

LIGHT

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ARE THERE OBJECTIVE APPARITIONS?

By B. ABDY COLLINS, C.I.E.

THIS question is very fully discussed by Edward Gurney in *Phantoms of the Living* and, to all intents and purposes, answered in the negative. Veridical apparitions—that is apparitions which have a true cause outside the percipient—he considers to be established beyond doubt, but these phantasms he regarded as merely hallucinatory shapes in which a telepathic impulse from the mind of a distant person, or perhaps one deceased, are embodied for the percipient. The vision itself is thus subjective. It has no real existence. It is not, as it were, a modification of space. It is not something apprehended by the senses, but a product of them. All that is veridical is the telepathic impulse, which is the "nucleus of a transferred impression." The vision itself is the creation of the percipient.

This view seems to be very generally accepted by those whose interest lies chiefly in Psychical Research, whether they have any belief in Survival as an established fact or not. For instance, the present Earl of Balfour says in his masterly paper on the *Psychological Aspects of Mrs. Willett's Mediumship*: "In the main, I do not dissent from this view . . . (i.e., that described above). For my own part I incline to the view that visualisations of communicators, and a fortiori all fully-developed hallucinatory phantasms, are to be regarded as subjective constructions—symbolic, it may be, of some objective reality, but still subjective constructions—except in so far as there is evidence for attributing to a communicator a definite intention to transmit a pictorial image of himself." It is not quite clear what this reservation means, but it is added in a footnote: "It must be admitted, however, that some spontaneous cases, especially of apparitions about the time of death, in which veridical details of personal appearance and circumstance are correctly conveyed, such as could not be known to or guessed by the percipient, are difficult to explain either as impressions telepathically transmitted or as purely subjective elaborations." This may be a hint that apparitions sometimes have an objective reality, but if so, it is a hint and nothing more.

Anyone who reads the records of the Society for Psychical Research must be struck by the constant use of the word "hallucination" and its derivatives in connection with apparitions and phantasms of all kinds. This seems almost to beg the question. In Nuttall's *Standard Dictionary*, for instance,



A. Tear, Ipswich

B. ABDY COLLINS, C.I.E.

"hallucination" is defined as "diseased perception of an object as present which is not: the object so perceived: mistake." The second census conducted by the S.P.R. was actually called "The Census of Hallucinations." The promoters of the Census under the aegis of the Society were no doubt very anxious to avoid any appearance of belief in the reality of visions, but it seems unfortunate that a term was chosen which tends to prejudice their nature. A colourless word like "phantasms" or "apparitions" would have been far better. It is never actually defined in the Census Report, but it is said (S.P.R. *Proceedings*, vol. x., page 70) that the characteristic of the hallucinatory percept is that it "lacks, but can only by distinct reflection be recognised as lacking the objective basis that it suggests."

At the same time, the committee were not prejudiced by the choice of terminology, and they remark towards the end of their Report that "the Census affords some remarkable cases which *prima facie* are not purely subjective, but which suggest the action of the dead." The amount of evidence, however, seemed to them insufficient upon which to base any conclusion.

F. W. H. Myers went further and, in an appendix, expressed his personal opinion that "in certain rare cases these messages involve, or are accompanied by, effects produced upon the material world; and such effects are of course observable by onlookers in an ordinary or supraliminal manner." He further points out that such cases are not so different from the more general hallucinations produced by telepathic impact, because "every case of telepathy involves, on any hypothesis, a modification of one small part of the material world—namely, the cells of the percipient's brain."

NOT OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE

I have thought it worth while to refer to these opinions in order to show that all those who so carefully examined the large number of cases collected in this Census so many years ago did not, as is so often stated, come to an unequivocal conclusion that all apparitions are hallucinations in the sense explained above, but, at the lowest, were prepared to admit that in some exceptional cases the apparitions appeared to be real—that is, that they involved some modification of space.

At the same time, I should like to emphasise that, whether some apparitions are real in this sense or not is not of fundamental importance in coming to a conclusion regarding survival. A "real" apparition, a sort of materialisation, partial or complete, might be regarded as specially impressive by some, but would have little particular influence on the hardened sceptic. Hallucinations, if veridical—that is, really caused by telepathic impetus from the dead—would, if evidential, *i.e.*, remarkable for their proof of identity or the information communicated by them, have just as much weight with the experienced. The question whether there are any satisfactory cases on record in which some real effect on the world of sense and matter took place is largely a matter of technical interest to those engaged in Psychical Research.

What evidence is there for such cases?

First of all: what is to be the criterion of objectivity? The mere hearing of a voice and carrying on of a conversation cannot be taken as a conclusive test. We hear voices and carry on conversations in dreams. These might be auditory hallucinations, though veridical—a construction of an incident based on a true telepathic impulse. Where the voice is heard by more than one person, the evidence for objectivity is stronger, but it is no more conclusive than the seeing of the vision by two or more persons—and the latter is a by no means unique kind of case that does not carry conviction, though many think it should carry conviction, to certain types of mind.

Again, an apparently physical act such as opening or shutting a door, as it is a necessary concomitant of certain scenes, might be considered merely part of a

veridical construction of them, just as we see and hear persons open and shut doors in dreams.

A typical case is that of David McConnel, a flying officer who was killed on December 7th, 1918. His friend, Second Lieut. J. J. Larkin, sitting in a small room at the time of his death and not expecting him back so soon (1) heard someone walking with a clatter along the passage; (2) heard McConnel's voice saying "Hallo, boy;" (3) turned round and saw him standing in the doorway, holding the door knob in his hand; (4) conversed with him; and (5) saw and heard him close the door noisily and go out.

This might seem and would be accepted by many as good evidence of objectivity; but, as there is no independent evidence that the door was open and shut, the case might be classed and actually is classed by others as a veridical hallucination. This would not be unreasonable, as a case cited in Sir Ernest Bennett's *Apparitions and Haunted Houses* shows. In this a ghost was many times heard (but not seen) cross a room, enter a large wardrobe and snap the door to, *though in point of fact the door was shut the whole time.*

In another case in the same book (62) the percipient tried to push to the door through which an apparition had appeared to enter, only to find to his surprise that it was shut. Looked at from another angle the complete naturalness of the whole incident might be taken as a proof of its unreality. It is just such a scene as telepathic impulse might originate. Some *unnatural* incident or incidents contrary to ordinary human experience, if clearly seen and witnessed by more than one person, might be held to be better proof of some real occurrence.

Apparent unsubstantiality is no bar to reality. Air, which cannot be seen or felt, is classed as real. Wireless waves which pass through walls are accepted by the world of science as existing and form part of their scheme of things. A form which appeared substantial and then, contrary to expectations, passed through a wall or door before witnesses might be said from this point of view to be less likely to be an hallucination than one which seemed to open the door and go out in the usual way.

There are a number of well-substantiated cases of this

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type—e.g., that investigated by Myers and recorded in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. (vol. vi., p. 26) where a husband and wife see and hear and speak to a figure taken to be a real person and recognised (though not at first) by the former as his father. The figure, apparently substantial, shuts off the light of the lamp as it moves by, but then passes through the wall in such a way that the husband opens the locked door of the room and tries to follow it outside. If the figure was an hallucination one would have expected it either to vanish or to leave the room by the door.

Such a case is in some ways a stronger test of objectivity than that of David McConnell. No one supposes that those who have passed over have bodies solid in our earthly sense and it should be easier for modern science to accept an unsubstantial apparition than one governed by the ordinary laws of nature.

It is impossible, I imagine, to lay down criteria of objectivity which would satisfy everybody. If (1) an apparition is seen by two or more persons to whom it appears solid and (2) at the same time it does take some mundane action such as opening or shutting a door, or giving or taking some material object, its objectivity would be generally conceded.

A REMARKABLE CASE

But, as pointed out above, this is really a fallacy, even as a test of solidity, unless there was proof that the door was really open or shut. Personally, I would prefer a case in which the figure is seen *at different angles* quite independently by two witnesses. A remarkable case (No. 329) is cited in *Phantasms of the Living*. It must be read at length to be fully appreciated. Here it is given, with omissions :

"On entering my office, I found my clerk in conversation with the porter and the Rev. Mr. H. standing at the clerk's back. I was on the point of asking Mr. H. what had brought him in so early, when my clerk began questioning me about a telegram. The conversation lasted some minutes. During this scene Mr. R. came in and listened. On opening a letter, I looked Mr. H. full in the face. I was much struck by his melancholy look and observed that he was without his necktie! At this juncture, Mr. R. and the porter left the room. I spoke to Mr. H., saying 'Well, what's the matter with you? You look so sour.' He made no answer but continued looking fixedly at me. I took up an enclosure (to the letter) and read it through. As I laid the papers down, my clerk said: 'Here, sir, is a letter come from Mr. H.' No sooner had he pronounced the name than Mr. H.

disappeared in a second. I was dumbfounded, which astonished my clerk, who had not seen Mr. H. and denied he had been in the office. Mr. H's letter, written the day before, said he was unwell and should not come to the office that Thursday. The next day Mr. H. came to the office. When asked where he was at 10.45 a.m. on the previous day, he replied he had just finished breakfast with his wife and never left his house all day.

"I felt shy of questioning Mr. R.; but on the Monday following I asked him if he remembered looking in on Thursday morning. On his saying 'Yes,' I asked him who were present, and he answered 'The clerk, the porter, you and H. He (H.) was standing opposite you. I addressed him, but he made no reply, only took up a book and began reading.' On being told that Mr. H. was actually 14 miles away, Mr. R. grew quite indignant and insisted on the porter being called up and interrogated. The porter, however, like the clerk, had not seen the figure." Mr. R. supplied independent and precise corroboration of these facts.

This is a good instance, by no means unique, in which a "phantasm" seems to have had objective reality. It is true that only two of the four persons present saw it, but the other two did see it and all along never dreamt that it was not Mr. H. himself. It was observed continuously for some minutes, addressed as if a real person, and behaved in an independent and unexpected manner. No explanation on the lines of an hallucination is at all convincing. Gurney considers the case "must be of the nature of thought transference," but this seems quite incredible.

Curiously enough, such cases of this type as present certain evidence of objectivity are for the most part phantasms or apparitions of *living* persons not undergoing any particular danger or crisis. It will be noted that Mr. H's appearance was unusual and unexpected, as we are told that he was not in the habit of coming to the office till about mid-day. It seems that Mr. H's thoughts must have been somehow directed towards his office and in some way his real person was for a short while actually projected there.

While I personally believe that cases such as David McConnell's cannot be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition that his real self was present in his friend's room, I do not feel that they provide such good evidence of objectivity as those of Mr. H. and other similar records. It is on the basis of such well attested accounts, that I would say definitely that some apparitions are objective.

SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

INTO the darkness of the natural mind comes the Light of the Spirit. Until that light arises in the soul of man, until the soul is attracted by the light, man's life, in effect and in the actual condition, is much as the animal life; not altogether so, but to a large extent the animal part of man, in its inclinations and desires, is governed more or less by the animal nature. And all around, clouding the mind, limiting the outlook, there is, as it were, a mist or barrier that shuts in the mind; and it is the piercing of this dense and darkening surrounding condition which is the great work of Spirit, its chief purpose and aim.

The enlightenment that comes through the penetration of this barrier by the Light of the Spirit comes to one and another in various ways. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Enjoyment of this enlightenment may be attained without the acceptance or intervention of any prescribed formula or ritual, and is therefore available for men of all creeds or of no creeds. Moreover, it may be that some who have received this blessing are not conscious of its spiritual origin and nature. With some, the process

of illumination may be almost as a natural growth and unfolding as a flower bud gently opening out into the full bloom of the flower; owing perhaps to an inborn love of that which is good and right, pure and holy; so much so that there is no need of any rude or painful awakening. In such a life there is nothing that calls for excessive contrition. With this natural goodness of heart the life flows smoothly in paths of righteousness and truth, of kindness and love; so that there is no stage of it which can be recognised as a turning point or a re-birth.

For others this dawning of the Light of the Spirit upon their lives may come through bitter sorrow, a sorrow that pulls a man up to face the realities of life as they have never been faced by him before. Suddenly, it may be, he is brought to see that, no matter what may be given in the way of worldly gifts, they cannot satisfy the inward longings of the soul. And so, with this new view, this fresh aspect of life, there comes a change of desire; the truth is borne home that "The things that are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;" and thus the light breaks through upon the soul and in very truth the man is born again.

G. E. WRIGHT.

A MODEL CHRONICLE

Review by H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

IT is the salient defect of many books, which offer copious evidence of Survival, that the needful acuity of scientific outline is blurred by the grateful sentiment of the recorders.

The number of such volumes which one has to lay aside is remarkable: one has no doubt as to the honesty of the writers; one does not question the events they relate; one knows of people who have found them helpful; but they cannot be offered to a sceptical world as satisfactory to the psychologist.

This collection of reappearances made by Mr. Maurice Barbanell is, however, exactly what is required. It is written by a man with an extraordinary range of experience, who is well aware of the foggy entanglement of fraud which enshrouds the subject, and who, mercifully, can write, even when most impressed, with a business-like brevity.

Moreover, he has selected as his most striking cases men whose names were known across the world, and whose vigorous personalities could be trusted, if there happened to be a way back, to find it with the least delay. Among them are Sir Henry Segrave, Edgar Wallace, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Thomas Lipton and Sir Vincent Caillard.

Maurice Barbanell tells us that he has devoted a score of years to the investigation of Spiritualism; that he has attended over 2,000 séances; that he has had thousands of conversations with the "dead," who have spoken in the "direct voice," which has enabled him to establish the identity of the speakers by their mannerisms, inflexions and intonations; and he declares that it is sometimes more difficult to get the right number on the telephone than to get a message from the spirit-world.

He has handled materialised spirits, and has received from one, on a note-pad he was holding, a signature which the writer's bank would have accepted; and once, during a sitting, a woman's wedding-ring with a significant inscription arrived in his closed hand.

So much for his authority; very few of us can even approach it.

WAYS AND MEANS

Henry Segrave's reappearance was precluded in a curious way. He had once remarked that the only time he was ever frightened was when he saw a piano jump in Hannen Swaffer's flat; and in that flat, on the Sunday after his passing, an electric light was switched off by unseen hands and the bulb was deposited gently in the fire-place; later, a copy of the *Sunday Express*, in which Segrave's last article had appeared, was twice moved from one room to another.

Mr. Swaffer wrote of the occurrence to Lady Segrave, but it was more than a year before she was introduced by Red Cloud to her husband's spirit, and never after was she for a moment in doubt that he was still with her. Once, unannounced, she brought Lord Cottenham, one of Segrave's oldest friends, to a sitting, and the two men had a long talk of old times, as gay and keen as though their lives were still undivided; and later, in his Buckinghamshire home, Cottenham's hand was controlled, and he was soon receiving long messages from Segrave, whose brother Rodney, and his wife, when they attended a sitting, were at once hailed by him and described it later as the most amazing experience of their lives.

It may come as a surprise to his many readers to learn that Edgar Wallace was an unconscious Medium.

Once during the war in South Africa, where I remember him as a somewhat quaint private in the R.A.M.C., he had attended a post-mortem after a sleepless night, and on entering the empty barrack room saw a big unattractive woman who, smiling at him, said: "Our Tom has put you out this morning."

Across the Gulf, by Maurice Barbanell. London. Psychic Press, Limited. 1940. 3/6.

A moment later she vanished, and was recognised from his description as the dead man's step-sister who had brought him up.

Many years later, while editing the *Sunday News*, in which he had been poking fun at Spiritualism, he was writing in his country house some "amusing jabs" at Hannen Swaffer, when a voice in the air said: "I think it very silly and you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

There was no one in the room, the door was closed; and when he continued to write, the voice once more remarked: "It is silly."

Edgar took his temperature, went into his wife's room, and, after a few moments, returned to find the sheet on which he had been writing stripped from the pad, the watch and chain he had placed on it deposited beside it, and the charred remains of paper on the top of the fire. He said nothing, went to bed, and, rising at five next morning, saw seated on a chair in the corner of his study a woman whom he recognised as the dead sister of Hannen Swaffer, though he had never met her. She spoke quickly, giving him no chance of getting in a word. Then suddenly, as she ceased speaking, she was gone. Edgar again took his temperature; it was still normal; but he ended his article: "I shall no longer sneer at spirits."

The story of his return is too intricate to be spoilt by compression. It began by his transmitting the account of his "Passing Over" through the hand of an unknown woman in South Wales, and was made memorable by his impressing a message on a dictaphone for which no expert has been able to account.

EXPLORING AVENUES

Segrave and Edgar Wallace, one a daring merchant of speed, the other immersed in crime-fiction and horse racing, were two men whose mundane careers could have stimulated no expectation of their extra-mundane progress.

With Arthur Conan Doyle the only question was how soon we should hear from him, and he communicated with his daughter, Mary, through an entranced charwoman a few minutes after his passing over; so easily terminated is the somatic tenancy by a pure spirit.

Also, having realised by bitter experience the full range of sceptical incredulity, he contrived a bombardment of it through Mediums in various parts of the world; and the selection and preparation of the main channel of communication—a woman unaware of her psychic gifts or even of Spiritualism—makes romantic reading, and had been accomplished all unknown to him while he was still alive.

A month after his passing, she heard a voice declaring in clear tones: "I am Arthur Conan Doyle. I want you to get into touch with my wife and send her a message."

Being a Scotswoman, full of reserve and caution, and unknown to Lady Doyle, she asked for proof of his identity; and then for his wife's address. The voice gave her the telephone number of the Doyle cottage in the New Forest, adding that it was not in the telephone book.

This the lady found out to be correct, the Exchange, on her enquiry, declining to divulge it. So she asked for the number and Lady Doyle replied.

Incidentally, seeing how many people can forget their own telephone number, this was a pretty good test that memory—which science pretends to understand—is something apart from the cerebral matter which so often betrays it.

Even so, Lady Doyle was not convinced, and asked for more proof; so Sir Arthur produced a spirit-photograph of himself above the Scotswoman's head.

Even that did not suffice; so he deposited a key on the Medium's pillow, the key of his study at

Crowborough, which he must have transported over some forty miles.

His son, Denis, fetched the key, opened the door, and further doubts were abandoned. The story should go some way to correct the impression that bereaved Spiritualists are only too ready to swallow any consolatory evidence; and Sir Arthur must have been amused that his own repeated injunction to "Try the spirits!" had recoiled on his own immaterial head.

Sir Vincent Caillard's return was in the "unlikely" class. He had never given Spiritualism a thought, nor had his wife till six months after his passing.

Sir Thomas Lipton's was another of the "unlikely" returns, but he seemed no less cheerily at home in his new surroundings, and resented unreasonably the surprise of his friends at his reappearance; since they knew that he had had no faith in Survival when he was on earth. However, his memory was in no way impaired by sloughing off its fleshly burden, and he gave Mrs. Emma Cunliffe Owen, who raised the Sportsman's Battalion in the last war, convincing evidence of his identity.

One must omit regretfully the chapters on the *Mystery of Colonel Fawcett*, and on *Spirit Warnings about the R101 Disaster*, and the very interesting account of the amazing ability of Frank Leah and Marcel Poncin, who "draw the dead;" in order to leave room for the "return" of an absolutely unknown

girl, Bessie Manning, who, introduced by Red Cloud, gave her name and the ailment from which she died, and mentioned having brought with her her brother, Tommy, who was killed by a motor-car.

Her mother, she told Mr. Barbanell, because she reads his paper, has prayed that the Great Guide, Red Cloud, would bring her there. She begged that her mother should be brought to meet her, and gave slowly and distinctly her address: "14 Canterbury Street, Blackburn."

No one at that sitting had ever heard of Mrs. Manning, nor of the street in which she lived; but a telegram sent to the address evoked a grateful letter, and a week later she met her daughter again, and confirmed everything that she had said; and they talked together of happenings known to themselves alone.

Well, there it is! and if Science can offer an explanation other than ours, we should be glad to hear of it.

Nor is this a lone instance. The Bessie Mannings do turn up, from time to time; lost children brought back by kindly spirits to lighten the darkness that has settled on their homes.

She winds up effectively this excellent little volume, proof that it is not only the expected or the illustrious who return, and that those who guard the Elysian lanes that lead to us are no respecters of persons.

WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING

ALCHEMY

Sir,—May I congratulate LIGHT on the admirable articles by Mr. Cammell and his review of the book by Mr. Cockren that has just appeared? True Alchemy is indeed the Royal and Noble art; the universal art of vital chemistry, which by fermenting the human spirit purifies it and by dissolving opens up a new life and consciousness; the ancient experiment of nature to which the greatest philosophers, ethnic, Vedantist and Christian, have all borne witness. That ether, of which modern science is beginning to know a little, was quite familiar to such adepts as Tritheim (1484-1516), who writes:

"Everything as to its interior is fire and light, where the essence of the spirit is hid. Everything is a trinity of fire, light and air. This fire resides in the heart and radiates through man's body, giving it life. This spiritual light, which we call Nature or Soul of the World, is a spiritual body, which can be made tangible and visible . . . it is a universal and vital fluid, diffused everywhere in Nature, which penetrates all beings and is the most subtle of all substances." Any reader who consults the last sentences of Isaac Newton's *Principia* will find precisely the same idea expressed, though his official biographers carefully ignore the fact that Newton himself was an ardent alchemist and his MSS on Alchemy contain over 650,000 words in his own writing. Along with Boyle, Elias Ashmole and others, Newton's activities in the Royal Society (1703-1727) were probably intended to preserve the ancient tradition and keys to the hidden wisdom bequeathed to us from antiquity. Unfortunately, the drift of official science tended to materialism, and the Sacred Art, along with Christian doctrine, have been despised and rejected—resulting in the melancholy condition of Europe to-day. The last person in this country who is known to have held the true theoretic view of the Hermetic Mystery—though not a practising alchemist on the material plane—died in 1910. If Mr. Cockren can revive interest in the true subject and point the way to the Quintessence or "Mercury of the Wise," he may help to kindle a new light in the ever-deepening darkness which now threatens Western civilisation.

(Rev.) A. H. E. LEE.

TIME IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

Sir,—With reference to the letter from Mr. Alec Bussey in LIGHT of 2nd May, I would draw attention to the fact that this subject is dealt with by the discarnate F. W. H. Myers in his communications entitled *The Road to Immortality*. In this script Myers states that time and space are conditions of each of the planes of existence after death, up to the sixth, in which the spirit is embodied in form, but that on entering the seventh plane the spirit passes "from time into timelessness and from an existence in form into formlessness" (page 72).

Myers also refers to the time element in his scripts *Beyond Human Personality*, in which he states that on the Third Plane (The Immediate State after Death) each community within the group soul lives in its own space and time, and that one may travel backward and forward in point of time at will (pages 38-40).

W. HARRISON.

A WAY OF LIFE

Sir,—Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, in her address reported in LIGHT of May 9th, would make Spiritualism, not a religion, but synonymous with Psychic Science—merely another term for "Survivalism," to be used as a "firm foundation" to re-establish the teaching of the Church.

Imperator, through Stainton Moses, using, I think, a wiser definition, speaks of: "Spiritualism, or, as we prefer to call it, the voice of the spirit-world."

Now then. If that "voice of the spirit-world" tells us aught, it tells fundamentally, not only of Survival proved, of psychic faculties used (as in the miracles), but of things spiritual as well—of the greater worth of spirit beyond matters earthly (as in the resurrection of Jesus, His appearance to Paul and others, and his spiritual inspiration of them). And if we try to put into everyday practice this Spiritualism, this demonstrated superiority of spirituality, then surely—surely!—this is the "way of life"—and therefore, reverting to Mrs. Stobart's own definition—a Religion?

Orpington, Kent.

NELLIE I. SHAW.

Light

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EDITOR - - - GEORGE H. LETHAM

WHEN DEATH COMES

DEATH is inevitable, a condition necessary for the progress of life. But despite this, it cannot be said that we accept it either with grace or thankfulness; most of us resent the parting with those we love. No knowledge can fill the vacant chair or restore to us the voice which lightened our way. Absence and silence—these are what weigh upon our hearts.

In these days, many have a knowledge that death is not the end and that, in due time, they will meet their loved ones again. Some are fortunate and have a psychical awareness of their friends, which is a great comfort and takes the sting out of death.

But it is not everyone who is so constituted that he can experience this awareness. And there are some who find it difficult to get any satisfactory evidence through a Medium. It is these who find the separation which death brings so difficult to bear.

It is wise to remember that whenever the inevitable happens it is because we are so made that we must experience death. Grief is natural, but sometimes it is a form of self-love. We do not always love from and in the spirit; hence our affections are possessive. We desire to have the loved ones back, because their being with us ministers to our comfort. Our loss is that of the familiar; the absence of the well-known presence with its cheery smile. These generate influences which twine themselves around our hearts.

When death enters the household, it is never the same afterwards. But as death needs be, the wise person will not dwell upon it, and when the parting comes will recognise it as a process of nature which is a great blessing to the one who experiences it. If, instead of thinking of our loss, we consider the gain of the one passed on, it will help us to feel a nobler love for them. We shall see that to wish them back with us is to desire them to change their state of health and freedom for one of limitation and sickness.

Let us look beyond our loss to the joy which awaits our loved ones. For each has his friends who have preceded him; and although those we love also love us, there is no love so narrow that it excludes all other ties of friendship. And the arisen ones, knowing that death is really an entry into life, realise how temporary the parting is, and in this knowledge they live and enjoy their new-found life and friendships. They know that in a little while the gap will be closed, that reunion will be a blessed reality, and for them "there will be no more sea."

HOW SPIRITUALISM SHOULD HELP

Spiritualism should help us to see this; and if it does, what a comfort and help it will be when the gentle stranger enters our homes. This attitude of mind should be cultivated. We should have the forward look. We should learn to stand alone, at any rate in the physical sense. In the spiritual sense we need never be alone, for there is the possibility of a rich, though rare, spiritual communion with those of the larger life—a communion that is richer even than the messages given through a Medium. But this is not a common experience. Most of us need "the touch of a vanished hand" and long for "the sound of a voice that is still." Nevertheless, I

think we should strive for the higher fellowship more than we do; for in it is a transforming brightness that makes life beautiful. We can have a daily meeting with them in spirit; a few minutes in which we dwell upon their presence and enter into their joy. It is possible, and it can make life serene and happy.

TO RAIL IS FOOLISH

To rail at death and call God cruel is foolish. It reveals that our love is selfish and egotistical; it distorts life. For, when we adopt this attitude we are demanding that life shall be just what *we* wish it to be. We were happy; then death came and at one blow life became empty. Then we wail and cry and call God cruel. We shut out the light and deafen heaven with clamour. If such should be our love, maybe the one who is taken feels he has escaped something terrible. For a possessive love is vampirish; it sucks the life of the beloved in the fond delusion that it is ministering to it. Such love seeks by its compulsion to mould the object of its affection to its own pattern. The etheric symbol of such a love is seen as a number of hooked lines of light holding the object of its desire. The snapping of such a condition by death may indeed be liberation for the one taken, while it throws the one left upon himself to learn the lesson that real love gives. It ministers to and suffers for others. Its life is in the one beloved, but in such a noble and inspiring form that it gives freedom to him. By and by death will come to the one left, and if he has learned the lesson which the parting should teach, he will be reunited to his love.

The surest way to lose the one you love is to try to incorporate his life in yours. To hold, one must live their life in the beloved.

Spiritualism should be a guide in the time of sorrow. Its light should reveal the blessedness of death; the glory that awaits those who pass through the valley of light. It should rob death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. For:

There is no death in God's wide world,
But one eternal scene of change;
The flag of life is never furled,
It only taketh wider range.

W. H. EVANS.

"LIGHT" HELPED HER

A FEW weeks ago, an acquaintance whom I had not seen for a few years, called on me unexpectedly. I was surprised that she came, for we had never shared any mutual interests. A copy of LIGHT lying on the writing-desk attracted her attention, and we talked about Survival for two hours. When leaving, I handed her the copy of LIGHT with the remark: "Perhaps you would like to read it?" She replied: "I'd love to!" and put it into her hand-bag. A few days later she died from appendicitis.

Three weeks later, at dawn, my daughter, Nancy (the spirit-child who is always with me), said: "Darling, Mrs. Stone is here; she wants to talk to you."

SELF: I am so glad you have returned to speak to me. Can I take a message?

Mrs. STONE: "Yes, give my love to my son and to Charlie" (I didn't know her husband's name was Charlie). "Tell them I am with my daughter" (her daughter died in infancy twenty-one years ago). "She is such a beautiful girl! We are so happy together; I love being here and hope I shall never return to the earth! Tell them I haven't got a club-foot now, and my body is perfect" (this woman had a very pretty face, but a club-foot).

SELF: Yes, I will deliver your message. Do you remember the copy of LIGHT I gave you?

Mrs. STONE (most emphatically): "Yes, I do! Tell the Editor I came back! That paper helped me greatly!"

SHIRLEY ESHELBY.

THE PSYCHIC THREAD

WHAT IS GOD?

Last week, with the aid of the philosophers, I endeavoured to show that the *First Cause* cannot be regarded as a Personal God. Philosophically, this position cannot be avoided or denied, and once the mind has grasped it no other Idea of the First Cause can be admitted than that expressed in my quotations from Philo, Proclus, the Kabbalah, and from that living exponent of Eastern theosophy, Paul Brunton. The First Cause is Impersonal, Incomprehensible. He is the *Limitless One*, the *En Soph* of the Kabbalah: "a Being infinite, boundless, absolutely identical with itself, united in itself, without attributes, will, intention, desire, thought, word or deed." Transcendental Philosophy, which is compounded of the primordial wisdom transmitted by tradition; of the combined spiritual revelations of generations of Seers and Mystics; and of that philosophic deduction that may be termed Socratic or Platonic; has divested the First Cause of all attributes. He can be no other than the *Limitless One*, the *Incomprehensible*, formless and impersonal. But does the acceptance of this mystery, this most certain philosophic and theologic Truth, exclude faith in, and realisation of, a *Personal God*? It does not.

The Idea of the Limitless, Incomprehensible, Impersonal First Cause is to be found in every mystic system inspired by, or derived from, Higher Revelation; so is the Idea of the Personal God, the all-seeing, all-comprehending Father of all creation. But this twofold aspect of Divinity, which is, as mystic realisation unfolds itself, also threefold and tenfold, is so hard to express in any language as to remain almost impossible of understanding save by those who have developed that habit of mental concentration which may be called meditation. On that account the compilers of the Kabbalah, guided by their remote mystical progenitors, devised a symbolic and scientific system of theosophy to the end that the most profound mysteries might be interpreted to earnest seekers for Truth in terms sufficiently intelligible to the human understanding, and in such a way as to disclose a method by which meditation might be systematised and realisation attained. To explain, or attempt to explain, such a system in the brief space of an article is, of course, altogether out of the question; but, without discussing the subtle gradation of argument by which the Kabbalah develops its doctrines, I will try to give as simply as may be the result of its deductions regarding the *Personal God*.

THE CREATOR

In former articles (following my *Psychic Thread*) I have tried to indicate how from the First Cause, the *Limitless*, emanates a *Universal Force*, the *One Thing* of the Alchemists, the Divine or Astral Light, which has animated and still animates all creation, in every form, mineral, vegetable, animal, human, angelic: a Force which not only endows with life, but which confers immortality upon whatsoever it quickens. Now, when first this Force, this One Thing, this Light, issued from the formless being of the Boundless One, it took the form of ten emanations, the ten primary *Intelligencies*, or *Sephiroth*. These *Intelligencies* or Potencies were the beginning, as they are the sum, of all Intelligence. They were the first and the every attribute of Divinity; and it is only in and by His attributes that God is comprehensible. Before the *Intelligencies* emanated from the Limitless, God was formless, incomprehensible; with their emanation all potency of intellect and of creation became possible, and the Universe emerged. For the Limitless One cannot be the direct Creator, because He has "neither will, intention, desire, thought, language, nor action, as these properties imply limit and belong to finite beings, whereas the *En Soph* is boundless." It is the *Sephiroth*, the *Intelligencies*, which comprise together every Divine attribute and which constitute together God the Creator.

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

No mind can really comprehend any Personality save in relation to its attributes. The Kabbalah recognising this fact attributes to the ten Divine emanations (the *Intelligencies*) the ten primary qualities attributable to the Deity. From the Limitless, by means of the Divine Light, have therefore emerged ten potencies which together constitute *One Personal God*, emanated, uncreated, all-powerful, all-seeing, all-creating, all-comprehending, all-wise. The Divine attributes which constitute this *Omnipotent* and *Omniscient One* are, according to the Kabbalah, as follows: (1) Spiritual Power and Absolute Sovereignty, called *The Crown (Kether)*; (2) *Wisdom (Chokmah)*, this is God the Father; (3) *Intelligence (Binah)*, this is the Mother. These three form the first Holy Triad, and comprising, as they do, all power and the male and female principles (the Father and Mother), they constitute together a vast creative potency, which is likened to an infinite sea. From this sea pour forth into all Creation seven streams (the seven remaining *Intelligencies*): (4) *Love or Mercy (Chesed)*; (5) *Justice (Geburah)*; (6) *Beauty (Tiphareth)*; these three forming the second Holy Triad; (7) *Valour or Firmness (Netsach)*; (8) *Splendour or Glory (Hod)*; (9) *Foundation (Yesod)*, which is the Generative potency of creation: these three forming the third Triad; and (10) the Potency that binds all the *Intelligencies* together, encircling and unifying them: this potency is called the *Kingdom (Malkuth)*.

THE PERSONAL GOD

Such, comprehended in His divine attributes, is the *Personal God*, the direct Creator of all things, He whose spirit is *Light*, whose works comprise all forms of mind and matter. This is indeed God, who made Man in his Image. For the form of the united *Sephiroth (Intelligencies)* is (spiritually comprehended) the form of Man, and these ten potencies constitute the Divine Man, the *Archetypal Man*. Thus the Higher Wisdom, or Transcendental Philosophy, leads us back to the simple mystery of Faith, and destroys utterly the complacent cleverness of the Materialist who in his ignorance has rejected the doctrine of the Divine likeness of the human form. The *Sephiroth*, in reversed position, constitute likewise the mystical *Tree of Life*.

In the essential elements of the original Kabbalah we shall find all those doctrines which are of true value to the philosopher and to the Spiritualist (who must be, whether he will or no, a philosopher). The essential Kabbalah provides a symbolic corroboration of the sublime doctrines of Neo-Platonic philosophy, which embraces all philosophies. The Kabbalah unfolds and illuminates the esoteric law of Moses, which Christ, the incarnated *Word (Logos)* fulfilled and perfected. It is the doctrinal kernel of philosophy that matters, and that of the Kabbalah (when the shell, which is spurious, has been removed) is one with the core of all spiritual Revelation; while its symbolism provides us with a mental ritual, as it were, to strengthen our perceptions and confirm our Faith.

OUR FATHER

Never before in the age-long history of the human race has Man needed so urgently, so imperatively, the confidence and courage and serenity which arise with and abide with a complete Faith in a *Personal God*. Without that Faith, Man is lost—lost in this terrific hour in utter darkness, in despair of finding any spiritual potency in a world which to the material eye appears to be reeling before the most hideous onslaught of the grossest material machinery.

Take heart! God lives, and God is *Light*. He is the King, and our Father and our Mother; He is Love and Mercy, and Justice, and Beauty; He is Valour, and Glory, and eternal Rebirth; and He is Victory over darkness and destruction, that His Kingdom may come on Earth as it is in Heaven.

C. R. CAMMELL.

The Psycho-Dynamics of "Knocks" and "Raps"

7.—"I HEREBY DECLARE ON OATH . . ."

By ALAN HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM

EVEN were I being paid for these articles, I doubt whether the most perfect Theodore would venture to go to the extreme length of accusing me of what I called exceptionally artistic mendacity in describing the various incidents recorded in the earlier instalments of this series; if he did, I should know exactly what to say to him, and the same applies to Mr. and Mrs. Purchas and Dr. Hegy, not to mention various people whom they could no doubt call in evidence who shared with them their experiences of knocks and raps.

But evidence is evidence; it is accepted in law that an oath is somehow more binding and sacred than the word of honour of the most honourable man, and his testimony has none the less to be sworn in a court of law. So by way of added emphasis, as it were, I am sending to the Editor of this paper my sworn declaration, made before and witnessed by a Commissioner of Oaths, that what I have related is true—and that goes, while I am about it, for the occurrences related in "Forced to Recant"—for reproduction at this point.

* * *

9th November, 1939.

The above was typed, ready for press, the day before yesterday, November 7th. As an experience of the phenomena under discussion, what now follows would properly have belonged to the fourth instalment. There are two reasons, however, for inserting it here. One is the practical one that to add it to number four now would either make that instalment longer than the Editor would find convenient in his now war-curtailed space, or else it would cause me a deal of trouble in rearranging the allotment of pages to the already-typed succeeding sections. The other reason is that there is a certain dramatic fitness in inserting it here, because yesterday there was nothing to interpolate; it had not occurred; fourth-dimensionally it lay before me in my then unencountered Future.

Four hours ago, at 4.30 p.m. this afternoon, I had an experience of raps quite new to me. Up till that time, such phenomena had occurred in my case exclusively in my own rooms, and when I was alone. But this afternoon I had a sitting with a lady Medium well-known in Europe to those interested in Psychical Research as Frau Lotte Plaat, now Frau von Strahl. In fact I have before me copies of the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Evening Standard* of May 19th, 1930, "featuring" her and her mediumship.

Frau von Strahl is a waking clairaudient and clairvoyant, and what is called by the curious name of "psychometrist." I sat on a sofa, and she sat three feet away, opposite to me, in the middle of the room.

After evidential descriptions and messages concerning people known only to myself, she began giving me messages from the producer of the knocks mentioned in Number Four of this series. I had not said a word to her about having heard any such sounds, but she asked me whether I had not heard such. I replied that I had, and remarked that I was actually at this very time engaged on an article for a Spiritualist paper on that very subject. Frau von Strahl thereupon said—"This article, is it not in a number of . . . what do you call it? . . . parts, chapters?" "Instalments, or sections," I said. "Well, can you remember what is in the third section?" "Can't say I do." "Well, on the second page, page two, of the third portion, there is something about which you will have to write a lot more. Look at it when you go home; the second page of the third section." I did so in due course, and found that page 2 of No. III. of my typescript contains the description of Mr. Treu's knocks heard by Mr. T. A. R. Purchas at his "circles," to which I am now on the point of giving considerable attention in the

(at the moment yet unwritten) concluding portion of this article.

To return to the séance itself. Even as Frau von Strahl said the last words quoted above, there came a stream of little fairy-like taps apparently near or in a massive antique inlaid cupboard away in the corner of the room. I find it impossible really to describe the peculiar sound of these little taps with any exactness. I subsequently tried to imitate them on various parts of the cupboard and the chest of drawers next to it, but the wood gave out no sound in the least resembling it. I tried tapping rapidly with the unsharpened end of a lead pencil; I tried with the leaden point; I tried my index and middle finger nails in rapid alternation. I could make no sounds anything like the same; they were far too deep in note, too dull, too resonant, too hollow . . . too wooden, if I may so put it. The only sound I ever heard that at all suggested these accompanied sparks between the terminals of induction coil attached to a wet battery when, in the early days of wireless experiments, attempts were being made to send Morse. But these little elfin taps were on a high note, much less loud, and with a thin tinny quality not at all like the loud rending cracks which accompanied the sparks. Moreover they were very rapid—at a rapidity much higher than my pencil or finger-nails could attain; they were more rapid than machine-gun fire. If I called them something between a series of individual taps and a crackle as of a stream of tiny spark-sounds, that is as near as I can get to the effect. I can imagine no mechanical device which could possibly produce what we heard by any description of blows or taps. They ceased and recommenced three or four times in this manner.

We were both completely taken by surprise; Frau von Strahl said that she had over and over again heard the usual sounds of knocks and raps, but never these peculiar thin fairy-like sounds. Even as we talked, the sounds resumed, but this time with varying intervals. They now reminded me, in incidence only, not in sound, of nothing so much as of what I was able to do with a French St. Etienne machine-gun at the French army-school at Salonika in 1918. This gun has a device by which, through thumb-pressure as one fires, one can control and regulate the rate of fire at will, varying it from single shots, or pairs, to groups, at any slow or fast speeds up to full normal rapidity.

"Wait!" said Frau von Strahl; "he says he is going to do it again," and forthwith came a succession of the same sounds, perhaps ten or fifteen, twice over, evenly spaced at intervals of perhaps a fraction more than half a second between taps. "He wants one day to tap like that to give you messages, when you are alone. U moet de letters tel hardop, maar hard, hardop!" (You must say the letters over aloud—but loudly, loudly!). We listened for some more for a few minutes, and then Frau von Strahl said "He is vexed; he cannot do it any more; the power is all used up. Never mind! He says—'But some day I'll do it. Ja! Zekerlyk! Ik zal het doen.'" (Yes! Certainly! I will do it.). The Communicator was before his death bilingual, Afrikaans being his real mother-tongue. Apparently, having a Medium familiar with Dutch, he used it freely on this occasion; Frau von Strahl, whose first husband was a Hollander, rendered him in fluent Nederlands, the Dutch of Holland. Actually, no doubt, the words used were "Ja! Sekerlik! Ek sal dit doen!" (This by way of explanation for South African readers).

The sitting lasted an hour and a half, and was full of charm and of personal evidential matter, but the above incidents are all that concern my subject except that a discussion took place with the communicator,

(Continued at foot of next column)

ELEMENTALS—A THEORY

(From *L'Astrosophie* for May-June).

It is neither logic nor common-sense to proclaim the impossibility of an experience merely because it has never come our way: "The thing is impossible," said M. Richet, "nevertheless it happened."

PERCEPTION

Probably the number is relatively small of those who claim to have seen fairies, sprites or elementals of one kind or another. Maurice Hewlett asserts, in an article in the above journal, that he has done so on several occasions, and he puts forward definite theories as to the technique required for this supernormal perception.

"Form in itself," he writes, "is a convention essential to our understanding, as to our own existence. Form is just as much an expression of awareness as Time, Space or Rhythm. From this it follows that before they can become visible to us, nature spirits and elementals must assume a form or body; we become aware of this form or body by means of our sensitivity, and this twofold sensitivity—our own and that of the elementals—is what establishes the rapport between us."

"There are amongst us certain poets, sceptics and seers who have this faculty; and it follows that the same spirit, the same dryad, may assume a different form to different seers, for no clairvoyant can perceive any form that lies outside his powers of perception. To a poet such a form will be one of harmony or rhythm; to a musician it will be auditive; while mystics speak of 'visions of joyous colour.' For yet others, elementals only wear the body of a sigh of bliss, or even of a perfume."

"These forms of expression are not really of importance; they are merely conditioned by our sensitivity and powers of perception. The outward form of any such being is relative and variable, its existence is real and its substance spiritual and constant."

M.A.B.

(Continued from previous page)

sometimes in English, sometimes in Dutch, concerning how his knocks are produced. This I will keep till I come to their actual dynamics.

A SWORN DECLARATION

At this point I will ask the Editor to insert the sworn declaration referred to, and to certify in a footnote that his printed copy is a true copy of the original in his possession.

I, ALAN HERBERT HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM, of the City of Pretoria, in the Province of Transvaal, South Africa, hereby declare on oath as follows:—

(1) That the whole of the experiences and incidents related in the above articles as having occurred to myself are the truth and occurred exactly as related therein;

(2) That previous to the references stated to have been made by Mediums to these occurrences, no information whatever of any description which would have enabled or in any way assisted such Mediums to make such references was given by me to them or to any third party who might have conveyed such information to others.

ALAN HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM.

The above declaration sworn before me, J. C. H. BEYNON, J.P., Commissioner of Oaths, at Pretoria, this 6th day of November, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, the above Alan Herbert Howgrave-Graham fully understanding the terms thereof.

J. C. H. BEYNON,
Commissioner of Oaths.

Certified that the above is a true copy of the original declaration in my possession.

GEORGE H. LETHEM,
Editor of LIGHT.

(Next week: "Evidence by Cross-Correspondence.")

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CORRECTION

In last week's LIGHT we gave an account of a message purporting to be from Sir E. Marshall Hall, and received through Mrs. E. M. Taylor, whom, owing to a misunderstanding, we described as "a Medium who gives sittings regularly at the L.S.A."

Mrs. E. M. Taylor is a non-professional Medium who, in collaboration with the late Mr. W. Montgomery-Smith, wrote the book, *Light in Our Darkness*.

The Medium who is doing valuable work at the L.S.A. is Mrs. Mary Taylor.

We tender our apologies to both these ladies for this accidental misrepresentation.

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