earlier in getting on to the plate of Lady Glenconner, 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 recognized 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."

## APPENDIX

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 physical 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 recognized. A medium may under such circumstances be a martyr rather than a criminal, and a conviction ceases to be a stain upon the character.

THE END