LIGHT

A Journal of Psychical Research, Spiritualism and Occultism

Special Conference Number

EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL
By Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP
By Percy Wilson, M.A.

DISBELIEF IN THE PROBLEM OF SURVIVAL
By Professor H. H. Price

EXPERIMENTAL METHODS IN SURVIVAL RESEARCH
By George Zorab

Also Conference Discussions, Symposium, etc.

SCEPTICISM, GULLIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE
By Simeon Edmunds

AN EXPERIMENT IN RADIESTHESIA
By Dr. L. J. Bendit

THE MANOR HOUSE EXPERIMENT
By Major D. B. Stevens

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY
By W. H. Boore

Also Book Reviews, Correspondence, Editorial, etc.

THE
COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE LTD.

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MEETINGS IN SUMMER SESSION, 1959

APRIL

WEDNESDAY, 8th at 3 p.m.
"My Spiritual Odyssey"
MRS. DOROTHY HERRINGTON

TUESDAY, 14th at 6.30 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MRS. JEAN THOMPSON

WEDNESDAY, 15th at 3 p.m.
"Chalice Well"
MRS. CYNTHIA LEGH

SUNDAY, 19th at 3 p.m.
Speaker: MRS. C. SITWELL
Demonstrator: MR. ROY MORGAN

TUESDAY, 21st at 6.30 p.m.
"The Mechanics of the Paranormal"
MAJOR D. B. STEVENS

WEDNESDAY, 22nd at 3 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MR. JOHN LOVETTE

TUESDAY, 28th at 6.30 p.m.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
(Members only)
7.30 p.m.: "At Home" for Members
Buffet Supper *Tickets* 5/-

WEDNESDAY, 29th at 3 p.m.
"The Dead Hand of Dogma"
MR. SIMEON EDMUNDS

THURSDAY, 30th at 6.30 p.m.
"The Healing Aspect of Hypnosis"
MR. R. EARNSHAW

MAY

TUESDAY, 5th at 6.30 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MRS. IVY SCOTT

WEDNESDAY, 6th at 3 p.m.
"Mystic and Occult Paths"
MR. EDMUND BENTLEY

TUESDAY, 12th at 6.30 p.m.
"The Manor House Experiment"
BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.

WEDNESDAY, 13th at 3 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MRS. BESS HEWITSON

TUESDAY, 19th
NO MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 20th
NO MEETING

SUNDAY, 24th at 3 p.m.
Speaker: MR. F. R. MAUDE
Demonstrator: MR. JOHN LOVETTE

TUESDAY, 26th at 6.30 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MR. F. JORDAN-GILL

WEDNESDAY, 27th at 3 p.m.
"A Scientist of the Invisible"
MISS E. V. HERSEY

THURSDAY, 28th at 6.30 p.m.
"The Etheric Body and the Mind"
MR. R. C. WATERS

JUNE

TUESDAY, 2nd at 6.30 p.m.
"Possession"
MR. JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES

WEDNESDAY, 3rd at 3 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MR. ARMAND WILSON

TUESDAY, 9th at 6.30 p.m.
"The Unfoldment of the Idea of God"
MISS MARJORIE BISHOP, B.Sc.

WEDNESDAY, 10th at 3 p.m.
"Rupert Brooke and Life after Death"
MR. H. J. D. MURTON
(Editor of *Prediction*)

TUESDAY, 16th at 6.30 p.m.
"The continuing evidence of Trance Sittings"
(A sequel to an address given at the L.S.A. in 1939)*
"MR. TOM"

WEDNESDAY, 17th at 3 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MRS. IVY SCOTT

SUNDAY, 21st at 3 p.m.
Speaker: MR. W. V. BLEWETT
Demonstrator: MRS. JEAN THOMPSON

TUESDAY 23rd at 6.30 p.m.
Intuition, Clairvoyance and Prophecy—with Demonstration Experiments
DR. GILBERT N. HOLLOWAY and THE REV. JUNE HOLLOWAY

WEDNESDAY, 24th at 3 p.m.
"Clairvoyant Diagnosis"
MRS. L. J. BENDIT
(Miss Phoebe Payne)

TUESDAY, 30th at 6.30 p.m.
"Wave Functions in Thought Transference"
DR. GRIFFITH EVANS

JULY

WEDNESDAY, 1st at 3 p.m.
"New Developments in American Psychic Science and Spiritual Phenomena"
DR. GILBERT N. HOLLOWAY and THE REV. JUNE HOLLOWAY

TUESDAY, 7th at 6.30 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MRS. FRANK BROWN

WEDNESDAY, 8th at 3 p.m.
Demonstration of Clairvoyance
MR. ROY MORGAN

TUESDAY, 14th at 6.30 p.m.
"A Visit to Mexico"
MRS. MURIEL HANKEY

WEDNESDAY, 15th at 3 p.m.
"My Experience as a Medium"
MR. F. JORDAN-GILL

*Copies of this address can be had in advance from the College. Price 6d. each.

LIGHT

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Editor: **F. CLIVE-ROSS**

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EDITORIAL

In spite of our enormous technological advances we are spiritually, and as humane beings, not the equals of the average Australian aboriginal or the average Eskimo—we are very definitely their inferiors.

M. F. ASHLEY MONTAGU.

THE Problem of Survival, which was the theme at the Conference organised by the College of Psychic Science last November, is something which is probably peculiar to our times and which has arisen as a result of the decline in religious belief and the advent of scientific materialism. Our remote forefathers knew of no such problem, and it does not seem to have concerned other races at other times. This is possibly due to the fact that religions which are based on, and preserve to a greater or lesser extent, true metaphysic, and I am not using this word in the generally accepted but limited and erroneous Western sense, are not concerned with what is, I suspect, an entirely artificial problem which has only arisen as a result of the deviation and decadence of our times.

The unfortunate effects of the Reformation, which successfully removed the metaphysical teaching from the church and thus left it a body without soul or authority, and the subsequent appearance of rationalism, nineteenth-century materialism, and much which is designated "freethought", but which might be more correctly dubbed "wrong-thought" to the extent that any real thought can be said to be involved at all, illustrates the bounds and direction of this deviation. It is also a characteristic of our age that apart from those who are quite unaware of these trends, there exists a body of ostensibly educated opinion which imagines that "progress" is being made towards some undefined and nebulous goal, and which nurtures the delusion that twentieth-century man is more enlightened than his predecessors in the things that really matter, instead of being as in actual fact, very much less so. Against such a background it is not surprising that numbers of artificial problems or questions arise which would be unheard of in better times.

If we were to commence to think properly and to discard the limiting, stultifying and ultimately destructive "modern scientific method" which, by its very nature cannot provide an answer to "problems" which only exist because of the limitations we have invented; to return, in short, to a traditional way of life based on proper metaphysic and, incidentally, a knowledge of true principles; we should find that no "problem of survival" exists at all. We only raise the question of survival or non-survival

after death because we persist in viewing things from an artificial or false angle entirely of our own devising. In a traditional civilisation the question of survival is not a problem which has been solved by the availability of evidence denied to us; the so-called question does not, and could not, exist. It is really our attitude which must change; our present mentality which must be discarded; and the collection, sifting and analysing of material "facts" by the scientific method is, to say the least, not likely to bring this about.

To the student of history the trends and tendencies of the past few hundred years show all too clearly that the time would come when the question of survival after death would arise. It is worth noting that when it was asked and man actually knew less, he behaved as if the path he had been following had taught him more, and the knowledge he had lost through the centuries was merely referred to as "superstition". Instead of being, as in actual fact, less enlightened, he regarded himself as more enlightened than those to whom such a question had never occurred and to which, in any case, it would have been quite meaningless. We should never make the mistake of supposing that the people of mediaeval times and earlier had mentalities similar to our own; they were very different.

However, with the "discoveries" of science the question was asked, and it was not long before "scientific" answers were being offered by those both in favour of survival and against it. The argument continues to this day, and it does not say much for the church that it has even encouraged scientific attempts to prove the Bible historically true! Even the theosophists, occultists and other groups claiming deeper knowledge have, on occasions, stated that science and occultism are drawing closer together, and this with a certain satisfaction rather than as a calamity which only indicates that occultism is also falling, or has fallen, deeply into error.

It is likely that to unreal questions we shall only receive unreal answers and this certainly seems to be the case when we consider survival after death. These answers range from the materialists' strange belief that nothing survives at all, in fact there is nothing to survive, to the spiritualist "summerland"; a sort of astral subtopia, in which the individual finds himself exactly as before death only minus his physical body. Whereas the beliefs of the former appear to be based on nothing more than wrong thought and limited observation, the spiritualists claim that this information is derived from those actually living (if that is the right word) in the spirit-world and who have given us this information through mediums. This claim can only command respect if examination shows the alleged communications to be what they purport to be.

Telepathy and Clairvoyance

Despite the existence of a spiritualist movement and many hundreds of mediums, matter worthy of serious consideration from this point of view is extremely rare. Mediums frequently tell strangers of facts which they could not possibly have known, but this indicates no more than a clairvoyant or psychometric faculty and certainly does not prove the survival of the individual after death. In fact if we allow the existence, or very strong possibility of these two faculties and telepathy, there remains very little which cannot be accounted for by one or other of these means. It is unfortunate that so many mediums have been trained into the habit of saying "I am shown" or "My guide tells me" when they really mean "I see" or "I feel". So a great majority either consciously or unconsciously dress-up a little clairvoyance or telepathy as a "communication", working on the assumption that as "I could not possibly have known these facts" some guide or spirit "must have told me or put the facts into my head". This sort of theorising need not be taken very seriously; we know little enough of the limits and powers of the individual to state what he could or could not have known under certain conditions, without positing the intervention of discarnate entities.

When all due allowance has been made for these alternative explanations there remain a small number of cases which are exceptions, albeit very few. If we are to believe spiritualist

historians there was a time when it was a comparatively simple matter to visit physical mediums, who would produce materialisations in good light with which it was possible to converse freely. Mediums of this kind seem to have almost entirely disappeared and many of those who have claimed to be able to produce phenomena of this kind over the past quarter of a century, have subsequently proved to be fraudulent. However, there are cases on record where materialisations have appeared in the likeness of the deceased and have been able to converse in his manner and with some of his knowledge. This would appear to be of interest even to the members of orthodox religion.

It is a significant fact that spiritualism has only really established itself in the Western world in countries predominantly Christian, and which are showing more prominently than anywhere else, with the possible exception of communist countries which seem anxious to emulate all that is worst in the West in its decadence, the fate of a society which has deviated almost entirely from its proper function. In India it has made no impression and Buddhists do not even ask the questions which it purports to answer. In no case, however, would any of these religions (a word I use with reservations; it does not really apply, although better than "philosophies" which, even more, gives rise to the "systems" which occidentals are inclined to detect in everything) deny the actual facts as recorded; they would merely attach no importance to them, but regard them purely as "psychic tricks", although quite genuine in their sphere. Most orthodox religions frown on attempts to communicate with the departed, whilst admitting the reality of psychic phenomena, and there may well be a good reason for this.

To begin with it is necessary to decide exactly what it is that survives death. Many spiritualists would claim that the individual remains entire, having shed his physical body, unlikely as this may seem. Other schools have taught that after the death of the physical body, a further etheric and near physical vehicle is discarded, to be followed by the emotional nature and so on. This means that the real "I", animating principle, spark of the divine, or whatever we like to call it, which was probably not very apparent during life, is the only part of us to survive eventual death, and this because it has never been subject to it. The remainder disintegrates in time, and it is not unreasonable to imagine that each of these cast-off attributes of the human being possess some form of life of its own, similar to that of the physical body. It is not inconceivable, therefore, to suppose that it might be easier to establish contact with one of these discarded vehicles, rather than with the deceased's true "I", specially if working from a gross or physical level. If one were able to do so one would expect a deterioration in the personality and mental capacity of the deceased, and this is precisely what one does find in the majority of communications, whatever the form of mediumship. So pronounced is this, in fact, that it once led someone to remark to the effect that it might be debatable whether ghosts or spirits had bodies, but they certainly had no brains!

If this theory is true, and it has the advantage of some orthodox backing as well as being more in line with the facts of mediumistic communication, it would mean that attempted contact with the departed is largely a waste of time and might be unhealthy in any case. This possibly accounts for the injunction of the Bhagavad Gita: "Men of Darkness are they who make a cult of the departed and of spirits."

Insignificant Communications

Further strong support is given to this theory by one of the most telling facts against the discarnate spirit hypothesis, and that is that after one hundred years and more of spiritualism very little of any significance has been communicated. We are told of the "summerland" where "halls of learning" exist, but no learning worthy of the name seems to filter back to us, although a steady stream of long-winded platitudes, pious hopes and woolly thinking pours forth. If one was to ask where there was any communicated material to compare with the works of St. Augustine, or St. Thomas Aquinas or Meister Eckhart or, in more modern times such contemporary writers as Frithjof Schuon or Rene

Guenon, one can only reply that nothing has appeared even to remotely compare with any of them.

If little is communicated of any intellectual worth one might well ask what is the value of mediumship? To this it might be replied that it proves life after death although, apart from any argument about that it would, presumably, only prove it to those who had departed from any proper traditional religion or had acquired such a materialistic manner of thinking as to need this kind of "proof". Occasional conversation through a medium, even if it is what it is supposed to be, is in any event a poor substitute for the loss of the physical presence of a loved companion. Undeniably it sometimes comforts the bereaved, although it is doubtful whether an emotional argument of this type can be sustained. Is one justified in comforting the bereaved at all costs, by means which may be either true or false?

I am not suggesting that all possibility of communicating with the dead should be ruled out and, in rare cases, it may be that mental mediumship can establish a link with the departed "higher self", in the case of exceptional mediums, who are all too few. We must try to consider the nature and functions of what I have called the real "I", existing independently of the physical body, not in space or in duality, but probably in eternity, which latter word should be defined as "without time". Was it ever subject to death and does any problem of survival have any meaning in relation to it?

The Conference Report

THIS special Conference number of *Light* constitutes a landmark in our history for two reasons. To begin with it reports in detail the lectures and discussions which took place at the most important and successful Conference to be organised by the College of Psychic Science in its long history and, secondly, it is by far the largest issue of *Light* to appear since it was founded in 1881.

I only wish we had been able to include everything that was said during the Conference, but it is an unfortunate fact that when we rise to speak impromptu we often fail to express ourselves in a manner that will appear intelligible if it is recorded. I was very surprised when I received the typed copies of the Conference discussions to find what a large part did not make sense at all. In some cases the speaker had not made himself clear enough, and I have been obliged to delete these parts. In others the microphone failed to record certain key words which it was difficult to supply from memory, or the voice just trailed off and could not be heard. Despite the repeated warnings of the Principal of the College speaker after speaker failed to give his name, and in the record we had no idea who was speaking on many occasions. In these latter instances I have just had to preface the remarks with the word "Questioner".

Regrettably the whole of the discussion following Mr. Zorab's lecture had to be deleted, and in other places wherever matter has not been published I have inserted a row of asterisks to denote a cut. We have published all that we possibly could, and I am very much indebted to Mrs. Hankey for her help in the difficult task of editing and deciphering the scripts.

It is hoped that the extracts published will give some idea of the interest taken in the whole Conference.

F. CLIVE-ROSS.

Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him: it is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of nothing, and that his present birth is his first entrance into life.

SCHOPENHAUER.

EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL

By BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.

The Lectures and Discussions delivered at the Conference on "The Problem of Survival", organised by the College of Psychic Science at Brighton on November 28th—30th, 1958, are published in the order in which they took place. This lecture opened the proceedings after the delegates assembled.

DO we survive after death? This is a question which two hundred years ago was not asked as the civilised world was Christian and so automatically believed in the teaching of their priests under pain of damnation, and even in the so-called uncivilised world, the majority of religions endorsed a belief in some kind of survival. There have always been schools of philosophy which denied survival, but it was left to the mechanistic scientist of the Victorian age to raise the first real doubts about it. This doubt has persisted to this time and may have even been increased by the claims of Spiritualists to be able to prove it. If it can be proved, as is claimed, why believe without proof? It is probable that fewer people today believe in survival than in past centuries, as many are unwilling to accept the assurance of the priesthood but require personal evidence. Recent polls in civilised countries reveal that not more than fifty per cent were certain that man survived death.

In this paper, I am not using the word proof, as it is doubtful whether there can be absolute proof of anything. It seems always possible to raise alternative theories if one is prepared to speculate widely into the unknown, an unknown which, with our subject, leads us into conjectures about the omniscience of the unconscious or into the deeper realms of Universal Mind. It is the increase of knowledge about the unconscious which creates the main difficulty in obtaining conclusive evidence for survival.

It is, therefore, necessary to deal with the claims for the powers of the unconscious in order to assess their validity. It is not within the scope of this paper to deal fully with these and to state which in my opinion are valid and which remain in the realm of theory. Some, I regret to say, seem to me to be more in the realm of phantasy than of theory.

I am willing to believe that the unconscious has a perfect memory and can hold and reproduce on occasions, everything that it had acquired. I am quite unwilling to believe that the unconscious contains all knowledge or that it can acquire knowledge at will. If, indeed, our minds and presumably the minds of illiterate folk have this faculty of omniscience, then it seems to me that such a mind has earned survival, as it would equate with the mind of the Deity. If only this were true, how much easier it would be to solve our daily problems. I would not, however, base any claim for survival on such slender evidence.

Some of the evidence, which in the past was accepted without question as coming from the other world, can now be explained as coming from incarnate sources. There being no doubt that some form of communication is possible between incarnate minds, there remains the possibility that evidence given through mediums does come from an incarnate mind and not from a discarnate one as it generally purports to be. The evidence for this is too strong to be denied and I, for one, would not wish to deny it. On the contrary, I affirm strongly that telepathy between incarnate minds takes place and is responsible for some mediumistic communications. The question which interests us today, is whether telepathy or extra-sensory perception—a term which is now used to include all forms of supernormal activity—can be said to explain *all* mediumistic activity and thus to render null and void evidence which

appears to have its origin in discarnate sources. The problem in all forms of psychic activity is to determine the intelligence behind the manifestation, to determine whether that intelligence is incarnate or discarnate or a mixture of both. It is my belief that both forms of psychic activity exist, incarnate and discarnate, and that it is our problem to decide in any individual case which intelligence is manifesting. I would ask you to consider what I am to say in the light of this statement.

The term "extra-sensory" perception implies in itself that this psychic activity is beyond the physical senses. The evidence that it is beyond these senses is so strong that I do not think that anyone can reasonably claim that it is physical. One thing that is certain is that it does not obey the laws of time and space and indeed, has been responsible for breaking practically every known physical law. I accept, therefore, that it is not physical and affirm that it belongs to another order of being, which undoubtedly has its own laws but which, however, are very imperfectly understood by us. This may be because in considering them, we are prone to think in terms of the physical with which we are acquainted and not in terms of the meta-physical with which we have only a nodding acquaintance.

I claim that the scientific confirmation of extra-sensory perception is necessary because it gives proof that a man can function without his physical senses. Without that scientific proof, it would be more difficult for Spiritualists to maintain their claim that man can utilise some form of senses after the dissolution of the physical body. I know that Spiritualists are sometimes prone to regard E.S.P. as an enemy. On the contrary, I regard the proof of E.S.P. as an important step in the claim of those who believe in communication after death. A friend and not an enemy.

If man is only a physical body and nothing else, survival becomes impossible. There is nothing to survive after the decay of the flesh and its return to mother earth.

There must be something to survive, something to go on to other realms and that something must be our own individuality, must be "us". To me, it entails the recognition that, besides the physical body, there are other vehicles of manifestation of the mind and intelligence of man. It does not matter for the purposes of this paper what they are called. The Bible refers to a "spiritual body". Other schools of thought refer to etheric and astral and other bodies which act as the vehicle for the soul of man and together with it, form the surviving personality.

A seeker would therefore start by looking for evidence that such a vehicle exists. A scientist would find this task difficult because it would appear unlikely that it could be detected by any of his scientific methods, based on physical measurement. We must look elsewhere for evidence of the existence of the immaterial and we find it in the accounts of men and women who have had the experience of being out of their physical body but with their consciousness still functioning.

Astral Travelling

I refer to so-called "astral travelling". By this is meant the ability to manifest as mind at a distance from the physical body. To view a distant scene, to hear a distant conversation and to describe in detail unknown physical surroundings and at the same time, to experience the sensation of being in another body and even to view from outside the physical body which has been left behind. With this experience, there is not the sensation of being a disembodied spirit but rather one of existing in a body which, although apparently having many of the attributes of the physical, does not obey physical laws. When functioning in such a body, space and time do not have the same meaning. There are many cases recorded of this happening, too many to be disregarded as imagination and there are even people who are to some extent, able to produce this manifestation at will. They can project their consciousness with all the sensation of being clothed in a body to a distance and return with correct information about the distant scene. Although this may be to some extent explained by clairvoyance, the alternative explanation is that the physical body has been left behind and

that another vehicle is being used for the utilisation of the mind of man. Whatever this manifestation is, there is no doubt that the intelligence behind it is the purposeful intelligence of an incarnate, acting in defiance of physical laws.

It is claimed that this is what happens on death. At that time, the intelligence leaves the physical body and continues to manifest in another body. It is remarkable that accounts from clairvoyants all over the world, amongst the civilised as well as amongst the uncivilised races, agree that, at death, another body manifests to their clairvoyant sight and that this body at first is connected to the physical body by a cord. When the process of death is complete, this cord is severed and there is complete separation between the two bodies. You will recall the biblical statement about the silver cord being loosed. Is this what happens during "astral travelling"? Most of those who have undergone this experience, affirm that they have felt an attachment to the physical during their experience and have even seen themselves suspended above the physical body but joined to it by a cord. This cord appears to defy physical laws by being infinitely extensible. Death would occur if this cord snapped, but the experience of astral travelling would appear to be a foretaste of life without the body. In these cases, there appears to be a presence at the distant scene or at any case, a sensation of presence which distinguishes them from my next theme, that of apparitions.

When the apparent form of a person is seen or heard by someone else at a distance, that constitutes an apparition. It is rare with astral travelling, for the form to be seen and with the true apparition, it appears rare for the intelligence behind it, when that intelligence is incarnate, to be aware that it is manifesting. There may well be many classes of apparition but many are due to some form of telepathy, the projection of ideas by other than the physical senses and their apprehension by the distant percipient. Our problem here is to ascertain what acted on the mind of the percipient to cause him to conjure up an apparition. There have been many well authenticated cases of experimental apparitions, that is to say, that someone deliberately tried to make himself seen by another person at a distance. Here the evidence shows that the intelligence behind the manifestation must be that of the incarnate agent. There would, indeed, be no other possible cause. Many of the apparitions seen are those of dead people. It is therefore possible to deduce that the intelligence behind that manifestation is that of a dead person. This is the simplest explanation and to avoid this conclusion demands a complicated theory unlike the simple theory in the case of an incarnate apparition and one that often strains, by its very complication, the credulity of the ordinary man or woman. Both Myers and Tyrrell, who have written on apparitions, came to the conclusion that it is difficult in many cases to find any other intelligence behind the apparition than that of a deceased person. Although I am aware that the whole question of apparitions is complicated and that there are, in my opinion, many different causes for their appearance, I feel that some apparitions form the most impressive evidence for survival and I am unable to accept complicated alternative explanations involving unproven powers of the unconscious and making too great a claim on our credulity to be called scientific. In this and in other cases, I am unable to classify as scientific the extension of the powers of the unconscious to a degree for which there is no proof. It is not scientific to invent theories to explain away that which you do not like.

Although the best ghosts seem to belong to distant times, there is a case which took place in 1932. Samuel Bull of Ramsbury, Wiltshire, died in June, 1931. His aged widow, his married daughter and her husband and children lived together in a ramshackle cottage, which they continued to occupy although it was condemned as unfit for human habitation. In February, 1932, Samuel's figure appeared and ascended the stairs into the room where his wife was lying in bed. He was seen by his daughter and grandson, aged twenty-one, as well as by the widow and the other children. At first everybody was terrified and the children screamed but as he continued to appear, they got used to

him. He was dressed as he usually was after changing from his working clothes. He looked quite solid and natural and on one occasion at least, called the widow by name and laid his hand on her forehead. He continued to appear frequently until Sunday, April 9th. Only members of his family saw him and he was actually seen by nine persons at once and, in this respect, is probably unique. On occasions, he was seen on and off for several hours. I cannot account for this appearance on any other hypothesis than that of the surviving personality of Samuel Bull. All other hypotheses seems to me to be too far-fetched. This case, backed up by others of a similar nature, are excellent evidence for survival and must be taken into account in assessing the problem. I prefer to believe that the surviving mind was responsible for his ghost appearing and that, therefore, this case is evidence for survival.

Visions Seen by Children

Another class of visions is that of those of quite young children for which there are many examples. Children of tender age who are too young to have formulated ideas on the subject, have seen dead people quite naturally and have given their own ideas of the next world in contradiction to all they had been taught by their orthodox parents. This class of case is most impressive and shook a most determined defender of the theory that all such visions are of incarnate origin, Charles Richet, who found them most "disturbing". Disturbing they were, to him, as they failed to fit into his materialistic ideas. One case is particularly impressive. A young dying child, who hovered between life and death for some days, repeatedly saw visions of other children. There was an epidemic at the time but she only saw the forms of her school friends who, unknown to her, had died. Why did she not see the forms of the living as well, if some incarnate process was involved? Here is strong evidence that she was seeing the forms of the dead, because they were able to manifest to her. Here again, the simplest explanation may contain the truth.

The expression "crisis" apparition will be well known to you. By that is meant the appearance of an apparition at the time of a crisis. When these were investigated by Gurney, he found that so many apparitions appeared, without any doubt, some time after death, that he was forced to try and find a reason. There was nothing to distinguish these apparitions from the apparitions of the living. But by hypothesis, they could not have been caused by the surviving minds of deceased persons, so the faculty of delayed telepathy was invented to explain their appearance. By this theory, for it is a theory for which Tyrrell himself can find little evidence and that he states to be unconvincing, the telepathic message is received by the subconscious mind of the percipient before the death of the agent but remains dormant until a suitable occasion arises for it to emerge into consciousness. A purely arbitrary time limit of twelve hours was fixed for this to happen. Unfortunately, there are many well attested cases when so-called delayed telepathy arose into consciousness several days after death. Why should it wait when the opportunity of emergence in dreams was there and sometimes await the waking state of consciousness when one would think it would emerge with greater difficulty. Even allowing for the arbitrary twelve hours' interval, there are many cases, such as that of the Morton ghost, where an apparition was seen over a long period and up to several years after death. Another typical example is that of a Mrs. Spearman. Her brother, an airman in the First World War, suddenly appeared to her in her bedroom in Calcutta. She first sensed his presence, turned round and saw him. She thought he had actually arrived in Calcutta. But, he vanished. It was just about at this time that he was killed. If it is maintained that he was actually alive at this moment and that, therefore, incarnate telepathy is at work, it must be remembered that there is good evidence that this officer appeared to others, including a young child, many months after he was undoubtedly dead. If incarnate telepathy might be put forward for the first case, what is the explanation of the others? Something entirely different or the surviving personality of the young officer?

Tyrrell has affirmed that all these apparitions

are of the same type, they behave in the same way and are indistinguishable from one another. Telepathic they may be but why, when in the living cases it is recognised that the mind of the living man is the agent, should another explanation of doubtful validity be given to explain away unpalatable facts? Tyrrell himself states that it is difficult to think of any other agent for the Morton ghost than the surviving personality of the lady. Hence, I believe that some apparitions are strong evidence for the survival of personality.

I willingly concede that it is doutful whether these apparitions have anything physical about them or that they may be considered to occupy physical space. Except, perhaps, in rare cases they are not physical as they pass through obstructions and behave in a manner impossible to a physical being. Investigators have found difficulty in conceiving of a non-physical being occupying physical space. But, if space includes both the physical and other forms of space such as etheric and astral, the difficulty seems to me to be resolved. An etheric being can occupy space in the ether. Myers, who was in difficulties with this problem, did conceive of the occupation of what he called the "methetherial". What he called "methetherial", some of us would call "etheric" or "astral". Such a concept gives help in the understanding of apparitions and is to be preferred to such theories as delayed telepathy which, in any case, only cover a certain proportion of cases.

Let me just summarise the evidence for survival before considering the evidence obtained through mediums. We have considered astral travelling, experimental apparitions of the incarnate, the evidence of children of tender years—that afforded by the crisis apparition either before or after death and that of the haunting ghost.

Taken together, there is a strong presumption that there is an intelligence which survives death and this justifies us in considering evidence obtained through mediums with this as a background in mind. Survival, with this evidence before us, cannot now be held to be antecedentally improbable, that phrase beloved of the sceptic but so rarely justified by the event. Motor cars, aeroplanes and atomic bombs, not to speak of flights to the moon, were once antecedentally improbable.

The classes of psychic happenings which we have been considering, appear to happen to ordinary folk who are not what is generally called mediums. It may however be true, that we are all potential mediums and that, in certain circumstances, we may become mediumistic if only once or twice in our lives. For this, we have the proof of different polls, which have shown that about ten per cent of the population have had one or more mediumistic manifestations. We now come, therefore, to the evidence for survival which is obtained through people who are mediumistic.

Evidence which comes through mediums almost always purports to be given by a discarnate being who often gives such evidence of identity, that it appears to be proof of his survival. In order, however, to recognise the evidence given it must be known to the sitter and we inevitably have the second alternative that it has been obtained by telepathy, not from the mind of a surviving personality but from the living mind of the sitter. This is a valid alternative as I accept fully that it is possible and indeed, that it does take place. It is said that this explanation for the production of undoubtedly supernormally acquired facts is the simplest and that it therefore should be adopted. If there were no cases when information was given which was not known to the sitter, I might be inclined to adopt it myself. Such cases do, however, exist in great numbers. Here, simple telepathy cannot give the answer and a much more complicated theory is required. I therefore feel justified in treating the hypothesis of telepathy from the sitter as only one possible explanation of the communication. The evidence of the particular case must be considered and the sitter must come to his own conclusion as to the source of the intelligence given. Let me give an example of this from my own knowledge.

Evidence in Russian

In 1935, I was discussing survival with a friend who had a few theories on the subject. I

explained that it would not convince me of his identity if he returned through a medium and merely talked philosophy. We both spoke Russian, so I said that he could prove his identity, if indeed he was able to do so, by giving me two Russian words. These two words, although very common amongst Russian-speaking people, were, I regret to say, two Russian swear-words. Two years later he died, but it was some four years after his death when, at a sitting with an English medium, his names, Christian and surname, were given, a good description and then the statement was made by the control that he was trying to say something in a foreign language, which she could not understand. She would, however, try to give me the sound. With some difficulty, she gave me the two words which were absolutely correct Russian and were the two words we had agreed upon. Here we have our difficulty. These words were known to me and therefore, theoretically, could be extracted from my mind. They were also known to my deceased friend. What was the source of the intelligence from whence the medium obtained these words? That must remain a matter of opinion. Is it all thought-reading? There are cases where it seems that the communicating entity takes particular care to ensure that what he says will not readily be assigned to thought-reading from the sitter. The Rev. Tweedale, unknown to anyone else, put an acorn in the coffin of his mother. On several occasions he put the question "Can you tell me, mother, what it was I put under your head in your coffin"? On each occasion, he hoped to receive the answer "acorn". Instead of that he got the following answers on different occasions: "I grow slow", Cluster, *Quercus*—the Latin for Oak, OAK, then ACNOR spelled out A C N O R and finally the correct word A C O R N. There, there seems to have been a plan to avoid the suspicion of thought-reading. I suppose, theoretically, his own mind could have made this plan, but once again, I prefer to regard this as from another intelligence, in this case, discarnate.

We need evidence to be given through a medium which is unknown to the sitter and indeed, generally unknown. Such a case is that related by Sir William Barrett. A young boy of nineteen, killed in the 1914 war, purported to communicate and stated that he had recently become engaged to a girl whose address and full name he gave and that he wished her to have his pearl tie-pin. No one knew that he was engaged to be married or the girl's name or that he had ever possessed a pearl tie-pin. A letter to the address given was returned as wrongly addressed. Later on, however, the War Office returned the young man's effects and they included a soldier's will, in which he had put down the girl as his next-of-kin, and a pearl tie-pin. Her correct address was given, whilst her Christian name and surname were the same as those given in the message. The alternative here is between a communication from the dead and telepathy with an unknown person, possibly a War Office official, with whom there was no link whatever.

I remain unconvinced by such claims for telepathy without any connecting link, as I do not know and cannot guess the process by means of which the medium is supposed to make the selection and thus find the individual whose mind does contain the evidence required. I am unable to share the views of a distinguished researcher who informed me that if one person in the world, who may be unknown to all, does have the information, he would prefer to credit telepathy from this individual. In talking with him, I gave the theoretical case of the knowledge being possessed by an unknown Aunt Fanny living in the middle of the Australian bush and in my mind, this class of claim is always associated with my hypothetical Aunt Fanny. I do not believe in Aunt Fanny and consider her an insufficient substitute for a surviving intelligence. How complicated some people can make it!

One factor which inclined me to accept at their face value some of these direct-medium-sitter sittings, is the great detail often given which is not apparent in experimental telepathy. It would even appear that the results of telepathy which is known to be from an incarnate source, are very far inferior to that which purports to come from the discarnate. There is

also a quality about some sittings, the appreciation of which cannot, I admit, be scientific, but which does give a feeling that you are indeed in communication with a friend. There is at times, evidence of intelligent purpose behind what is being said which appears more suitable to the communication from a discarnate friend than merely the repetition of one's own subconscious thoughts. Indeed, evidence of purpose must rank very high in our appreciation of the possibilities of communication.

I remember once, asking a distinguished psychical researcher what was the most evidential fact in her experience in favour of survival. She replied that it was the complete change of personality with Mrs. Piper at the time of the arrival of the G.P., control. You will remember that Mrs. Piper had various controls for whose identity very little proof could be obtained. A new control manifested and with this control the phenomena took on a completely different character. This control purported to be, not a character of the past but a recently deceased person, who was able to manifest through Mrs. Piper his own personality and to show that the memories of his life were still existing. This control made no mistakes in identifying those he had known in life and in not recognising those he had not known. But, it was not the actual evidence of identity which impressed this observer, it was the change of personality which was seen when the new control took over. From whence did Mrs. Piper obtain the intelligence to impersonate this man, if impersonation it was, or was there an intelligence behind Mrs. Piper, the existing intelligence of a deceased person? This characterisation made a deep impression on observers and if it is held that an impression is not evidence, I would not agree. Impressions on their own are not good evidence but when added to the facts, they do have their own great value in the solution of our problem. A jury pays attention to the manner of the witnesses as well as to what they say. At good sittings, many of us have had this impression of the reality of a communicator and with the evidence given, we are entitled to take this into consideration. If the medium is an impersonator, or an actor, whence does she get the necessary role? In some cases, it cannot be from the sitter, who is ignorant of the facts and it requires a very extended theory of telepathy for which there is little, if any, scientific justification to account for the successful impersonation.

Spontaneous Evidence

Let me give one example of spontaneous evidence in the absence of a sitter. I had been sitting in a physical circle with a friend who greeted another lady also sitting in the circle. I was not introduced to her. Nothing occurred for me during the sitting and my friend returned home to Brighton. Late that night she was rung up by the other lady who, unknown to me, was a medium. She said that there had been a man in her bedroom, who would not let her sleep until she had passed on to the stout man sitting with her friend—a message. She gave to my friend on the telephone the Christian name and surname of a deceased man well-known to me, actually the same man who had communicated the Russian words to me. I suppose it is possible to believe that she had telepathic contact with me during the sitting and that by delayed telepathy, it emerged into her consciousness later that night. Certainly, another alternative is that my friend had been present at the sitting and had made a successful attempt to communicate through her in my absence. In this class of mediumship, there have been many cases of successful communications given to people on the telephone when there had been no previous contact. Once again, we would need to stretch the known facts of telepathy in order to account for these without invoking the survival hypothesis.

Another class of cases which often give impressive results are known as "proxy" sittings. In such sittings the actual sitter does not know the deceased person with whom it is desired to establish contact and therefore, direct telepathy from the mind of the sitter is impossible. I have taken part in such sittings myself during an experiment with very satisfactory results when evidence was given and subsequently verified, which was completely outside my know-

ledge, conscious or subconscious. The telepathic theory here would involve the mind of the medium contacting someone who does know the facts through the sitter, who might be held to have a link with that person, merely through the idea of the experiment. Is this a reasonable hypothesis or is it wishful thinking for which there is little evidence? In one such case as a proxy sitter, I was successful in getting excellent evidence as subsequently confirmed by the interested person but, when later, this same person herself took a sitting with the same medium, no evidence at all was obtained. Her mind was then available to the medium for reading but no success was obtained.

I do not deny but rather affirm that telepathy between medium and sitter can and does take place. I do not consider it is the only way for evidence to be obtained. It is merely one way and there is always the alternative explanation of survival and communication. In certain cases, such as proxy sittings, it is even a more reasonable explanation as the telepathic hypothesis demands the acceptance of a form of extended telepathy. This remains an unproven theory.

In all cases of alleged communication, we must look for signs of evidence of purpose, of a plan to get something through. A report embodying one such a case will shortly be published by the College. The most famous of all such cases remains the cross correspondence obtained by members of the Society for Psychical Research and published by that society. Here, communications were obtained through several mediums, some living abroad, each furnishing one part of a problem which had to be resolved.

The communications were eminently suitable to the characters and knowledge of the alleged communicators. It was evident that there was an intelligence directing the scheme of operations for there was a plan. The problem to resolve was to find the intelligence involved. If it were accepted that communication was possible, there was no problem as the intelligence appeared to be discarnate and it was indeed difficult to find any one incarnate intelligence which could be held responsible for arranging the plan. One suggestion was that the planning was the work of the subconscious mind of one of the mediums. Here was a possible explanation, as this medium had the necessary knowledge and could possibly be held to have communicated it telepathically to the other mediums concerned. Unfortunately for this theory, this medium died but the communications continued to be received.

There has never been, in my opinion, any other source of intelligence suggested as feasible or likely and although I do not hold that any one case is sufficient to prove survival beyond doubt, I think that this well-known case goes as near to proof as any other and indeed, would and should constitute proof to any reasonably minded individual.

Speaking with Tongues

Another class of mediumistic communication is known as "xenoglossy", or speaking with tongues. By this is meant the ability of some mediums to sustain a conversation with a sitter, or by means of automatic writing communicate in a foreign language unknown to the medium. There have been many well authenticated instances of this phenomenon, some of which are detailed in a book by Bozzano. The most famous case is that of Dr. Whymant, a Chinese scholar, who claim to have conversed with a voice speaking ancient Chinese. There are few, if any, other people in the world capable of speaking in ancient Chinese and none was present on this occasion. Whymant states that the voice, which claimed to be that of Confucius, intoned a known passage from his own works but gave a different version. I have myself asked Whymant whether he had any doubt at all on the subject and he replied that he had no doubt whatever that he had talked with a voice in ancient Chinese and that no one in the room was capable of talking in that language. Here, we appear to have a clear-cut claim that another intelligence was speaking and that that intelligence could not be that of the medium or of any other person present. The only other possible explanation is that, in some way, Whymant's mind was talking with himself, but even if I were prepared to accept

this explanation, it does not explain how the voice could give an entirely different version of the text—one which had never occurred to Whymant.

I consider that this is in quite a different category from those cases when a medium utters a few words in a foreign language and it is subsequently proved that he had at some time heard that language spoken. Then it may reasonably be held that the memory of that language was present in the subconscious of the medium and could be reproduced in suitable conditions. If we are to admit that the mind of the medium can carry on a conversation, as opposed to isolated phrases in a foreign language, it must be assumed that the subconscious mind of the medium can obtain knowledge of all tongues, ancient and modern and I am not prepared to accept that explanation. There is no proof of such an assertion but it has to be made if the evidence for survival and communication is denied.

As I consider that the evidence for communication through speaking in foreign languages is so strong and indeed incontrovertible, I will give one personal instance. At a materialisation sitting, a Russian lady of my acquaintance was present, quite unknown to the medium. A form appeared and was addressed by this lady in Russian. The form answered the question in fluent and correct Russian. I do not have to depend on the word of this lady, as I was present and heard and understood what was said, as I speak Russian.

Considerations of time prevent me from giving other classes of phenomena which have their bearing on the question of survival. The problem of materialisation will, I think, be dealt with by another speaker. I have also, for the same reason, not been able to give illustrations of all the classes discussed. I have tried to show that spontaneous phenomena do point to the fact that a prima facie case may be made out for the existence of powers not dependent upon the physical organism and that therefore there is reason to postulate the existence of mind operating apart from the physical. All these cases can be explained on the theory of an extraphysical mind and indeed I hold that this is the only explanation which fits all the facts. The alternative theory, that of telepathy, with its various extensions such as precognitive, deferred and telepathy from a vague undefined, unconnected source, do not seem to me to be proven or even to be a reasonable hypothesis. Exactly the same hypotheses are put forward to explain or to explain away mediumistic communications and sometimes as if they were the only explanation. At the best they are only an alternative hypothesis, not a final one.

I do not claim scientific proof for survival. Whether we shall ever be able to attain that I do not know. It may well be in the future that we shall be able to establish the limitations of the unconscious, which I am convinced exist and then we shall be able to claim proof of survival. Until that happens—and even then I am sure there will be some who will not accept it—I am firmly convinced that those of us who claim that survival is for them demonstrated are justified in their belief.

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BEAUTY

Beauty mirrors happiness and truth. Without the element of "happiness" there remains only bare form—geometrical, rhythmical or other—and without the element of "truth" there remains only a wholly subjective enjoyment or, it might be said, luxury. Beauty stands between abstract form and blind pleasure, or rather so combines them as to imbue veridical form with pleasure and veridical pleasure with form.

Beauty is a crystallisation of some aspect of universal joy; it is something limitless expressed by means of a limit.

Beauty is in one sense always more than it gives, but in another sense it always gives more than it is. In the first sense the essence shows an appearance; in the second the appearance communicates the essence.

FRITHJOF SCHUON,
Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts (Faber)

DISCUSSION

Following the Lecture by Brigadier Firebrace

(Asterisks have been inserted throughout the reports on these Discussions to denote matter which has been deleted through being imperfectly recorded.—EDITOR.)

Mr. Percy Wilson: In his lecture, Brigadier Firebrace has mentioned the Morton ghost case, which was described by F. W. H. Myers and later formed the subject of a book by Mr. Abdy Collins, called *The Cheltenham Ghost.* Now in both those descriptions it is assumed that the appearance of the Cheltenham Ghost ceased very many years ago, way back before the present century in fact. That is not the case, as I can show from the following experience.

As most of you know, I have just returned from a visit to America. During the course of that visit my wife and I stayed with relatives of hers in Connecticut. Her uncle, George, migrated to America forty-eight years ago as a young man and there has never been any contact between the two families from that day onwards, except once a year by means of a Christmas letter. In that correspondence, of course, nothing of what I am going to say now ever took place.

Well, when we got over to Uncle George's house, naturally we reminisced over things that had happened in the meantime and he was very anxious to know what had gone on in Cheltenham since he went over to America. Voluntarily, in the course of this discussion, he rather excitedly asked what had happened to the ghost, the Pitury ghost he called it; so I said "What do you know about the ghost?" He said, "Oh, we used to go and see the ghost dancing across the lawn on many occasions when I was a boy. It used to be quite a common experience with the boys of the town. I've seen it many times." I cross-examined him as to what it looked like and he said it was just a lady, who walked and sort of danced, if not floated, across the lawn. He had no doubt at all about the physical character of the ghost. I should stress this point that he had no knowledge whatsoever of psychic matters and in fact I should think if I were to talk to him seriously about psychical research he would be most bored with it.

There we have an example which must have occurred at any rate about fifty-two or three years ago. I have since confirmed that the boys of Cheltenham used to play about with the ghost, from my wife's father, who also saw it on many occasions. He, too, is reluctant to talk about it but I have elicited from him the fact that the house in which it appeared had been empty for many years and nobody would take it over; it was empty when they used to go along and see the ghost walking in the garden.

I also know of one other person who has seen the ghost, some thirty-five years ago; she is still alive and living in Cheltenham and her name is Mrs. Maisey. She is a friend of my wife's, and she asserts that she has seen the ghost on many occasions.

Well, I have not had time yet to pursue the matter much further but I think it is worthwhile placing on record the fact that the ghost still walked until as recently as thirty-five years ago and that, although the house was haunted and regarded as haunted for so many years that people would not buy it, as soon as the Diocesan Committee bought it the ghost ceased to walk!

Mr. Boore: There is just one point that arises out of this question of antecedent improbability, and that rather helps to reduce that in my opinion. That is an intensive study of old people, of healthy old people; I must emphasise the word healthy. I gave a broadcast once on a gentleman of my acquaintance who died at the age of ninety-four, and studying him, it was really possible to see the man ripening up to the last day of his life. It is not an unusual case; providing their health is good and the physical structure of the brain is adequate to the development of the spirit within the man, it is a fact that the older people grow, the more complete they become. And at the end of his life, a healthy old person appears to be launched at,

so to speak, maximum value. I think you can find that often in life. I can give you quite a lot of detail about this particular man by study. But it is a fact, and a fact which I think should be noted. Wordsworth said "trailing clouds of glory do they come from Heaven which is their home"; but personally I think Wordsworth was starting at the wrong end of the trail, I have got little ones myself and have noted clouds about them but they have not been clouds of glory. I think a study of old people and the maturing and development of the human spirit in the gradually decaying husk of the body does give remarkable emphasis to the antecedent probability of life after death.

Voice: That's very gratifying for us old people!

Mr. Williamson: I have had my own experiences, a couple of instances, quite different, which I think bear very much on the speaker's address to us. One, which was a perfectly convincing case of survival so far as one can judge, and the other a perfectly convincing case of the reverse, and telepathy. We have our own family circle and many years ago we were sitting in Cape Town; a spirit purported to come through to us, to my wife who is a medium, who particularly wanted to give a message. Now this message she desired to give to a named person, in Durban. The name and an address was given.

We were asked to assure the gentleman with whom we were asked to communicate that the deceased's pains had ceased, that she was now all right and there was no need to worry about her. Well, we had not heard of the individual at all, neither the name nor the address; we did not even know there was such a street in Durban. A few weeks later we went to Durban and with some difficulty we started to ferret round. We looked up the name in the telephone directory, where we found it and we got into touch with the gentleman who answered to the name. He said that he had had a sister but the address given was that of a nursing home in which she had died; and she had died from an extraordinarily painful and incurable disease and the cause of her trouble was the fact that her sister, who had had more or less charge of her and who was a Christian Scientist, had refused to allow her to have any drug to alleviate the pain. In spite of that, after death, she wanted to assure her family that she had no pain.

Well to me that seemed a very convincing case, probably as convincing a case as one is likely to get. The other case I will give you was quite a different one. We were in England on holiday and we were at the Reading Psychic College; the Principal there suggested that we should have a sitting with quite a well-known medium in that vicinity. He rang her up and said he had two friends from abroad who would like to have a sitting, and that was all he told her. We went to that sitting. The medium, through a guide purporting to be a native, said that there was a lady present, which she described in terms which were fairly general, but did give both my mother's Christian names and the date of her birth, which was quite useless in convincing me that my mother might be there. It so happened at that time that one of my sisters had an extraordinarily difficult problem to deal with and as mother and son perhaps talking together was only natural, I said to my mother: "You know my sister, Helen, has been worrying me. She is very worried about so-and-so and she has asked me for advice. Now what should I advise her?" She said, "Oh well, I think so-and-so quite definitely." So my reply was. "I'm very glad, mother, that you should say that because that was just exactly what I was thinking myself; we always thought very much alike when you were alive and that is what I would expect."

I did not know this, but on the same date and almost at the same time, maybe an hour or so's difference, my sister, who was then living in Cheshire, came down to London to the L.S.A. and had a sitting with a well-known medium. The object of that sitting was to see if she could communicate with my mother and ask my mother's advice on this particular problem. My mother purported to come through; my sister was quite satisfied it was my mother. She asked mother the question and mother then gave her diametrically opposite

advice to that which she had given me, or was giving me almost simultaneously. Now the advice that she gave my sister was just the advice my sister wanted to take.

There you have two cases, one which is convincing and one which has the indication of telepathy in it. This is a phenomena which undoubtedly happens; it proves that you sometimes get back from the medium what you would like. In short—wishful telepathy.

Questioner: Would Brigadier Firebrace please let me know—which is the more reliable: What happens in a group sitting as a whole or what happens in a direct medium-sitter interview?

Brigadier Firebrace: Well, I have always thought that a group sitting was probably considerably more difficult for the medium; after all, on the assumption of communication there may be several entities all trying to hold the medium's ear at the same time. Also on the telepathic assumption, it is worse for the poor medium, because there are five or six subconsciouses all bombarding the medium at the same time. I have had, I admit, good evidence in a group, but I think it's more difficult for the medium and I certainly prefer, for accuracy, the direct medium-sitter sitting.

I am afraid I think that mediums very seldom really know the source of their information. They do not know whether it is from a discarnate or incarnate source. They will nearly always claim that they can distinguish between the two; I do not think that normally they can. I recall an instance at the College not long ago when a medium was giving what appeared to be very good evidence to a lady in the back row and she continued: "Do you know David?" "No." (It was the first name she received). "No, it is two Davids?" "No." And she said: "I see a picture of the Prince of Wales when he was a young man." Then I spoke up, because during the lunch-hour that day, I had been discussing two Davids, one of which David was the Prince of Wales, and I had been looking at a printed horoscope form which showed the portrait of the Prince as a young man. Now that was given to the lady to whom the medium was talking. I have no doubt that part of it, which she no doubt thought was still from the discarnate, was coming from me and I said so. But I did not think the medium was prepared to accept that I was right, but I was in that case.

Questioner: My father became a spiritualist in the last ten years of his life, and a medium about four years prior to his death. Most interesting was the fact then when in a trance he could never speak in English; it was always in German. I never heard him speak anything else in trance. Now I can assure you that he never went to Germany in his life, I know of no German connections, or friends or relatives of any kind whatsoever; yet my mother used to call me constantly at night (she worried terribly about it) and there he would be lying in bed talking fluent German, probably sometimes for many hours. Unfortunately in those days we did not have tape-recorders to record it, but many people came forward and took shorthand notes and said it was a German scientist, who was expressing great knowledge of the days prior to the war and talking of scientific matters to do with warfare. I am also interested in your comments on Russian. Has anyone else ever had any knowledge of a medium who cannot speak in his own language?

Brigadier Firebrace: Yes, in a direct voice circle which I had in my own flat with only my own intimate friends, we did get this phenomena known as the direct voice. The medium was a Russian; her English was extremely poor, but she was fluent in French and, of course, in Russian. Now the control in the direct voice spoke nothing but English and on philosophical topics completely out of the range of her knowledge. That control never spoke Russian at all. Here was the reverse, a Russian medium with a control speaking fluent English, which was not always by any means (she only knew a few words) understood by her. I do know of one other case which impressed me, with my brother-in-law. He went to a sitting where the medium's control was supposed to



C.P.S. CONFERENCE, BRIGHTON, 1958
The President and Vice-Presidents of the College of Psychic Science
Mr. F. R. MAUDE, O.B.E. BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.
MRS. CONSTANCE SITWELL



THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE WEEK-END CONFERENCE, NOV. 28-30, 1958. Left to right, back row: Mr. Lucian Landau, Mr. George Zorab, Mr. F. R. Maude, O.B.E. (Vice-President, C.P.S.), Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E. (President, C.P.S.), Professor H. H. Price, Mr. Percy Wilson, Air Chief-Marshal Lord Dowding. Front row: Mrs. C. Sitwell (Vice-President, C.P.S.), Mrs. Muriel Hankey (Principal, C.P.S.), Lady Dowding.

be a Zulu. (My brother had lived for a considerable time in South Africa.) He assured me afterwards that this control through the English medium reproduced the Zulu "click"; there is a kind of "click" in the Zulu language which I believe is almost impossible for a European to acquire. And he was quite certain that he had heard this well-pronounced Zulu "click" in the language. I regard these cases of speaking in foreign tongues as of supreme importance.

Dr. Mary Austin: Did the figure of Christ appearing in the Garden of Gethsemane after His death start the idea of the proof of survival?

Brigadier Firebrace: I cannot think that that was the first proof of survival. I am not certain what the ancient Jewish faith was on the question of survival; I think there is some doubt on it. But the traditions of the Old Testament certainly show that at times people who were dead, quite definitely did appear. Without great knowledge I think I would be inclined to say that the Jews had rather gone back on that belief in survival. I would think that the manifestation of Christ in Gethsemane was a planned purpose, once again to give evidence to all the world of that survival after death.

Mrs. Goldney: Christ did not appear in Gethsemane: He appeared in the Upper Room.

Mr. Furzeman: I understand that many distinguished investigators have made elaborate plans for proving their survival after death. Can any comments be made on how far that has met with success?

Brigadier Firebrace: Sir Oliver Lodge made, as you say, elaborate plans to try and prove his survival after death. His test consisted of various envelopes enclosed one within each other which were to be opened from time to time by the investigators, in order possibly to give a hint to him to revive his memory if he had forgotten what he was trying to communicate. Well, I cannot say Oliver Lodge completely succeeded in that test. I was, amongst others, concerned with opening the final envelopes and I took part in some of the sittings. No, he did not give a hundred-per-cent proof of his identity by giving the exact message. But he did give certain indications regarding it. One possible reason for failure was that owing to the war sittings did not take place; they only started a good many years after he had died. There was a certain amount of success but not conclusive success; certainly not, I think, the success that probably Oliver Lodge had hoped for.

There are other cases; one quoted by Abdy Collins that Percy Wilson may know of in which apparent success was obtained, and a lot of people say that Houdini also succeeded. But generally speaking there have been comparatively few of those well known cases and I am doubtful whether complete success was obtained. It is a difficult thing to convey exact words, if such is your message. I think a lot of communication is telepathic, and I think a lot of telepathic communication is by ideas, although on occasions direct words have been conveyed by telepathy. I regard it as the most difficult form of telepathy and I don't think success is certain. But even if success is obtained, it is really little proof, because you see the words have already been written down somewhere and we know that mediums on occasions have been able to read through closed envelopes. Therefore I do not think a researcher could really accept as absolutely conclusive what would appear to be the successful carrying out of a test like that.

Questioner: I wonder whether the Brigadier would like to tell the story of the Chaffin Will case, which I believe is the only mediumistic communication that has ever altered the verdict of a court of law. It is outstanding in that respect and I expect Mr. Wilson knows it very well too.

Mr. Wilson: Very briefly the story is this: there was an old gentleman called Mr. Chaffin who lived in the backwoods of America. He owned a little farm and he had several sons; not an uncommon thing. Well, the old man died and I think the fact was his property descended to his third son by a will made many years before his death. Some considerable time later his second son had a dream; he dreamed

that his father appeared to him and showed him that there was a later will and that it would be found in an old coat, sewn up in the lining of a particular pocket. He was very excited about this and in fact he had the dream, I think, several times. Well, that jerked him out of his lethargy and he took steps to get hold of that old coat, which was not a very easy thing to do, I believe.

Anyway, he did do it and he found the will which was a shock for them all, because in fact the will left the farm between all the sons. Anyway, they took the will to the local Probate Court and after the usual rigmarole the judge pronounced in favour of the will as found and declared the intestacy to be invalid. Now that, I believe it is correct to say, is the only case on record where an apparent apparition or mediumistic communication altered the verdict of a Court of Law. It might be interesting to bear it in mind.

Questioner: About this matter of languages, I think if we accept survival we probably accept reincarnation. I think that if we survive one death we might as well be born again; and that means that we probably have previous lives. And I think that might have some slight bearing on this matter of mediums speaking in foreign languages. That case of the medium speaking in German, for example. I would be inclined to consider the possibility that it might have been a case of the medium himself recalling something in a previous life. You see, if we carry our memory with us when we die, we probably carry more than one memory, that is the memory of each incarnation. And he might well have been a German last time; and thus have something to recall in German.

Mrs. Muriel Hankey: Would you think that might account in some way for some of the so-called or probably real spirit guides? If I may tell an instance: many years ago there was a man called Foster (not Stephen Foster), who was a healer, and his guide purported to be the good old Red Indian, a Sioux, I believe. We addressed him as such, but did not bother very much whether indeed it was a Red Indian or not. But always this personality appeared when Mr. Foster was healing. I had a friend who gave drawing-room meetings and at one of these At Homes she invited Os-Ke-Nonton along; some of you may remember him. He used to come over every year and sing the part of the Medicine Man in "Hiawatha" at the Albert Hall. He and I went into the kitchen and made a tom-tom out of an enamel pan with leather tied around it. He walked into the drawing-room with a blanket over his shoulder and sang one of his well-known Indian songs. As he did this, beating a peculiar rhythm on the tom-tom, Mr. Foster went into a trance, stood up and did the same dances and began to talk in a strange language which Os-Ke-Nonton immediately answered and they held an intelligent conversation in the language of the Sioux tribe.

Now there is one other person living, I think, who remembers this incident. He wrote to me last year and asked me would I write to Os-Ke-Nonton and get his written testimony confirming my own shorthand notes taken at the time. I did write but he was at that time dying, and I had no answer.

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Brigadier Firebrace: I think with Valiantine probably more different languages were spoken through him including such languages as Lithuanian, which very few people speak, and Hungarian, than through any other medium.

Dr. Chisholm: May I ask Brigadier Firebrace three questions? The first is about the case of the child who was dying and saw the other children who had alread died. Whether there is any possibility that she had overheard or in any way become aware that these children had died?

Brigadier Firebrace: Not by the statement made; she could not have known. I think people would refrain from talking before a dying child about the deaths of other children whom she had known. We cannot prove it.

Dr. Chisholm: My second question is about the other case where nine people saw the apparition. I would like to know what you think about the possibility of a kind of mass hallucination produced by suggestion from the one to the other, since it was limited to the nine people who were actually relatives.

Brigadier Firebrace: Would you assume then that one person saw it and communicated it to the others? One person definitely saw the apparition and communicated it to the others by some form of telepathy? The difficulty of that theory I think is that when nine or two or three people see it, as far as is known they all see it from a different angle, exactly as they would if there was a presence there. I will give it telepathically; supposing No. 1 sees the apparition face to face and then projects it telepathically I would be inclined to think that the others would also see it full face. Evidence is that they do not.

Dr. Chisholm: The third question: I wonder if you have any information about the use of what are apparently nonsense statements given by a proxy sitter to a medium who is in contact with someone speaking a foreign language, and where the answers have been written down as nonsense statements and then subsequently interpreted as a genuine foreign language?

Brigadier Firebrace: I do not know of a case like that. Does anybody know of any case exactly like that?

Questioner: I do know of a case in which some people were playing about with planchette and received what they thought was nonsense. It turned out to be modern Greek and gave the name of a young man and the ship in which he was drowned. They had no idea it was in modern Greek until a girl came up and translated it.

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Questioner: I am not quite clear about how the ouijaboard, which presumably had English letters, could spell out something in Greek? I wonder if she could help me about that?

Questioner: I only know the person to whom it happened and I am afraid I did not ask her that question. I will try and discover further and let you know. My cousin told it to me. She was a W.A.A.F. officer in the war and she was speaking to a girl who suddenly said "I must go upstairs." The girl went upstairs where some other girls, I think, were playing with the glass and letters; I am not absolutely sure. Anyway, they were playing about with some form of communication just for a lark; they knew nothing about it. This girl was engaged to a Greek; she knew he was probably on a ship but she did not know where the ship was and she did not know the name of the ship. She went up to these girls who said "This is a lot of nonsense," and she translated the Greek, which gave the name of her fiancé who said "I have been drowned; and the name of the ship was so-and-so." She went to the Admiralty who told her there was a ship of this name but they did not know anything about it. But a week later came the confirmation. My cousin did not write this down at the time and she lost touch with the girl. I can vouch for my cousin's integrity but it is not more convincing than that.

Questioner: Well it may well have been the Greek words in ordinary Roman letters.

Questioner: It is quite a common practice at the present time to print extracts from the Greek language in Roman letters; it is quite a commonplace so there is nothing difficult with the ouijaboard.

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In reply to a question on controls Brigadier Firebrace said:

A good many controls I do not accept as separate living personalities; I think they are some sub-conscious creation of the medium; but I also think they are a very necessary part of the mechanism of mediumship. A good many child controls would probably work very well; some kind of sub-conscious longing in the medium might well create a child control. I

do not think it applies to all cases because, to my knowledge, one, at least, child control appears to have given proof of her identity by speaking through other mediums and showing intelligence in doing so. I am thinking of a particular control, who spoke through another medium and addressed herself to the only person in that room who had ever had a sitting with her own medium. So I accept some controls as genuine entities, both children and grown-ups. However, I do not always accept these controls at their face value. I think in the initial stages of mediumship, some mediums would sometimes like to shake off the responsibility for giving messages, and subconsciously create a control to do so whilst in trance. The control then takes the whole responsibility for what is said. That is subconscious creation; later on, there may be behind that creation a genuine entity controlling, but he is content to remain anonymous and to function under the masquerade of Big Fellow, or what have you. Some, I think, are genuine entities who have adopted that name; in certain cases that name can be genuine. I regard child controls with a certain amount of suspicion but would not entirely rule them out.

Questioner: Has Brigadier Firebrace anything to say about the word-association test, which I believe was made on certain mediums to try to determine whether in fact these controls were a separate entity or a secondary personality of the medium?

Brigadier Firebrace: In one case, I think with Mrs. Leonard, there was a completely opposite effect obtained in the reaction, which tends to show that they are one and the same person. It was not the same reaction but it was definitely an opposed reaction which, in the opinions of psychiatrists, would show there was a connection between the two personalities. I think I am right in saying in the case of another medium the results showed no correspondence at all between the control and the medium. I think it is a very fruitful line of investigation, but do not know myself of any other case in which tests have been carried out, so on the two cases I have quoted I would say the result was a draw. Undoubtedly, further work would have to be done along those lines to come to any final conclusions.

Major Gordon: I think it was Sir William Crookes who was making a number of hypothetical suggestions as to what could be the cause of various physical phenomena. Apart from the possibilities as normally accepted he put forward another idea. This was that the controls were entities not human. I have in my own experience encountered an Indian control claiming not to be a part of a person but to be a *Djin* sent by a particular Yogi. Does this sort of thing happen in the West and what class of control would you say this really was? If it was a *Djin*, this was in agreement with local belief, just as a surviving entity you might say is in agreement with local belief here.

Brigadier Firebrace: I would say that in the case of a *Djin*, or other thing in accordance with local belief, I would begin to suspect that it was possibly a subconscious creation. On the other hand, not knowing anything about *Djins*, I could not possibly rule them out absolutely as having the faculty of control, nor could I rule out absolutely the possibility of a subhuman or subconscious creation being in control. In fact, when it is usual to have a Red Indian for a control, I become a little sceptical about them and if in local circles it is the accepted thing to have a *Djin* as a control, I would require that that *Djin* should be at least double proof before I was prepared to form any tentative conclusions!

From an Indian point of view a man can only be said to *know* what he knows *by heart;* what he must go to a book to be reminded of, he merely knows of.

A. K. COOMARASWAMY.

EVIDENCE FOR SURVIVAL

The Historical Significance of Physical Mediumship

By PERCY WILSON, M.A.

WHEN some months ago the Council invited me to lecture at this conference, my first inclination was to ask to be excused. For the evidence is so vast and is scattered amongst so many books and periodicals, and the time at my disposal was so short, especially in view of my projected visit to America, that I felt I could not really do justice to the theme.

However, I was persuaded from my researches during the past few years that a new study and perhaps even a new approach to what one might term our historical sources of material is urgently called for and that I might at least give you a sort of introduction to such a study. I hope therefore that you will not regard this lecture as a discourse to settle any disputed question, but only as a basis for this new approach.

I am well aware that in recent years our philosopher friends have been at pains to suggest that when we talk of survival of human personality we really do not know what we mean. Only this year in his fascinating Myers Memorial lecture, Professor Broad of Cambridge has analysed some of the ideas that are involved, and has shown how complicated and even ambiguous they are. But I am not really perturbed by that, for I am reminded that Bertrand Russell once described mathematics (my own subject and one which after all is usually regarded as one of the exact sciences, the other being logic, which is Professor Price's subject), as "the subject in which no one knows what he is talking about, nor whether what he says is true". And that *is* the case about mathematics, because its application to life is something rather remote. I suggest indeed that in many subjects one does not know what one is talking about until one has submitted them to the test, or if you like the word better, the application of practical experience.

I have just paid a visit to America where I have met several cousins of mine whom I had not seen for over forty years. Nor had I even been in touch with them until about five years ago, when a rather dramatic interlude took place. One of my cousins happened to go to a hairdressing establishment in Toronto, and had to wait; so she picked up a newspaper from the side, and found that it was Psychic News! And she read there (this is five years ago) that I was projecting a trip to America. Within a week I received an airmail letter from her, saying that she had seen this announcement and she thought that I really must be one of her cousins; and gave her family's history. I replied "you are indeed one of my cousins, I'm glad to renew the acquaintance". That was, as I have said, five years ago. For the previous thirty-five years we had completely lost touch.

In the past five years we have had a little correspondence, though not much. Still, that correspondence seemed to show that my cousin still retained some memories of our common experiences before she left England some forty years ago. I came to the conclusion, naturally, that some sort of memory did exist beyond that transition. But nothing in the way of cross correspondences would have been so convincing a demonstration as personal contact, either by my going over there or by my cousin coming back to this country. You see, the letters or cables could have been lost in the post or distorted or mixed up with other cables in transmission in the course of a multiplex system of telephony. In fact, I think I can construct an entertaining criticism of such a method of establishing identity. But we *did* establish identity, and I *did* make the visit and confirm it.

Now I do not want to press this analogy too far, but I think that if you work it out you will find that it has some very pertinent lessons for us. And I do suggest that it illustrates the weakness of an *à priori* system of procedure determining in advance what you can or cannot do in a personal and practical investigation.

I submit indeed that though *à priori* arguments may be useful as warnings, they should never be regarded as direction signposts.

In this matter I am reminded of a passage in Alfred Russell Wallace's essay on the Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural. I want to quote it to you—you will find it reprinted in his book *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*. But remember that it was written as long ago as 1866:

> If there is any one thing which modern philosophy teaches more consistently than another, it is that we can have no *à priori* knowledge of natural phenomena or of natural laws. But to declare that any facts, testified to by several independent witnesses, are impossible and to act upon this declaration so far as to refuse to examine these facts when opportunity offers, is to lay claim to this very *à priori* knowledge of nature which has been universally given up. One of our most celebrated modern men of science (*That was Faraday — P.W.*) fell into the same error when he made his unfortunate statement that "before we proceed to consider any question involving physical principles we should set out with clear ideas of the naturally possible and impossible". For no man can be sure that however "clear" his ideas may be in this matter, they will be equally true ones. It was very "clearly impossible" for the minds of philosophers at Pisa that a great and a small weight could fall from the top of the heavy tower in the same time; and if this principle is of any use, they were right in disbelieving the evidence of their senses, which assured them that they did. And Galileo, who accepted that evidence, was, to use the words of the same eminent authority, "not only ignorant as respects the education of the judgment, but ignorant of his ignorance".
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> Men who repeatedly, and under conditions which render doubt impossible to them, witness plain facts that their scientific teachers declare cannot be real, but yet decline to disapprove by the only means possible, that of a full and impartial examination, may be excused for thinking that theirs is a parallel case to that of Galileo and his opponents.

That is Alfred Russell Wallace in 1866.

Colour Vision

Now about ten days ago I attended a lecture at Harvard University; the subject was colour-vision and the lecturer was Dr. Land, the President of the Polaroid Corporation of America. I learned, incidentally, that Dr. Land had discontinued his university career there as an undergraduate some twenty-five years ago, because the course was not teaching him what he wanted to know. I wonder how many undergraduates in this country would like to follow the same procedure!

However, Dr. Land proceeded to study the phenomena of light by private reading and experiment. He invented Polaroid, which some of you may know: it's a form of material on which particles are sprayed so as to polarise light in a single plane, and it is used in all realms of physics nowadays. He invented that, and he founded the Polaroid Corporation to make it. By that means he made a fortune. So then looking round, like Alexander, for other worlds to conquer, he invented a camera which develops its own films within a space of one minute and is therefore an invaluable instrument for scientific research. By that he made another fortune, so that by now he is a very rich man. Whereupon Harvard gave him an Honorary Doctorate. And not only so; they also made him a member of the Visiting Committee of the Physics Department. So that he is now one of the leading physicists of the world, although he defaulted as an undergraduate.

Well now, in his lecture, Dr. Land first of all asked us to look at two pictures projected by white light from a double lens lantern on to a screen. We were seeing seemingly identical photographs of a woman's head in black and white. One of the pictures was then illuminated with a red light and gradually moved into superimposition on the other, which still remained illuminated with a white light. As the superimposition proceeded the face took on its natural tints in a fantastically realistic way. Red light and white light!

A bowl of mixed fruit of all colours, green grapes, bananas, oranges, red and purple plums and so on, was then projected and treated in the same way and the natural true colours again appeared with startling realism.

I remember ejaculating to my son Richard who was sitting next to me "Good gracious! What's happened?" And then Dr. Land remarked, I must admit to my own purring gratification, "If on seeing these pictures you say 'that's impossible' then you're a fool. If,

however, you say 'My God, how can that be?' then you're a wise man". And he went on to explain how this effect comes about. It had first been discovered, a little marginal effect in an experiment by two German scientists, in 1914, and ignored. Then about a year ago when Dr. Land had been doing some experiments with a lady assistant, they had seen this fringe effect, and she said "What's that?" And he said "Oh that's merely fatigue". But, as he put it, during the night his scientific conscience, which had been cultivated during his one year at Harvard, smote him and he decided he would have to look into the fringe effect. These pictures were the startling results.

Dr. Land went on to produce coloured pictures in full colour, every colour, in conditions which contradicted, one by one, and in succession, all the criteria which had been laboriously built up by Helmholtz, Clerk-Maxwell and many other distinguished physicists. He then proceeded to demonstrate a new theory which he and his colleagues at Polaroid were gradually constructing, and he concluded his lecture by postulating a new kind of physical world (which he called Johnny's world) which had a much smaller range of light frequency than that we are accustomed to. The centre of that world was a wavelength of five hundred and eighty-five Angstrom units; but even in that world with a range of only five hundred and forty to six hundred and twenty Angstrom units, a full range of colour was possible. For this demonstration he asked us to look at a picture which was a combination of two, one illuminated by white light and one by sodium light—and again it was a black and white photograph of coloured fruit. To the naked eye that picture just looked yellow, like the street scenes we get in this country when sodium lighting is used. But when looked at through the green Wratten 61 filters which he handed round, all the natural colours of the scene appeared at their full value: a delicate gradation of tints, in fact, showing the whole spectrum, down to the deepest red. Yes, all that was visible through a green filter.

You will gather that this lecture upset the whole classical theory of colour-vision, and after the lecture several of the scientific professors present—there were many—got into a somewhat heated argument about the possibility of explaining what they had seen along classical lines. But the facts were too much for them. At all events I noticed a couple of days later that the shares of Polaroid Corporation had gone up by fifty per cent on Wall Street!

Now I was reminded by that incident of the treatment that some of the early investigators of Spiritualism had had at the hands of the scientific world; of the attitude of Tyndall and Huxley and Romanes and the other biologists to Wallace—as related in Wallace's *Autobiography*; and the attitude of the members of the Royal Society to Crookes. I recall the famous retort of the latter "I did not say it was possible, I only said it was true". Compare that with Dr. Land's remark.

The Scientific World

The scientific world in those days, the seventies, had decided to ignore the testimony of even its most distinguished members and it has gone on virtually ignoring it ever since. I doubt whether even today there are many people in the scientific world who would even begin to admit that the physical phenomena of Spiritualism are possible. It is true they know nothing about them, but that will not prevent them from refusing to admit them. This attitude, unfortunately, was reinforced some years later by a rather curious paper on physical phenomena read to the Society for Psychical Research by Mrs. Sidgwick in 1886. This concluded—and I quote: "by far the larger part of the testimony put forward as affording solid ground for belief is of such a nature as to justify the contempt with which the scientific men generally regard it". That paper, I believe, did far more to discredit the testimony of even eminent people than any other single factor; and yet, as I think I showed in one of my lectures to the College last year, it is full—chock full —of the very errors of observation and of argument and of judgment that the author herself had attempted to attribute to those who testified to the validity of physical phenomena.

Moreover, it ignored entirely the most convincing testimony that was then available, the reports, for example, on the mediumship of Miss Nichol, who was later known as Mrs. Guppy; on that of D. D. Home, who was only casually mentioned; of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, of George Spriggs, and of Madame d'Esperance; five of the most wonderful and outstanding cases of physical mediumship that one could wish to see. A study of them well repays the time spent because in each case (with an exception in the case of Madame d'Esperance, of an incident which was later discovered to be the result of petty spite), no breath of suspicion has ever been given about the honesty of any one of them. Dr. Dingwall said, when he heard me talk about them in one of my lectures, that I had picked out the cases which were indeed puzzling—and you know what that word means. Moreover, not only did Mrs. Sidgwick's paper ignore those cases, but it ignored, except for a rather unworthy sneer, the investigations of Crookes and Zöllner. And even when it purported to give a detailed account of séances which the Sidgwicks and Myers had had with Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb, it omitted to mention relevant matters which were revealed later by Alfred Russell Wallace in his *Autobiography*.

According to the latter, Myers showed Wallace several manuscripts and books full of notes of these séances of which he, Myers, was the reporter. I will quote you an extract:

> Whilst talking to me about the remarkable séances with the two Newcastle mediums, the entire series of which he (that is Myers) attended and recorded very carefully in the notebooks he showed me, he laid great stress upon the extremely rigid precautions which were taken against the possibility of imposture, and conveyed to me the impression that he himself was quite convinced of the genuineness of the whole series. He also told me that Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick only attended a portion of the series, and that, unfortunately, several of the most astounding and conclusive of the phenomena occurred in their absence. This was important because Mrs. Sidgwick has published an account of those she attended, and has laid great stress upon the inconclusive nature of the tests applied, though she admits that it was extremely difficult "but not perhaps impossible", to impute the result to imposture. Under these circumstances, it seems to me (*this is Wallace speaking—P.W.*) that if these records of the whole series of séances by Mr. Myers are still in existence and can be obtained, it is the duty of the Society, in justice to the mediums one of whom is still living—(*this was 1908—P.W.*) and in the interests of science, to make the entire series public. Under the light of our more advanced knowledge today, such a record by so careful and so critical an observer, of so long continued an enquiry, must contain a mine of invaluable facts.

So far as I know, those records have never been published.

Further evidence about all this was also given by Mrs. Myers herself to *Light* in 1931. Unfortunately, I could not find my cuttings from *Light* before I left home, but I remember the date and you can look it up. I remember quite distinctly that she said how impressed Myers had been by these experiments and particularly by a séance when a large hand came down from the ceiling and grasped him and pulled him right up on to the table. That was Mrs. Myers, in 1931. How different, too, was Mrs. Sidgwick's own attitude in her presidential address to the S.P.R. in 1932. She was a very great woman, do not make any mistake about that. Her analyses were critical, well informed as a rule and very valuable. But like many other people she did jump to conclusions on insufficient data; a charge which is commonly made against Spiritualist investigators.

This charge, indeed, reminds me of a story told by Professor de Morgan, the famous London mathematician, in the preface to his wife's book, *From Matter to Spirit*. It was about an American agnostic who said, "I guess I should not like to be annihilated". When asked why not, he replied, "I am afraid that perhaps I should regret it afterwards".

Early Cases

Looking back over the evidence of those early years, the testimonies as to the mediumship of those I have just mentioned, Mrs. Guppy, Home, Moses, Spriggs and Madame d'Esperance (yes, and even that of some of the mediums against whom allegations of fraud were made, Dr. Monck for example, allegations which in many cases only demonstrated the

credulity of their accusers), I often wonder what testimony will satisfy some people.

Let me illustrate by one or two examples, going right back to that time, of cases which seem to me to be cast iron in their testimony. I start with one, a simple one, from Major-General Drayson, in a paper which he read to the L.S.A. in 1884. In this he says:

> It was in the year 1856 that I was invited to be present at what was termed a séance, in the house of a friend at Blackheath. At that séance a large dining-table rose from the ground several times, our hands being held above the table. I at once decided that if this phenomenon was not produced by some trick, the theory of unconscious pressure was erroneous, and I determined to test this fact in a manner that would render trickery impossible. (*The theory of unconscious pressure, and unconscious cerebration, was Faraday's and Carpenter's.—P.W.*) I invited the medium to stay at my house, and there with various tables I tested the facts. I found that on every occasion the tables would rise, sometimes remaining in the air several minutes. On three occasions in my own house I saw a table six feet long and four broad, rise from the floor and move several feet towards me. I being several yards from the table, and no other person near me, trickery or machinery were in these cases impossible, and although as a cadet I had been a pupil of Mr. Faraday's and had admired his great skill as a chemical experimentalist, I was forced to conclude that as regards the phenomena of table-moving, he had committed the elementary error of theorising from an imperfect examination of facts, and really occupied the same position as the gentleman who had given a theory of the geology of the whole earth based on his investigations round Edinburgh.

Again:

> Only a few months ago I was staying at a country house in England, when the subject of table-turning was raised. I stated that in my own house I had seen a table rise in the air and remain suspended several minutes, when no person was touching it, and this fact I had seen not once only but hundreds of times, and under such conditions that any trick was impossible. There was a gentleman present who claimed to be scientific, and who told me he was much surprised that I was not aware that Faraday had fully explained this fact by unconscious pressure. "Then", I said, "if I place my hands a foot above a table, and the table rises from the ground and comes up to my hands, the fact is explained by unconscious pressure?" "Certainly", said the gentleman, "and Faraday proved it by some instruments". When I told some of my native Caffre acquaintances that I had seen railway carriages running along as fast as a horse could gallop, and that these carriages were made to travel by the aid of fire and water, they have told me that if they saw this with their own eyes, they should know that they had been bewitched by the Rainmaker of the tribe.

The next case I want to call your attention to (I will not describe it in detail but you will find a short extract in Campbell Holms' *Facts of Psychic Science,* paragraph 424), was the case of a séance at Gothenburg in 1890, in which some notable Swedish savants, scientists, lawyers, and literary men took part. M. Aksakov, the Russian politician, who was very interested in these matters, hearing of the séance and knowing Madame d'Esperance, made a special journey to Gothenburg to examine all the evidence. He cross-examined the persons who had been present, took down fully the testimony of each and included it in a book called *A Case of Partial Dematerialisation.* It is in the library at the College, and is a most interesting account of a detailed scientific study of one single séance—a whole book about one single séance.

There you have complete testimony, which was thoroughly investigated at the time; and yet that testimony, and that case, have largely been forgotten.

The third class of case, and it is a class, I refer you to were the Crookes experiments with Florence Cook and Katie King. I published some years ago a letter from Sir William Crookes to Mr. Blackburn of Didsbury, Manchester, written on the mornings following two of the séances. The originals are in the Britten Memorial Library in Manchester. In these, he details all the circumstances of the séances which were held in gaslight, and how he saw Florrie Cook and Katie King side by side—and Katie King was moved away and came under the light for him to see. That letter I published in *Psychic News* some years ago. The Crookes evidence still remains adamant, and unassailed like a fortress.

The fourth case I want to call your attention to is one which occurred in 1874 in Dr. Monck's mediumship, after he came out of prison, having been convicted, the first conviction of a medium, under the Vagrancy Act of 1824.

Here is the account. This again is a quota-

tion from Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, who, as I may remind you, was sufficiently distinguished in his own line of scientific activity to be given the Order of Merit (*My Life*—p. 330).

> Monck, a non-conformist clergyman, was a remarkable medium, and in order to examine the phenomena carefully, and to preserve the medium from the injury often caused by repeated miscellaneous séances, four gentlemen secured his exclusive services for a year, hiring apartments for him on a first floor in Bloomsbury and paying him a moderate salary. Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood and Mr. Stainton Moses were two of these, and they invited me to see the phenomena that occurred.
>
> It was a bright summer afternoon and everything happened in the full light of day. After a little conversation, Monck, who was dressed in the usual clerical black, appeared to go into a trance; then stood up a few feet in front of us, and after a little while pointed to his side, saying "Look". We saw there a faint white patch on his coat on the left side. This grew brighter, then seemed to flicker, and extend both upwards and downwards, till very gradually it formed a cloudy pillar extending from his shoulder to his feet and close to his body. Then he shifted himself a little sideways, the cloudy figure standing still, but appearing joined to him by a cloudy band at the height at which it had first begun to form. Then after a few minutes more Monck said again "Look", and passed his hand through the connecting band, severing it. He and the figure then moved away from each other till they were about five or six feet apart. The figure had now assumed the appearance of a thickly-draped female form, with arms and hands just visible. Monck looked towards it and again said to us "Look", and then clapped his hands. On which the figure put out her hands, clapping them as he had done, and we all distinctly heard her clap following his, but fainter. The figure then moved slowly back to him, grew fainter and shorter, and was apparently absorbed into his body as it had grown out of it.

Now I have given you that testimony because in a comparatively short space you have what I think is a complete picture. There are many more examples, both in Monck's mediumship and in that of others, but that is just a little cameo on its own which illustrates many of the main features of full form materialisation in full daylight.

Helen Duncan

The next case I wish to draw your attention to is one within my own experience; there are many more but I think it is time to reveal some of the things of this particular experience, relating to Helen Duncan's mediumship, during the last war, and leading up to her trial. The story so far as I am concerned began with an invitation to me to have lunch with Maurice Barbanell. During that lunch he asked me if I had heard what had happened at a Helen Duncan séance at Portsmouth the previous evening. He told me that he had had a message that morning to say that at this séance a figure had appeared of a sailor with a capband H.M.S. *Barham*; and the information was given that the *Barham* had been sunk in the Mediterranean but that the fact was not to be announced for three months because of the political and military situation. I went back to my office. I was then what you might call a senior official of the Ministry of War Transport. I was in a detached building, Devonshire House, whereas the main office was in Berkeley Square House; so I deliberately went along to Berkeley Square House to ask some of my senior colleagues—and remember, the Ministry of Shipping was part of the Ministry of War Transport—whether they had heard of the sinking of the *Barham* in the Mediterranean. No one had heard, but one of them said he would make an enquiry; and he told me later that afternoon that it was not known in the Ministry of War Transport. That was on the day after the message had been given in Portsmouth.

Well you will find, as I found, that in fact the news of the sinking of the *Barham* was only released three months later and the explanation was given that it was not in the public interest to reveal the fact at the time. You can imagine the consternation and feeling in Portsmouth when this piece of rather colourful information had appeared at a séance with Helen Duncan. In passing I would have you observe that although this was a physical séance, it contained evidence at the same time, rather straight evidence, of the survival of the particular boy who came back to speak to his mother.

Nothing further happened until, I think it was about a year later, Mrs. Duncan paid another visit to Portsmouth, and gave another séance. In the course of that she was seized, and a white sheet, so called, was seized but was

never heard of afterwards; and then the prosecution under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 began. The defence under that Act was really conducted from my house, where Mr. MacIndoe stayed with me.

At the beginning of the trial I got a message from two of my sons, who were then undergraduates in Oxford, and had visited the Cowley Spiritualist church. There they met a man called Spencer who asserted that at the Cowley Works of Morris Motors in the previous year a young man had made a bet that the next time Mrs. Duncan appeared at Portsmouth she would be arrested. That bet was taken, the side stakes were given to a third party, and when Mrs. Duncan was arrested the bet was paid. It transpired that the principal witness on behalf of the police against Mrs. Duncan was the uncle of the man who had made the bet.

I immediately saw the value of this testimony and with a lot of last-minute effort we managed to get Mr. Spencer up to the Old Bailey during the trial; but for some reason he was not called as a witness. I would ask you, however, if you ever read the record of the trial, to look at the concluding remarks, after the conviction, of the Chief Constable of Portsmouth, which seem to me to shed a lurid light on the circumstances of that trial. The only conclusion I can come to is that the police and the naval authorities did not want Mrs. Duncan about in Portsmouth before D-Day or during D-Day.

Séance During Trial

During the trial one of my sons, Geoffrey, acted in the court as a messenger for the defence, and when it was half-way through, after prosecution evidence had been given, we arranged (it was a Friday afternoon) that he should collect Mrs. Duncan straight from the court at four o'clock, take her to Holborn Viaduct station, bring her through to Wimbledon and then by taxi on to my house. This he duly did. She had had no opportunity of going anywhere else from the court on the way. And I had my usual home circle gathered there. So, we gave Mrs. Duncan a good tea; I don't advocate this before a physical circle, but there was a reason for it on this occasion because we included some really good red jam in it, thanks to the regurgitation theory of Harry Price. Shortly afterwards, we went upstairs to my own séance room and held a séance. I was seated next to the curtains of the cabinet, and there was a red light behind me on the ceiling. (I could not see it but it was shining behind me, so that my eyes were not inhibited by it.) In the course of the séance Mrs. Duncan stood up and ectoplasm poured in streams, in ribbons, from her nose and her mouth, on to her massive bosom, curled up in a ribbon on her bosom, and dropped to the ground; and then, as she was standing with her arms akimbo, I suddenly saw it leap up two ways to her hands. I was within a yard of her with a light above my head and I saw everything that happened. Shortly afterwards the whole mass of ectoplasm disappeared in an instant. I could not tell you when: it was there and then it was not. It just disappeared.

Now that evidence was sufficient for us to conclude that it was safe, even in the hard circumstances of the court at the Old Bailey, for Mr. Loseby to offer the judge and jury a personal demonstration when he opened his evidence for the defence. That offer, as you will remember, was refused.

Those are the circumstances which I want to put on record now, relating to the Helen Duncan prosecution. I think they tell a story of their own, and I need not dot the i's or cross the t's.

Now these testimonies, all that I have quoted, are so positive that I suggest that only three conclusions are possible. (a) The facts are substantially as I have related them, or were related by the witnesses, or (b) the people testifying were unworthy of credence, which is precisely the criterion, I may remark, which Professor Sidgwick himself, in his first presidential lecture to the S.P.R. on its foundation, had postulated as being one of the desirable positions to get into. Here are his words: "We must drive the objector into the position of being forced either to admit the phenomena as inexplicable, at least to him, or to accuse the investigators either of lying or creating, or of a blindness or forgetfulness incompatible with

any intellectual condition except absolute idiocy".

Or (c) that the people who deny the testimonies are like the Irishman who was brought before a judge on a charge of stealing a kettle. Three witnesses gave full personal testimony that they had seen him steal the kettle; whereupon he said to the judge, "Surely, Your Honour, you are not going to convict me on the evidence of three witnesses? I can produce fifty who did not see me steal that kettle!"

Overwhelming Testimony

Now I am prepared to maintain that any impartial person who studies the whole of the historical evidence, and I have only been able to give just a small fragment, for the physical phenomena of Spiritualism from those early years, must find the testimony quite overwhelming. It was from ordinary, honest people, and from people who are accustomed to weigh evidence.

But even if, as I maintain, the evidence for the physical phenomena is quite overwhelming, what has it all to do with survival? If I want to establish that a man survives bodily death, I must somehow establish his identity, or at any rate substantial identity, before and after. What has the movement of objects by no known force or the apparent production of ectoplasm, or even its condensation into human simulacra, to do with proof of survival? The arguments have been examined in some detail by Bozzano and I think it was pretty well established by him that these phenomena do make an important contribution to the proof which psychic facts as a whole provide. I don't want, however, to go over that particular ground again. I want rather to stress the significance of the phenomena in another respect.

First of all, though, just one or two incidental remarks. In the first place, I would have you note that virtually all the early protagonists of Spiritualism, all the scientific men, all the literary men, owed their conviction of survival to physical phenomena, whether by raps or table-turning or materialisation or whatnot. In fact, although there was clairvoyance in the séance room, public clairvoyance, platform clairvoyance, was not known in this country or in any place in the world until after 1886, when it was introduced into America. But by the physical phenomena it was soon established that (as Stainton Moses put it) there was intelligence at the other end of the line. That was the first step and it is a very important step, to decide that there is intelligence at the other end of the line. The question, however, still remained, what was this intelligence? That of the medium, as might be contended on the animistic theory, especially when Crawford's hypothesis of psychic rods was later attached to that theory; or by some supra-mundane intelligence, as was suggested by Professor Balfour Stewart in his presidential address to the S.P.R.; or by a discarnate spirit of someone who had lived on the earth? The possibility of the existence of superior intelligences is one which I have never seen debated at length, and yet it is the only one I know which I should regard as at all damaging to the survival hypothesis. The most elaborate exposition of it that I have ever seen is in a science fiction story which was written by a man called Eric Frank Russell. (You will find it in the Pan series. The book is known as *The Sinister Barrier*.) It was not written with specific regard to psychic matters, mind you: it is just a science fiction story. But there is a psychic background to it. The story pre-supposes the existence of a race of invisible beings, whom the author calls Vitons, which had supernormal powers. This race was supposed to live on human emotions! Our loves, joys, fears, hatreds and yearnings and terrors. The Vitons cultivated these emotions by stimulating religious and political conflicts, wars, massacres and other terrible catastrophes. But all the time they were concerned to preserve a sort of balance, much as humans do in the farmyard and in the hunting field. The supermundane intelligence hypothesis is very ingeniously worked out to its logical conclusions in that story; and it really is, when you come to examine it, a formidable alternative to Spiritualist philosophy.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a sort of domestic cow to be milked of your emotions by a race of superior beings? It is very

humiliating, isn't it, that very thought. And yet it is one which you ought to face. Even the phenomena of direct voice and materialisation do not fully negative the hypothesis.

The next point I want to draw to your attention is that we are accustomed in our ordinary life to recognise people by curious little tricks of personality, which are partially physical as well as mental. And even a partial materialisation which shows those characteristics can be far more convincing than some of the more recondite elaborations of mental mediumship; just as, in the case of my cousin in Canada, the visit was far more conclusive about our respective identities than any correspondence could have been. Unfortunately, most materialisations are of controls, like Yolande or John King or Abdul Latif, and not of those whom we have known and loved in their physical life. There are, however, quite a number of satisfactory cases which seem to establish personal identity. I will only just mention two that come to mind immediately.

Cardiff Circle of Light

The first is a story which I related at length in one of my lectures, of the materialisation in the Cardiff Circle of Light (where the medium was George Spriggs), of a former member of the circle who had come, after her death, to bid farewell to the circle. The second is the story of Sven Stromberg, in the mediumship of Madame d'Esperance.

Now it has been argued that if we could only get complete proof of only one case of survival, that would be sufficient to establish the proposition for all men and all time. *Einmal ist allemal* as Goethe says somewhere. Yet I doubt whether that academic argument would have weight with many people. Most of them want evidence to relate to their own particular circumstances; and unfortunately, too, they want it served up to them on a plate. They will not, I fear, be convinced even by a massive accumulation of observations relating to others.

Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, whom, as an undergraduate, I helped to refound the Oxford University Society for Psychical Research in 1911, used to argue quite cogently in favour of the thesis that a bunch of faggots is much stronger that the individual twigs of which it is composed. That was his justification for the society's going along collecting more and more and more records of cases. But nowadays, I am afraid, that argument does not find much favour. Does this mean that the world at large will not be convinced of the truth of survival until each individual has had his own individual experience? I certainly hope not. And I do believe that there is an alternative approach. We do not have to convince every individual about the facts and principles of most branches of knowledge. We are all prepared to take many things on faith or on the say-so of experts, provided that, somehow, they can be fitted into the main structure of our knowledge. When we see the sun apparently move across the sky we do not nowadays require much persuasion, as the ancients did, that it is really the earth that is moving. Nor do we normally call for detailed evidence about the doctrine of evolution. But we do not arrive at that state of blissful acceptance until the "how" of the phenomena has been worked out.

That is where our psychic investigations have been so sadly deficient. We know no more now than Stainton Moses did, and probably less, about the physical conditions which affect the production of phenomena. Harry Price did some work on this, and so did Geley. But their work ignored what had been done in the seventies and eighties, and there was very much work done in that respect by the British National Association of Spiritualists, which was the forerunner of the L.S.A. And in its turn their work has now been forgotten.

In what other field of research is the work of previous investigators completely ignored, so that every new investigator starts from scratch? When I was in New York a fortnight ago, I discussed this aspect with Mrs. Eileen Garrett and her colleagues, and I am glad to say that a new research is being planned to discover more precisely what are the physical conditions that encourage or discourage mediumship: the effect of light, of temperature and humidity, as well as physiological and psychological conditions. And in this matter, by the way, the

application of Dr. Land's discoveries on colour-vision will, I believe, have a very important bearing. That is one reason why I mentioned them at length earlier in this lecture.

We need, then, to direct much more of our attention to the *modus operandi* of phenomena and much less to convincing more and more individuals of the reality of survival. Conviction comes much more easily when the "how" has been established, and it will last for more than one generation, which personal conviction never does.

It is here, I suggest, that physical phenomena have a special significance. For mankind is much more expert in dealing with physical experiments than it is with philosophical ideas or with what my headmaster used to call the fancy subjects such as psychology. I have often wondered, indeed, whether even now the technique of psychology has developed enough to justify its being classed as a science. Hitherto, the psychologists as well as the psychical researchers and Spiritualists, have been too ready to fall into the Zanzibar trap. I hope that in our further researches at the College we shall be able to avoid it. It is such an easy one to fall into and its effects are so soporific.

The Zanzibar Story

What is the Zanzibar story? Well, perhaps it is fitting that this should conclude my lecture this morning.

A sea captain decided to live in his retirement in a remote part of the island of Zanzibar. But he was a stickler for discipline and for the forms and ceremonies that had constituted the rules and technique of his trade. So he built his house in the likeness of a ship, and he flew his flag at the masthead and rang the bell at the appropriate times. And at noon each day he fired a brass cannon that he had installed specially for the purpose.

Now one day an old shipmate called on him and noted with great interest the routine the captain followed. But he was constrained to ask how the captain knew when it was precisely noon. "Ah", said the captain, "that's easy. I brought away my ship's chronometer with me. It has always kept good time, and I know it's 'rate'. Every now and then, when I go into Zanzibar, I check it against the clocks of an old horologist, who has a wonderful selection of good timepieces, and is really a very knowledgeable person. You ought to go and see him, you will find him a most interesting man to talk to".

When the shipmate was next in Zanzibar he hunted out this remarkable man and found him, as he had been told, most instructive. So he asked him how he found out the correct time to set his clocks. "Oh", said the man, "that's easy. You see there is an old ship's captain living at the other end of the island who is a stickler for correct time, and he fires his gun at exactly noon each day".

I will only add that that trap was fallen into during the war on the foundation of a new department for an American university; and for many years the research in that department was quoted as establishing the value of one of the more important "constants" of Physics. And if Physics is not immune, what shall we say about some of the modern research in Parapsychology?

One of the most painful freaks of our era is the "historical method" with its "close criticism" of documentation and its systematic contempt for all sources connected either with miraculous acts or even with exceptional coincidences. When one denies the supernatural it is imprudent to hold forth on matters which have meaning only because of the supernatural or to busy oneself about the psychology of those who accept the supernatural.

Critics who deny the supernatural are applying to things which *a priori* elude them a logic both artificial and meticulous. What is evident appears to them as "naive"; they put in the place of intelligence a type of cold cunning that feeds on negation and paradox.

FRITHJOF SCHUON,
Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts (Faber)

DISCUSSION

Following the Lecture by Mr. Percy Wilson

Mr. Lucian Landau: If I may I would like to go right back to the beginning of Mr. Wilson's lecture when he described the experiment of Dr. Land. As far as my knowledge goes, the fringe effects and also the effects of superimposing two or more colours upon a plain black and white picture thereby producing a multi-colour effect, were discovered over a hundred years ago by the German writer and philosopher Goethe and they were demonstrated last year in London during the Exhibition of the Physical Society at the Royal Agricultural Hall.

Now I would like to turn to Mrs. Duncan as I had a certain experience with that lady. To start with I think that Mr. Wilson made a mistake in giving her red jam for tea and then having a red light in his séance room. It would have been better to have given her some bright green jam! However, I have sat with Mrs. Duncan in groups on a number of occasions and witnessed numerous phenomena which I regarded as extremely uninteresting. Generally speaking, all I could see was Mrs. Duncan covered with something or other that was very difficult to identify, and I thought little of it. On one occasion, however, when I was beginning to get bored, the control, whoever that might have been, called on me and asked me to step forward, which I did. The curtain was drawn by something and a figure stepped out. The figure was much smaller than Mrs. Duncan and much thinner and it had the face of my mother. For the first time since I was two years old I found myself speechless.

As far as I was concerned there was absolutely no doubt about it; my mother had been dead then for only about six months and she looked exactly as she did before her last illness. She looked at me; I suppose she expected me to say something, but as I said, I couldn't do it: she didn't say anything but nodded in a very characteristic way. The experience is really quite uncommunicable but yet, to me, it was highly significant. A moment later she disappeared. She sank into the floor, as it were. The light was quite good and there could have been no doubt about it. I discussed this occurrence with Dr. Dingwall fairly recently and he said "Ah! that was your mind's eye that saw it". Now I am fairly well acquainted with my mind's eye and I don't believe it was that.

Mr. Wilson: I would like to say that the effect that Dr. Land showed was in fact quite different from the one referred to by Mr. Landau. It was of one colour, not two colours, and it was any colour. And it was, as I said, seen through a green filter producing all the colours of the spectrum. The whole theory is in fact quite novel.

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Brigadier Firebrace: Just a little addition to Mrs. Duncan's story of sunken ships. During the war I was head of Intelligence in Scotland and I had the opportunity of attending a séance with Mrs. Duncan in Edinburgh. There appeared during the séance the form of a control, Albert, and he suddenly said "a great British battleship has just been sunk". Well, I had no knowledge of this. After the séance I returned to my headquarters and as soon as I got back, about two hours after the sitting, I heard on the private line from the Admiralty in Scotland the news that the Hood had been sunk. And I was then able to check up that at the time of the séance the Admiralty had no knowledge whatever of the sinking of the ship. That was an instance of a materialised form, whatever you like to call it, which did give, I think at the correct time, the fact about the sinking of the battleship. So you understand from the point of view of the authorities, Mrs.

Duncan was a somewhat dangerous person. It is a fact that the police from Scotland Yard did come to the International Institute while these stories were current, and consulted Mrs. Dundas there, and myself, as to how Mrs. Duncan could be prevented from giving this information out, because the authorities admitted that the information was authentic.

Mrs. K. M. Goldney: I don't want to make this remark appear facetious, but if the control, Albert, was able, by means of clairvoyance, to find out about the sinking of the ship he might also have known that it was extremely dangerous to read the minds, presumably of British Intelligence and it would really have been a very big disadvantage to the British side. They had that knowledge made perfect and I don't know whether one would presume he was on the side of the Germans when he gave out it had been sunk.

Brigadier Firebrace: Well, I don't know why you should assume that anybody on the other side should favour British Intelligence or German Intelligence. All I am trying to establish is that there is very little difference.

I should like to refer very shortly to this question of Albert. Now I can't think that the mere fact of dying confers wisdom on a person who had none before and I would suggest that Albert in life, if he ever was in life, was probably a loose-talker, and when he returned through Mrs. Duncan he still remained a loose-talker. You know the tendency, in all of us, if you have some information that other people have not, it's a very great temptation to pass it on. I do not think the mere fact of dying actually had changed Albert.

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Mrs. Goldney: Anyone who has read Harry Price's book on the investigation of Mrs. Duncan, will know that at that time I was on the staff of Queen Charlotte's and he asked me whether I would come to give a medical examination of Mrs. Duncan. As a result of that I and William McDougall, who was also present at all these examinations, as well as Dr. William Brown, confirmed that no medical examination explained the presence of ectoplasm or material or whatever you like to call it. But following it, there were several letters written to me on the view that no medical examination had been given at all and because of that I think it would be fair to put on record that I asked the medium whether she wished to have the examination take place and she said yes, she did. So far as the examination was concerned it was entirely in her favour insofar as no medical examination could account for the material.

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Mr. Harold Vigurs: I was associated then of course not only with the L.S.A. but also with the Society at Croydon and Mrs. Duncan was a member of that Society at Croydon. It had quite a number of remarkable sittings with her there. I was with Mrs. Duncan when Miss Phillimore and I think, I'm speaking from memory now, it was Captain Miller, came down to see Mrs. Duncan to terminate the arrangements that they had made. Apparently on the recommendation of Dr. Ross, Mrs. Duncan was invited down to the L.S.A. for a series of experiments and naturally certain conditions were laid down as to her services. I am sorry to say that Mrs. Duncan quite blatantly broke those conditions. Why she ever went to Harry Price at all I do not know. It was a breach of faith so far as the L.S.A. was concerned and I think it was primarily due to the fact, not that her mediumship was so much questioned, but her reliability as a party to a contractual obligation was so doubtful, that the L.S.A. decided to terminate the whole arrangement.

Mrs. Goldney: There were also facts of doubting the mediumship, weren't there? It was never made public and I think it's rather a pity that it was not.

Mr. Harold Vigurs: There were times when the mediumship was beyond peradventure; the

conditions were such that it carried the whole imprint of its own genuineness. But undoubtedly at other times the mind of the sensitive interferes with the production of the phenomena and it requires a very sympathetic and far-seeing researcher to co-operate with the medium. Well I am afraid with all physical mediumship at times you do get those periods when you have to put it down to the interference of the personality or mind of the actual sensitive. But if you are far-seeing enough you will continue with your efforts, because you know that you will obtain results which seem to indicate otherwise.

Mr. Wilson: Arising out of a remark made by Mrs. Goldney I would like to say that I am very strongly opposed to publication of negative results of investigation. You will find that in every branch of science, as far as I know, you use your negative results to direct you to positive. Unless there is some positive thing in negative research which can direct future research, then it is simply cluttering up scientific literature to publish it. It is very important in scientific research that your negative results should be discarded, except insofar as they direct the lines of future research. It is the positive that counts and never the negative. In other words, the Irishman cannot bring forward his fifty witnesses.

Mr. Maurice Barbanell: I have had a great deal of experience with Mrs. Duncan and when Harry Price first advocated the extraordinary theory of regurgitation we tested her out very simply by getting her and every member of the séance to swallow methylin blue pastels, which dyed the contents of everybody's stomach blue. The ectoplasm that emerged was definitely white. Then on numerous occasions I was asked to feel the ectoplasm, to handle it, and it was bone-dry. No liquid of any kind and not even dampness. My most extraordinary experience with Helen Duncan was (I think this is unique, I don't know anybody else who has had it) being invited into the cabinet with her and to watch the whole process of materialisation taking place from scratch. I saw the ectoplasm extruding from her ears, her mouth, her nostrils and gradually billowing and forming the shape, six feet high, of the guide who called himself Albert, and then watched him slowly sink and disappear into the ground. Now I think one other fact ought to be mentioned in connection with the prosecution of Helen Duncan which started at Portsmouth; it may be unimportant, and it may be completely coincidental but it is that the Chief Constable at Portsmouth at the time was a Roman Catholic.

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Dr. Chisholm: First of all I should like to ask Mr. Barbanell whether any of the people at the séances were doctors. Secondly I would like to ask him what sort of capsules were swallowed, because methylin blue capsules quite frequently pass through the stomach without absorption. Thirdly I would like to ask our speaker, first of all with regard to the disturbance in light that Dr. Land carried out, was there any question of polarised light? And in either the white light or the red light, and secondly why is it that all the material referred to is historical? I note the paper was on historical study of difficult phenomena, but in view of the fact that in those days there was neither the electronic developments that have happened since, nor the study of the unconscious which has been made since most of these papers were written; why is it that more recent phenomena are not put forward as evidence?

Mr. Maurice Barbanell: I'll answer your methylin blue question very simply by telling you that the capsules were prepared by a doctor friend of mine, Dr. Margaret Vivian, of Southport; they were effective and didn't pass right through the stomach as you suggest and as this is a scientific gathering I will tell you how we proved it. Because an hour later when we passed water it was blue. This was suggested by a doctor as being the perfect test.

Mrs. Goldney: The answer to the first question is that Dr. William McDougall was a

medical doctor and Dr. William Brown was a medical doctor and there were two other medical doctors, for instance, at St. Thomas's Hospital present at the séance and I was on the staff of Queen Charlotte's.

Mr. Wilson: As regards the other question about Dr. Land, I can't honestly say whether polarised light was used, because Dr. Land did not reveal the whole of his technique. It was what is known as a Polaroid double projector, but as far as I know polarised light was not used. As to why I concentrated on the past, I think I explained that at the beginning of my lecture; because research into the past two years has shown that in those early years a number of evidences were given and a goodly number of experiments were made which have tremendous value for us in starting any new researches today. We do not want to start again from scratch; we must start again from some of the lines that have been explored. We do not want to start with our feet on the floor; we want to start with our feet on the shoulders of what other people have done in the past. I say in this paper that in no other subject that I know of has any investigator deemed it necessary to start from scratch, assuming that everybody else who had investigated it before could be ignored.

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Mr. C. C. L. Gregory: It has struck me for a long time that there is possibly another rather important alternative explanation as to why there is this reluctance that you spoke of and it should perhaps be that religion and science and even psychology have all developed rather different languages, different senses of belief. And if one said something that would be acceptable to a religious man, in the language of religion, he may think that as something perhaps inward and to do with what he would call the spiritual world. Whereas if one said there is evidence or there is a question of after-life, materialisation and so on, it would then throw the discussion over into the language of the scientist and there those particular presuppositions and the methods used throughout the whole of the scientific era would come in. He would be as it were bound by scientists to adopt a certain framework for the discussion.

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It does seem to me that that offers a very real difficulty and could make a discussion go round and round in circles. You have the religious who suddenly switches over to the scientific and then back into the religious and vice versa.

Mr. Wilson: May I add just one additional reference which I have just looked up, in answer to a previous question. I mentioned Dr. Geley and I've found a reference. This is what he says: "Men of science who approach this subject for the first time take no account of the work done by their predecessors but consider it null and void. This is the most serious of all for its consequences are mostly disastrous. In no other branch of science has this ever been done. Everywhere and always, when new facts are in question, the man of science begins by thoroughly acquainting himself with what has previously been done. If he wishes to experiment, he undergoes a regular apprenticeship, guided by previous work. And in psychic matters that regular apprenticeship, I'm afraid, would take rather a long time".

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Mr. George Zorab: I have heard the speaker call upon us to believe in the positive witnesses. He has pointed out that also all kinds of phenomena were witnessed by learned men, scientific men, etc., and he wants us to believe that. But there are some cases where many witnesses of scientific and learned standing were

ultimately proved to be wrong. I would just quote the case of Eva C., the materialisation medium in France who worked together with Mme. Bisson and who was investigated by Dr. Geley. At the head of all these witnesses was Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, the German. And we have hundreds of signed witnesses declaring that the phenomena of Eva C. were absolutely true. We now know without a doubt that Eva C.'s phenomena were fraudulent. And the same is the case also with the Margery Crandon business. You know that hundreds of learned and scientific men all trained to be good observers, have stated that the phenomena they witnessed seemed to be real. Later on it was proved, I think without doubt, that Margery's phenomena cannot be accepted as authentic. I think that we should be a bit careful with human testimonials.

Mr. Wilson: I could give quite a long lecture on that particular subject but I would say that no one in the world can say without doubt what really occurred over a period of years when they were not present. We have to take the evidence of the people at the time and if there were competent observers there, as in other branches of science, you have to accept their evidence. What you do if you come across something which is doubtful, is to examine the particular features of that evidence in the light of any new considerations which have arisen and which may cast doubt upon it. But you can never assert without doubt that what has happened with a medium when she was young was fraudulent merely because you have discovered some doubtful fact when she is getting on in years.

Again, what constitutes a doubtful fact is a matter I would like to discuss. One of these days at the College, I am going to examine in detail a whole series of so-called exposures. I can, in some of them, prove that the only thing that was exposed, was the incompetence of the exposers. And I will do that at the College at a later date.

Questioner: I would like to pick up this question about the validity of scientific observers. Most of the evidence that Mr. Wilson has referred to came at a time before we had become aware of the mind's capacity for self-deception. Therefore on that basis alone a great deal of the conclusions of the observers must be open to question. And since we have no means now of investigating what actually happened at the time, I think that we really are obliged to start more or less from scratch, although that is not to say that we do not need to be familiar with the work that has been done in the past. But I think that in scientific investigation we *must* start from scratch, with the necessary controls on the people as well as the situation. And I don't think that it follows that because a man is an expert in any field of science that he is any the less liable to be subject to self-deception or distortions of reality perception.

Mr. Wilson: Well, I can only say that I disagree entirely with that point of view and I'm a person who has been trained in science from my youngest days, and in several branches of science. You've got to examine the evidence as it comes forward, just as in all branches of science. If that statement is true, you would naturally reject all of Newton's researches *ab initio* in view of what has happened since. You should re-examine the results of past researches in the light of modern knowledge to see in what respect you can obtain suggestions from them. Now, as regards these questions of deception, I would just ask you to look once again at that case which I quoted of Dr. Monck and A. R. Wallace and to re-examine the details as he gives them. I would like to know in what respect modern knowledge of psychology affects those simple observations. If it does, then all the observations that have been made in all normal daylight circumstances must be suspect in the light of modern psychology.

Questioner: I don't think it's quite a fair analogy because it is a difficult subject; it isn't as easy as that. The conditions are not such

as say in most scientific examinations, which are not held in the dark.

Mr. Wilson: I have not quoted any case which did not occur in full light. I strongly object to dark séances being held for the public. All responsible Spiritualists throughout the years have objected to it. Private investigation is one thing but public demonstration and publication is quite another. I would never attach any importance whatsoever for public purposes to anything that was done in the dark.

Questioner: I still think it's not so very simple; if you take the Fatima case for instance, which is a perfect example. Mass hallucination has often been suggested in the past as an explanation and a good paper was published in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research on why it did not invalidate the phenomena with Home. And I think his argument was valid. But since then of course there has occurred the case of Fatima, which is a perfect case insofar as there was mass hallucination and it was a fact which could be nothing but hallucination. There was no possibility of it being genuine. That was when the believers and unbelievers to the number of some thousands imagined that they saw the sun revolve very quickly and come down towards the earth. They became hysterical, some fainted, and there was a general impression that the end of the world was coming and, of course, that is the Roman Catholics' reaction to that phenomenon. But there you had a mass hallucination where one or two people who were believers didn't see it and a large number of people who were critical and scoffers did see it and they saw something which must be hallucinatory and could not possibly be a fact. It is a very interesting thing and in view of an extreme example like that, I do not think it is right that one should, so to speak, sit in judgment on people who query it and not take the views of people who've gone before it. I think it is a very difficult subject and one cannot be too harsh on those who require a great deal of repetition and testimony from people who are both for and against it.

Mr. Wilson: The thing is, in what way we can learn through the testimony of the past. Do not let us ignore it and try to start from scratch. Let us examine it, see what we can learn from it and proceed from there. Do not let us assume that Alfred Russell Wallace and Crookes and all the rest of them, who were after all experts in examining things, were being subject to something which we call mass hallucination which is, after all, not quite so widespread as we might be led to believe by some isolated cases. Let us look at the facts and nothing more than that, and see where we can go from there. That is all I'm asking; do not let us forget the past, let us build on it.

Questioner: Perhaps I could put it another way round, then. I think the difficulty is that very often the testimony comes from those people who are already believers and it would be more cogent if it came from those who were not.

Mr. Maurice Barbanell: On the contrary, I would not accept any testimony from some of the disbelievers I know, for five minutes, because I can prove that they start out on the wrong foot.

I think on the one hand you have the incredulous, so-called scientist, who's most unscientific. One researcher, after thirty years of seeing materialisations, wrote "it is regrettable that in so many instances the apparitions resembled deceased persons". You have equally the incredulity of Professor Richet who waited until his deathbed before he announced that the evidence so far as he was concerned, proved survival. You hear people, with great respect to our friend from Holland, who accuse Margery Crandon of fraud, who have never even seen her in their lives and thus are prepared to accept statements from people because it affects their preconception of what happened. On the other hand you get the credulous Spiritualist, who when a jamjar falls off the table says "Thank you, spirit friends".

There is an obvious solution of all these; look for the happy medium!

* * *

Mr. Boore: There is just one thing that I think has emerged this morning largely from the discussion and I come back to the early part of Mr. Wilson's paper. You alluded unfavourably to *a priori* knowledge. I think from what you said about it that the *a priori* knowledge to which you alluded was acquired knowledge and that the bringing of acquired knowledge, and with it prejudice in your studies was a disadvantage, because it is. Jeans, the famous astronomer, in one of his books, posited the opinion that all knowledge was potentially *a priori* knowledge. *A priori* knowledge can be considered in two classes; the acquired and the natural. But the natural has immense value because it sharpens the perception, and the acquired can be a disadvantage because it produces prejudice. I think that one thing that has emerged from the discussion we've had today, is that knowledge may be very important, but the most important thing of all, is that the filled mind should always remain open.

Mr. Wilson: May I just add one word to that? I did not intend to condemn the use of *a priori* knowledge. The whole point was that *a priori* knowledge cannot determine what is possible and what is not possible.

Questioner: May I just revert to the psychological point? I talked about this emotional resistance. Now that emotion I take to be largely fear. In most sittings I understand the temperature drops, and one of the indications of spiritual or psychic phenomena is a kind of cold trickle down the spine and so on. So that to a great many amateur sitters or observers, this drop of temperature, this cold and gooseflesh sensation is exactly analogous to the accompaniments of the emotion of fear. Added to that is the extreme fear of the mental upset that is going to ensue in fitting this new knowledge in to the closed sort of conceptual system of the mind. Is it true that this does happen?

Mr. Wilson: A drop of temperature is only one of the physical things that occur in séances. One other thing not generally recognised came out clearly in some of the research I did at the beginning of the war and which had also been done before, way back in the eighties of last century; it is that when a medium goes into trance, for the first half-minute, not longer, the pulse rate goes up to a most alarming degree. But it settles down within a minute, especially in the case of a physical medium. Now if you were to make a scientific examination without knowing that fact, you might test it two minutes after trance, to see whether there was any effect and find there was not. It has indeed been published that there is no effect, because the effect is only observable at the onset but not later.

Questioner: I would like to refer to a statement by Mr. Wilson that Mrs. Garrett is going to do research work in connection with the atmospheric and other conditions conducive to mediumship and other supernormal phenomena. I think there are far more important fields of research than that. Is it not true that the spirit bloweth where it listeth and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So what we have to do is to find mediums and they will be able to operate in red light or blue light or any other light; they will be able to produce evidence such as we have had in the past again and again. Is it not the search for better mediums that will make a tremendous difference to the evidence for survival?

Mr. Wilson: The theme of the last part of my paper was that your search for better mediums, or better mediumship, would be enormously helped if you only knew something about the how of the phenomena. You can only determine the how if you look at this preliminary investigation which has been started in the past but never continued. Now I don't know how far this particular research will be done by Mrs. Garrett herself or whether it will

be done by her colleague that I spoke of, and with whom I discussed the lines of research. I hope that I and other members of the College here will be able to do something in the same line. But at any rate that research is I believe fundamental to the whole development of the subject. Let us learn something of how things do happen before we start theorising too much as to why they happen. Until we know the how, so many of the whys are very obscure.

Dr. Chisholm: I really cannot let the speaker get away with putting together the kind of phenomena which is dealt with in the psychic field and the work of Newton; because the characteristic thing about scientific work of that nature is that it is repeatable. Now all I ask is that some of these factual experiences from the past of spiritualism should be repeated.

Mr. Wilson: I could not agree more with that last statement, because the whole of my contention is that until we know how these things happen we shall never be able to repeat them. That is just one of my complaints about it all. Now I would say that quite a large amount of the phenomena is repeatable and has been repeated. (*Mr. Wilson here gave several examples*). And there are also cases where there has been no repetition. No one has yet discovered why or how that takes place; until we do we shall simply get nowhere.

Questioner: May I say it's not for want of trying? I spent eighteen months in Bombay following up the Bombay Firewalk, and was in touch with a particular Mohammedan who was head of the sect which had performed it. I collected a large amount of first-hand evidence from the people who had walked the fire and the Chief Commissioner of Police, Sir Patrick Kelly, who had described it as a miracle, but after eighteen months I had to give up because I had to return to England. It came to an end because the man wanted me to sign papers to the effect that if he would consent to have it repeated, all the Christians who saw it would have to become Mohammedans.

Mrs. Hutchinson: I think we have all been talking about survival, and by practical lines I'm not quite sure what does survive. What is it that goes out of us when we die? What is the actual difference, apart from the physical changes, between me being dead and me being alive? Now I believe that some time ago a man in America did some experiments with cloud chambers, which subsequently people have quarrelled about. Has anything more been done or wouldn't it be a very good start to any research?

Mr. Wilson: In the first place, as regards what it is that does survive, I think you will find an admirable introduction to that question in Professor Broad's lecture; that is precisely what he discusses. Added to that I also suggest that at this moment it is rather futile to try and press the question too far. In science it is very often wise to know what are the right questions to ask at any particular time. And I do not think that is a right question to ask at this stage of investigation. Nobody knows yet precisely what it is that does survive, or what could survive. That is one of the things at the end of the chain.

The second point I want to make is in regard to cloud chambers. Well a cloud chamber is a physical apparatus which was invented by P. T. R. Wilson of Cambridge for purely physical purposes; it has nothing to do with psychics. Now a certain gentleman in America claimed that he was able to see emanations from a mouse that was dying when he put it in a cloud chamber. He published a paper on that subject which received a good deal of publicity. That experiment was repeated at the International Institute before the war, round about 1935 I think, and no such effect was found. Now there it rests; nobody has taken it into his head to resolve that doubt. Do not assume that either is correct. I will give you a parallel. My son at Harvard and some of his advanced students have recently been doing a great deal of research on high energy particles. They formed certain conclusions, and they published their results. A similar series of experi-

ments on rather different lines was also being conducted at Harwell in this country. And the results do not correspond. Each side is arguing at the present moment, as to where the other was wrong. Each is convinced that the other was wrong. The Harvard results happen to accord with other observations, but the argument is going on and will go on until some other method or some other series of experiments is designed to resolve it. Unfortunately in this subject of psychics we are prone to jump to conclusions on one series of experiments alone.

DISBELIEF IN THE PROBLEM OF SURVIVAL

By H. H. PRICE
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THE subject I am going to discuss is the Problem of Survival as it presents itself in the light of contemporary educated opinion, the particular form which the problem takes in this particular intellectual epoch in which we happen to be living. For that is the form in which we have to deal with it, if our views are to get a hearing.

If I had to choose a text for my remarks, I should be tempted to quote those alarming words from the Parable of Dives and Lazarus in the Gospels "Though a man rose from the dead, they would not believe". For my impression is that despite the labours of psychical researchers, or even partly because of them, educated people find it more difficult to believe in survival than they did thirty or forty years ago. There is a widespread and increasing lack of interest not only in the survival hypothesis, but even in the Problem of Survival itself. I want to consider the reasons for this and to ask what, if anything, can be done about it.

But these, you may say, are questions of psychology or sociology. What does it matter to the psychical researcher whether many people believe in survival or few? What matters to him, surely, is not how many people hold this belief, but whether the belief is correct; or if this question cannot be decided on the evidence available, what matters to him is what degree of probability, great, small or negligible, can reasonably be assigned to the proposition that human personality continues to exist after death. Of course, if he was a propagandist whose aim was to convert as many people as possible to a belief in survival, he would be greatly concerned to find out how many people now had this belief, how influential they are, and whether their number is increasing or decreasing. But a psychical researcher is not a propagandist. He is, or at least he tries to be, a scientific investigator. He wants to find out what the facts are and what conclusions may reasonably be drawn from them. He does not need to worry about what is actually believed, but about what may be reasonably believed.

Yes, but unfortunately a psychical researcher is a human being after all. He is a social being too. Whether he likes it or not, he cannot fail to be influenced by the beliefs, and also by the disbeliefs and doubts, of those around him. And unfortunately the problems he is investigating are exceptionally difficult ones, and the problem of survival is perhaps the most difficult of all. If I try to make myself into a

disinterested observer and consider the whole situation as dispassionately as I can, I am quite seriously inclined to fear that the problem of survival will just be given up in despair, that it will lapse into being just a subject for after-dinner conversation, and that serious investigators will cease to bother their heads about it. The facts relevant to it are so difficult to establish, and when established they admit of so many different interpretations; the very meaning of the term "survival" is so obscure. Surely we psychical researchers should concentrate on investigations in which we can be reasonably confident of reaching reliable results? Let us devote our energies to the study of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis perhaps, paying some attention (but not too much) to the spontaneous manifestations of these. But let us leave the problem of survival alone. Theologians may discuss it if they like, though they do not seem to have much inclination to do so.

Those who take this view would admit, of course, that the problem of survival does have great *historical* importance. It was their interest in this problem which led the pioneers of psychical research to investigate telepathy, clairvoyance and other supernormal powers of living, embodied human beings. But this is like saying that the search for the Philosopher's Stone or the Elixir of Life had great historical importance, because these illusory quests led people to make the investigations which laid the foundations of modern chemistry.

You may say that this is a defeatist attitude. I agree that it is, and I am very far from advocating it myself. I am only saying that many serious students of psychical research may be led to adopt it, as indeed, I think, some have already; and that they may be encouraged to adopt it, or discouraged from holding any other, by the prevalent and increasing disbelief in survival which is part of the climate of present-day educated opinion.

If what I have been saying is correct, is it not rather surprising that in the same period (the last thirty years or so) religious belief has been somewhat on the increase among educated people, in English-speaking countries at any rate? It would be too much to say that religion is becoming fashionable, but at least it is becoming less unfashionable than it was in the 1930's. And a belief in the continuance of human personality after death is surely an integral part of all the higher religions, and certainly of Christianity. One might expect, then, that as a result of this return to religion educated opinion would be more favourable to belief in survival, rather than less. I consulted a philosophical student of theology* on this rather paradoxical fact that religion is at present rather on the upgrade among educated people, whereas belief in survival is on the downgrade. His explanation was that the recent return to religion has been mainly a return to one version or another of traditional orthodoxy. The belief in survival which was formerly rather widespread among educated people was not, in his view, a belief in the orthodox Christian doctrine of the "Life Everlasting", still less, of course, a belief in the Resurrection of the Dead. It was part of the vague and nebulous outlook which was all that was left of religion in many people's minds after the long battle between Religion and Science in the 19th century. This outlook was a kind of half-way house between traditional Christianity and scientific Agnosticism. People thought, or felt, that there was "something in" the two basic religious beliefs, the belief in God and the belief in immortality, but they did not pay much attention to the orthodox formulation of either. In such a state of mind it was quite natural to suppose that human beings quite probably do survive death, while rejecting the orthodox Christian views about how they manage to do it, for instance the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body. It was also quite natural to think that there might be empirical evidence which was relevant to the question. And therefore when men like Frederick Myers and Oliver Lodge maintained that there was indeed good empirical evidence for the continuance of human personality after death, there was a ready-made public willing to

*Mr. R. G. Swinburne, of St. John's College, Oxford. I should like to express my gratitude to him for supplying me with some interesting details in this sketch of contemporary educated opinion which I am trying to present to you.



C.P.S. CONFERENCE, 1958

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listen to them, willing at any rate to take their views seriously, whether convinced by them or not. Today, on the contrary, the situation is quite different. If you are a Theist at all, you are likely to accept the whole paraphernalia of traditional Christianity as well. Of course you will accept the doctrine of the life of the world to come, but you will think that it cannot be either proved or disproved by scientific investigation. It would be futile to try either to prove or to disprove the doctrine of the Trinity by scientific investigation, or the doctrine of the Atonement. It is the same with the doctrine of the Life Everlasting. It is just part of the Christian Revelation, something which one accepts on the authority of the Church or of the New Testament. On this view it would be futile, or perhaps even impious, to discuss the problem of survival in at all the way in which psychical researchers have been accustomed to discuss it. Moreover, the Life Everlasting, as Christianity conceives it, is something vastly more than the mere continuance of human personality after death, which is all the psychical researchers have usually meant by "survival". It is a life of everlasting bliss or everlasting misery, and what is important about it is not that one's personality continues after death, but the relation in which one's *post mortem* personality stands to God.

On this side, then, what the psychical researcher is confronted by is not so much an increasing disbelief in survival itself (for Christians of all the traditional denominations do believe that human personality continues after death, although they may dislike the word "survival"). What he is confronted by is something more disconcerting: disbelief in the *problem* of survival. There *is* no such problem, if one holds these traditional religious views. That human personality continues after death is quite certain. It is part of the Christian revelation. A problem is something about which we are uncertain. Moreover, a problem is something one can investigate. One can propose hypotheses about it, and one can produce evidence for or against the hypotheses proposed, or at least one can look for it. But you cannot do any of these things with a revealed truth. You can only accept it or reject it. This is what I mean by disbelieving in the *problem* of survival. And such an attitude, which is, I think, really characteristic of the religious part of contemporary educated opinion, is more discouraging to the psychical researcher than outright disbelief in survival itself. It amounts to telling him that all the laborious work which has been done on the problem of survival has just been a waste of time.

You may think that this traditionalist religious attitude is not very important or influential, and that I am taking it more seriously than it deserves. But I do not think we psychical researchers can afford to disregard it. It is an attitude which is held not by the simple and ignorant, but by highly cultivated and learned men. Among them are some who deserve our most serious respect. Their influence upon the general climate of opinion may not be very great at present, but it is slowly growing stronger. A cynical observer might say that we are growing tired of freedom, both in thought and in action. We like to be told what to do, and submit ourselves gladly to the dictates of bureaucrats and planners, and we also like to be told what to believe. A still more cynical observer might say that culturally we are living at the beginning of a Dark Age, despite all our scientific and technological achievements, or even because of them.

Scientists and Philosophers

Let us now turn to educated people who are not religious at all; and these, no doubt, are still the vast majority, at any rate in Western Europe, though not perhaps in the United States. We find, I think, that the situation has altered in a curiously parallel way. The educated people I now have in mind are scientists and philosophers, together with those who have been influenced by them—their pupils, those who read their books or listen to their talks on the wireless, the schoolmasters who pass on their teachings in a simplified form to the young. Thirty years or so ago, the majority of such people disbelieved in survival,

and they justified their disbelief by appealing to the evidence against it. This evidence, they would have said, is derived chiefly from the biological sciences; the facts which the biological sciences have established suggest very strongly that consciousness and all the other constituents of personality (memory, character, etc.) cannot possibly exist apart from a living brain and nervous system. And we psychical researchers must agree that by far the most important evidence against the survival hypothesis is the evidence of the biological sciences, though we may urge that there is evidence on the other side which must not be neglected.

But we must notice that these disbelievers in survival, those of thirty or forty years ago, did at any rate admit that there is a genuine question here which deserves an answer. In their view it was perfectly proper to *ask* whether human personality continues after bodily death. The question, they thought, was a perfectly intelligible one. What they urged was that the right answer to it was "No"—in view of the well-established biological facts about the dependence of mind on brain. Some of them might have said that it was a foolish question, on the ground that the answer "No" was obvious to any person of scientific education. But they would not have said that it was a *meaningless* question, like asking "How many miles is it from here to next Tuesday?"

Now this is just what their modern successors very often do say. They do not exactly disbelieve in survival, as their predecessors did. Their disbelief is more radical. They disbelieve in the *problem* of survival; like the religious people I mentioned before, but on quite different grounds. On the neo-orthodox religious view there is no problem of survival because the continuance of human personality after death is just a revealed truth and therefore we cannot ask questions about it. On the view of those modern scientists and philosophers and their numerous disciples, the very concept of survival is nonsensical. According to them it is just meaningless to ask whether Jones has survived death. It may appear to mean something, because it is perfectly meaningful to ask whether Jones has survived an illness or a railway accident, and perfectly reasonable to look for evidence to decide the question. But (it will be said) if we reflect on what we mean by saying that someone is dead, surely we can all see that this analogy is quite false. This may be put in a crude form by saying that to survive death would amount to being alive at a time when *ex hypothesi* one is dead; to which the obvious answer is that there might be more sorts of life than one, and that a person might be physically dead but alive in some other way. But the view which I am stating (please do not assume that I agree with it) is much less simple-minded than this. It is that part of what we *mean* by "a person" is something which we can see and touch: something which has physical attributes, as well as thought, memory and consciousness. So if by any chance there could be such a thing as a disembodied mind or spirit it could not possibly be a *person*; nor could it be the same person as Mr. Jones who died last week, since it could not be a person at all.

This is sometimes called the "psychosomatic" conception of personality and in one form or another it is very widely held. And it does follow from it that the very notion of survival is nonsensical, that is, the notion of *personal* survival, the continued existence of a person whose body has died.

Such a theory does not have to deny the existence of consciousness. It is not committed to a purely Behaviouristic analysis of psychological concepts. It can admit that mental events are events of a unique and irriducible kind, and even that mental events sometimes cause physiological ones, and physiological events sometimes cause mental ones. But, it says, what these events happen *to*, whatever sorts of events they are, is just a certain kind of visible and tangible living organism. A living human being is indeed a wonderfully complex kind of living organism, and many different sorts of activities go on in him, often in the most intimate connection with one another. Some of these activities are purely physical, some are chemical or bio-chemical, some are physiological, and some are mental. People

who talk of the survival of human personality after death are trying to conceive of some of those activities (the mental ones) as existing apart from the living organism whose activities they are. It is as if one tried to conceive of walking without anyone or anything that walks, or of breathing without anyone or anything that breathes. You remember the story in Lewis Carroll about the Cheshire Cat. The cat gradually faded away until nothing but its grin was left. On this view the idea of a person without a body would be as absurd as the idea of the grin without the cat.

Two Alternative Hypotheses

We psychical researchers have been accustomed to think that there are two alternative hypotheses for explaining veridical mediumistic communications. One is what Professor Hornell Hart calls the "Super-ESP hypothesis" and the other is the survival hypothesis. But according to this psychosomatic conception of human personality there are not two alternative hypotheses. There is only one. For the survival hypothesis, on this view, is not a genuine hypothesis at all. It is just meaningless words, because the very idea that a person might survive the death of his body is nonsensical. So when we are confronted with a veridical mediumistic communication which cannot be explained in any normal manner, we *must* explain it by the Super-ESP hypothesis. Whatever improbable-seeming complications this may involve. There is no other alternative which makes sense.

I think we are justified in saying that the numerous scientists and philosophers who accept this psychosomatic conception of human personality do disbelieve even in the *problem* of survival. And this is a much more radically-negative attitude than disbelief in survival itself. For if it were correct, no amount of evidence, however great, would make survival in the least degree probable. Though a man rose from the dead such people would not believe.

In the earlier part of my remarks I said there was a danger that psychical researchers might give up the problem of survival altogether. We now see that there are three kinds of considerations which might lead them to do this. The first is that the evidence against survival is so strong. The second is that the problem is so difficult, and therefore it might be wiser to concentrate on other problems which offer more prospects of success. But the third and much the most discouraging is the suggestion, accepted by many of the educated people around them, that the very idea of survival may be nonsensical. If there is strong evidence against something, it is also possible that there might be strong evidence in favour of it. At any rate it is worth while to look and see. If a problem is very difficult, one may still make attempts to solve it, and if one fails, one's failure may be instructive to others and help them to succeed. But if the very question we are discussing is devoid of meaning, we are simply wasting our time in paying any attention to it at all.

All these sources of discouragement exist. But the third and most discouraging one is becoming increasingly powerful. What I called disbelief in the *problem* of survival is coming to be part of the "climate of opinion" in which the psychical researcher has to work, and is bound to influence him whether he likes it or not. After all, he does not conduct his investigations just for the benefit of other psychical researchers, but for the benefit of the educated public.

This disbelief in the *problem* of survival is what I now wish to consider and I wish to ask what, if anything, can be done about it. The real ground for it is the view that having a body, something which can be seen and touched and heard speaking, is an essential part of what we mean by "being a person". Professor Flew has put it in a striking way by saying that persons are "what you meet". When someone is dead, it is natural to suppose that he cannot be met any longer, indeed that the idea of meeting him again no longer makes any sense at all. And if so, the idea that a person could continue to exist after death makes no sense either.

Let us first assume for the sake of argument that this psychomatic conception of personality is correct. It still would not follow that there could be no kind of survival at all. The persons

we meet with in this life are certainly visible and tangible living organisms. We may describe them rather roughly as living organisms endowed with consciousness and memory; or, if you like, we may say that they (and we ourselves) are living organisms which have both mental and material attributes. One says without any qualms "I am six feet high, I breathe and walk and digest", as well as "I think" and "I remember". Nevertheless, it is still perfectly possible that the thing here denoted by "I" is a *compound* entity: somewhat as water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, though in our ordinary everyday thought and conversation we do not regard it as being a compound at all, and the fact that it *is* a compound has only been discovered by chemical research. A person might still consist of two distinguishable parts, a mental or spiritual entity on the one hand and a living body on the other; and this might be the reason why the person as a whole has these two very different sorts of attributes, mental and physical, at the same time. Whether a person is in this way a compound entity, consisting of two distinct parts, is a question of fact and not a question of terminology. It cannot be solved by considering the way the word "person" is used in everyday thought and conversation. The only conclusive way to solve it is to find out whether the mental attributes do in fact continue to be manifested when the body is no longer alive.

A few minutes ago I mentioned the analogy of the grin without the cat. Those who accept the psychosomatic conception of what a person is would say that the idea of a person continuing to exist after death is like the idea of the grin continuing to exist after the cat has vanished. But this analogy does not show that the whole conception of survival is nonsensical. There could very well be a grin without a cat. Tenniel, in his illustration of Lewis Carroll's story, has given us a very nice drawing of what it might be like. What there could not be is a grin without a mouth. But if the mouth was still there when the rest of the cat had vanished, there could very well be a grin without a cat: a very odd situation, no doubt, but one which it is perfectly possible to imagine. In the same way, if the mental attributes which belonged to the person Jones when he was alive continued to be manifested after he is dead we should be justified in concluding that there is a *part* of Jones, namely the mental part of him, which has survived death. The question is, whether this would be the survival of a *person*. This is the real issue.

Let us put it this way. Suppose we have pretty good evidence that quite detailed and accurate memories of earthly life do persist after death; and it certainly looks as if we had; at any rate we have pretty good evidence that they persist for some time and in some cases. If so, we have evidence that something, and something quite important, does survive death. But is this something a person? If it is true that part of what we mean by a person is something which can be seen and touched and heard, something which you can "meet" as Professor Flew puts it, the sort of survival to which this evidence points would surely be something much less than *personal* survival? What has survived, so far as this evidence shows, would surely be no more than a fragment of a person, or if you like, it would be an *ex*-person, somewhat as we speak of an ex-king.

It seems to me that we can form what I will call a minimum conception of survival in which life after death would be something purely retrospective. It would consist wholly in remembering the experiences one had had on earth. One would be living entirely in the past. It is plausible to suppose that when present sensory stimuli are cut off (because there are no longer any physical sense-organs to provide them) remembering would be far more vivid and detailed than it is now. Remembering the past might then amount to re-*living* it, as it does very occasionally even in this life in certain abnormal states of mind or body. Recollection would then have the vividness, the poignancy and "feel of reality", which in this present life is confined—almost always—to present sensory experience.

By a slight extension of this, one might "relive" one's unfulfilled earthly wishes, and vividly imagine what one wished for and never

actually had. And then you would re-live not only your actual past, but also your envisaged but non-actual past; and in the absence of competing sensory stimuli (which put a sharp check on our flights of imagination in this present world) this imaging might be almost as good as reality.

I think that something like this is an essential part of any tolerably-intelligible picture of the life after death, or at least of the first stage of the life after death, the "next" world as distinct from the next to one or the next but two.

But if this was the whole picture, if post mortem existence had a purely retrospective character, we might certainly be inclined to think that survival of such a kind would not be *personal* survival, but rather so to speak ex-personal survival, something like the life of certain ex-kings and ex-noblemen here on earth who "live entirely in the past".

For in this conception of survival there is no room for personal development. Indeed it is quite literally a condition of arrested development, a condition in which one "learns nothing and forgets nothing", as was said of the Bourbons during their twenty years of exile after the French Revolution. You might perhaps go beyond the perceptual experience you had on earth, but not beyond the wishes you had on earth. You might re-live your past inner life as well as your past outer life, the thoughts and feelings and wishes you had (including unfulfilled wishes) in addition to the things you actually saw and did in your earthly career. But still you would be in a state of arrested development, stuck in the mud of your own past, so to speak. It might be expected that the result after a time would be a state of almost unbearable boredom. But of course in saying that, one is getting outside the picture which I am presenting. Being bored by a purely retrospective life is not itself something purely retrospective. And the same applies to any valuation of one's past, whether positive or negative. If one passes judgment, favourable or unfavourable, on the vividly remembered earthly past—and does not just remember the judgments which one did pass on it when still alive—then one is no longer living a purely retrospective life. One is beginning to come out of the state of arrested development. Unlike the Bourbons, one is learning or beginning to learn.

Mediumistic Communications

What I have just been saying has some bearing on the evidential value of mediumistic communications. Communications showing accurate memory of Mr. X's earthly past have commonly been regarded as the best evidence for the personal survival of Mr. X, if the information they contain was not known at the time to any embodied human being.

But there is a difficulty here. Let us suppose that X has been dead ten years or twenty. Let us suppose that in communications purporting to come from him we find the most accurate and detailed knowledge of X's earthly past. But let us also suppose that the communications contain nothing else; they are wholly concerned with X's earthly life. Then the sceptic can object that the survival which these communications point to is not *personal* survival at all. It is evidence (he will say) that X's *memories* survive but not that X himself survives. To have evidence that X himself survives, that he himself, as a person, continues to exist, you must surely have evidence that he has altered in some way since he died. For if he has not, he is no longer alive in any sense worth considering—at any rate he is no longer alive as a person, even though his memories do live on for some time after his death.

On the other hand, if the communications show quite a different mental attitude from the one Mr. X is known to have had in earthly life; for instance, if they show a strongly religious attitude, whereas Mr. X in earthly life was a convinced atheist; then the sceptic will say "Whatever source these communications come from it is obvious that they cannot really come from X; for we all know that X was not at all like this when he was alive".

There is a genuine difficulty here. The sceptic is not just trying to have it both ways. It is a difficulty which arises about recognising or "identifying" a person in this world, especially about identifying someone whom we

have not seen for a long time. Suppose that Jones went to Australia twenty years ago and since then you have not seen him or heard anything of him. But now this morning you meet someone who reminds you very strongly of Jones. *Is* it really Jones? There are two opposite considerations which may make you inclined to say No. The first is, "It cannot be Jones, because he could not have changed so little in twenty years". The second is, "It cannot be Jones, because he could not have changed so much and yet be the same person". As to the first ("he could not have changed so little") it obviously applies to bodily appearance, which is after all one of our chief evidence for identifying people in this life. If the person you now see looks just as young as Jones did twenty years ago and his behaviour, voice, etc., are just like those which Jones then had, you would certainly be inclined to say "This cannot be Jones himself, though it might perhaps be his son". And this applies not only to his bodily appearance, but also to the opinions he expresses and the mental attitude he shows.

If, on the other hand, the person you see is very *un*like the Jones you knew twenty years ago, and especially if he is very different in opinions and in character, you will find it equally difficult to believe that he is really your old friend, even though he asserts in the most emphatic way that he is. And though he might try to convince you by reminding you of the picnic you had together on the Thames in 1938, it is not easy to make sure that this is a genuine first-hand memory of his, and not merely something he has heard about from others.

We may notice that of these two obstacles, too much likeness and too little, it is the first which is, if anything, the greater. It is really impossible that a man can live for twenty years and at the end be exactly like what he was at the beginning. And that is just the trouble with the sort of mediumistic communications I was considering, which consist just of detailed memories of earthly life and nothing else. They suggest that their owner cannot really be the deceased Mr. X, for if it were, he would have changed too little in the period which has elapsed since he died: indeed he would have changed so little that we could not regard his post-mortem existence as a *personal* existence at all.

It seems to me that in our assessment of the "evidential value" of mediumistic communications (and of automatic writing as well) we are in danger of using a standard of "evidentiality" which is much too narrow. There are of course communications which purport to describe what surviving persons have done and seen and felt in the next world since they died and the changes in their opinions or their emotional attitude which have resulted from this. It would generally be said that, though such communications may make interesting reading, they are completely non-evidential, and the only evidential ones are those I mentioned previously, which show detailed and accurate knowledge of incidents in the deceased person's earthly life. But it appears to me that the so-called non-evidential ones are important too, although from the nature of the case we have no means of verifying them in detail. They are important at least in this way, that if they did not occur there would be no obvious answer to the objection that the only sort of survival we have any reason to believe in is the survival just of memories, and not of persons. The communications which are generally counted as evidential, those which can be checked afterwards by detailed investigation of the facts of Mr. X's earthly life, are compatible with the hypothesis that what survives is something much less than a person, and is merely a set of memories. But if there is such a thing as *personal* survival, then there ought to be communications of the so-called non-evidential kind, describing what people are doing in the next world, and the changes which have come about in their thoughts and feelings in consequence. And if such communications did not occur, this would be a very important objection to the hypothesis of personal survival. In fact, of course, they do occur, and sometimes (not always!) they are coherent and intelligible.

Personal Survival

So much for what I called the minimum conception of survival, according to which it

is a purely retrospective existence and life after death consists in re-living our earthly past. It does appear to me that this, or something like this, is indeed an essential part of any plausible conception of survival and I think the evidence of psychical research supports the hypothesis that memories of earthly life do persist after death, at any rate for some time. But I have also argued that this purely retrospective life is not sufficient by itself to constitute *personal* survival. Memory is indeed one essential constituent of personality. But to be a person it is not enough to remember earlier experiences, not even if they are "re-lived" with the utmost vividness and in full detail. To be a person, and not just an ex-person, one must have new experiences as well as remembering old ones, and as a result of these new experiences one must change and learn. The so-called "non-evidential" mediumistic communications about life in the Next World, which I mentioned just now, do suggest that such new experiences occur after death and that those who have them change and learn and develop as a result. And that is why those "non-evidential" communications are more important than is generally realised. The sort of post-mortem life which they describe really would be the life of a person, a genuine continuance of *personal* life as we know it on earth.

Now in these same communications, the "non-evidential" ones, we are quite often told that the inhabitants of the Next World have bodies more or less similar to those they used to have on earth; and sometimes we are told so with great emphasis. It almost seems that these ostensible communicators agree with Professor Flew that persons are "what you meet", and then go on to say that the condition laid down by Professor Flew is, in fact, fulfilled in the next world, as in this one. For they do insist that in the next world, as in this, a person is among other things a perceptible and spatially-extended living organism, something which can be seen and touched and heard speaking.

What are we to make of this conception of *embodied* survival? There are obvious difficulties in it. The bodies spoken of in these communications are not physical bodies, even if they do resemble physical bodies in outward appearance; and if they can be seen and touched and heard speaking, this cannot be the seeing or hearing and touching we are familiar with now, because that depends on physical sense organs. To make any sense of the conception of embodied survival, we should have to suppose that there is another type of matter besides the one which our present sense-organs and our present means of scientific investigation reveal to us; and I think we should also have to suppose that there is another type of space in addition to physical space. Both these suppositions seem to me logically possible ones. The question is, how could we possibly get any direct evidence that they are correct? I shall say a word or two about this question later.

Other Worlds

But meanwhile let us suppose for the sake of argument that we could somehow establish that there are other material worlds besides this one, and that there are embodied persons in them. Would this satisfy Professor Flew and other thinkers who accept the psychosomatic conception of personality? Would they abandon their disbelief in the very problem of survival, and admit that the question "does human personality survive death?" does at any rate make sense? I think they would not surrender so easily. For after all, the other-worldly bodies, which these communicators claim to have, are not physical bodies. If Mr. Jones has been dead for ten years, there may be some person X in another world who has a body which *looks* very like the one Jones had when he was still alive on earth. But after all, it is not the same body. Therefore, it will be argued, X may indeed be *a* person, something which can be "met" (at least by others who are in the same situation as himself) but he cannot be the *same* person as the late Mr. Jones; and that of course is what is required if we are to attach any meaning to the hypothesis that Mr. Jones has survived death. If we *identified* this other-worldly person with the late Mr. Jones, it would be a case of mistaken identity. Even if he turned out to have an accurate knowledge of

all the details of Jones's earthly life, he still would not *be* Jones. For personal identity (so it will be argued) requires bodily identity. If I, whom you see now, am the same person as you saw ten years ago, then the body you are now looking at must be the same body as you saw ten years ago, and not merely one which is like it, or very like it, in appearance. Therefore, to repeat the point, the other-world person X may be a perfectly good person, since he does have a body of a sort, and he can conceivably be "met" by others who are in the same world as he is; he may also look very like the late Mr. Jones (to those who are in a position to see him) and he may know all about the late Mr. Jones' career on earth. But if we say he is the *same* person as the late Mr. Jones, it would just be a case of mistaken identity.

I am not myself satisfied by this argument. It seems to me that the identity of the physical body itself is something a good deal more puzzling than these thinkers suppose. It is not like the identity of a brick or a piece of coal which consists of the same material particles over a long period of time. (At any rate the great majority of them are the same as they were twenty years ago, even though a few of them may have been lost and a few new ones added.) A *living* body—and that is what we are talking about—is continually taking in new material particles and losing old ones. Indeed, biologists tell us that in a period of seven years all the material particles of which a living human body is composed are replaced by new ones. And the living body retains its identity not in spite of, but actually by means of, this continual replacement of its material constituents. So in the sense in which a brick or a piece of coal is a body, it could be argued that each of us is continually getting a new body even in this present life.

Nevertheless, there would be a pretty radical breach of continuity when the living body dies and is replaced by another body composed of some quite different kind of matter, located in some quite different kind of space, and subject presumably to quite different causal laws. The only link between them that I can see would be this, that the new other-world body and the old physical body serve as the means of expression for the same thoughts, feelings and wishes. This, in turn, would imply that the ultimate basis of personal identity is not bodily at all but mental or spiritual. I suspect myself that this view of personal identity is the correct one. But I do not wish to say any more about it at present, because it would take us quite outside the fundamental assumptions of the psychomatic conception of personality; and for the purposes of this discussion I want to argue within those assumptions. The question I am asking is how someone who accepts the psychomatic theory, as so many educated people now do, might nevertheless be induced to abandon his disbelief in the very problem of survival, and to admit that the question whether we survive death does at any rate make sense, whatever the answer to it may be.

Different Bodies

The difficulty I mentioned just now was that even if there are such things as non-physical bodies there would still be a radical breach of continuity at death, since the physical body would be *replaced* by another body of quite a different kind. This difficulty would be met if we could show that it is not a case of "replacement" after all. Suppose that every one of us already possesses a non-physical body even in this present life, as well as the familiar physical body, though he is not ordinarily aware of possessing it, because this "subtle" body, as it is sometimes called, is not of course perceptible by means of the ordinary physical sense organs*. Then there *would* be bodily identity between this life and the next. It would not be a case of losing the physical body and acquiring another body of a different kind. The position would be that you had two bodies all along, a physical body and an other-worldly or "subtle" body as well. At death you would lose the physical one, but you would keep the other. So if bodily identity is indeed a necessary condition for personal identity, that condition would after all be fulfilled.

*A little book by G. R. S. Mead called *The Subtle Body* (1908) contains an interesting and very learned survey of the history of this doctrine, especially the views of some Neoplatonist philosophers on the subject.

But the thinkers I have in mind, those who disbelieve in the problem of survival, will not, of course, be satisfied by the mere assertion that every human being does have this additional body even in this present life. They will ask for evidence, and quite rightly. How, if at all, can they get it?

There are two possible ways of getting it which we might consider. The first is by means of clairvoyance* or "second sight". There are of course people who claim to be able to "see" the subtle body by some kind of seeing which does not depend on the physical eyes. Unfortunately, such people are very uncommon, and others have no means of verifying what they say. But suppose that some reliable method could be found which would enable anyone you please to have this "second sight" when he wished, and suppose this method was used by a large number of people who all agreed in their reports of what they saw, the situation would be entirely different. But I cannot see much hope of this at present.

Out-of-the-Body Experiences

Another and perhaps more promising way of getting evidence is by means of out-of-the-body experiences. I do not think that psychical researchers have paid enough attention to these. We do not really know how frequent they are or what conditions, physiological or psychological, are the most favourable ones. We should be on the look out for more facts on the subject. Suppose that we got them, and that as a result we learned how to have out-of-the-body experiences at will, without too much difficulty. (The methods now recommended, if they work at all, seem to be too difficult for most people, and also perhaps too dangerous.) Or suppose that in some way or other involuntary out-of-the-body experiences just became very much more common than they seem to be at present (conceivably the invention of a new anaesthetic might have this result). Suppose, for example, that one person in five could count on having at least one out-of-the-body experience in the course of his life. I think that this would greatly weaken the present attitude of disbelieving in the very problem of survival.

For in the existing records of out-of-the-body experiences we find two features which are highly relevant to the question we are discussing. First, the person who has had such an experience usually reports that he seemed to himself to have *another* body, serving as his point of view or as the centre of his perceptual world, and responsive to his will: a body different from his physical body, which he sees from outside as one of the things in his environment. Secondly, though much less frequently, he also reports that he met other persons who had bodies of the same non-physical sort as his. And in one or two cases, he reports that among them there were deceased persons whom he recognised. If persons are "what you meet", as Professor Flew says, it would seem from these reports that *physical* embodiment is not absolute necessary for this purpose.

Let us consider these two features separately. The first by itself is apparently often sufficient to convince the percipient himself of his own survival. He claims to have found out for himself, at first hand, that he can get along quite well without his physical body, because he has another which is sufficient to enable him to think, feel, perceive, and move about from one place to another. True, his physical body is not, of course, dead at the time. But it is (usually) inert and in a state pretty close to death: so much so that in some of the cases reported a doctor or nurse who was present was quite convinced for the time being that the man had actually died. Perhaps the most important point of all, however, is this: the person who has had such an experience becomes convinced that "leaving one's physical body" is an expression which does make sense, and that when one does leave it, this does not necessarily involve the cessation of consciousness, memory and thought, but even perhaps their enhancement; nor does it involve any loss of personal identity.

*This is a rather old-fashioned and wide sense of the term "clairvoyance" and not the narrower and more technical sense to which Dr. Rhine and his collaborators have accustomed us, in which it means the paranormal cognition of physical objects or physical events. For the "subtle body" would not of course be a *physical* object, though it would be a spatial one.

It will be objected, of course, that such experiences are just rather complicated and vivid hallucinations. And if subsequently verifiable facts are reported, as sometimes happens, it will be said that the ESP powers of the patient were active and contributed to producing the hallucination—much as in a telepathic dream, veridical details may be mixed in with others which are not veridical at all.

But I think it would be difficult to persist in this opinion if out-of-the-body experiences became very common, and if the reports of those who had them were in substantial agreement with each other. After all, it could be said that when someone claims to have gone to Brighton on a fine August Bank Holiday afternoon and reports who he saw and heard there, the whole thing must have been a hallucination. It may well have been a rather extraordinary experience. But if enough people can go there, and their reports agree, and if the doubter himself can go and see for himself, a point comes when it is no longer reasonable to call the experience a hallucination, whatever extraordinary features it may have.

The same applies to the second point, mentioned in some reports of out-of-the-body experiences, but not, I think, in many, the claim to have met other non-physically embodied persons who are dead. Again, such experiences, if they happen only very rarely, are naturally written off as hallucinations. But the situation would be very different if they happened quite frequently. "You tell me that he doesn't survive, or that it makes no sense to say he does. Well, my dear sir, I met him only a few hours ago". The hearer might dispute this interpretation; but he would be much less inclined to do so if shortly afterwards he had a similar out-of-the-body experience himself and was continually coming across others who had them.

I conclude, then, by suggesting that in the present climate of opinion, when disbelief in the very problem of survival is so widespread, one of the most important things we psychical researchers can do is to look about for ways of making out-of-the-body experiences much more frequent than they appear to be at present. They have a more direct bearing on the survival hypothesis than is commonly thought; not so much because they are themselves evidence in favour of it, but because they help to show that the idea of personal existence without a *physical* body does at any rate make sense, and that the survival hypothesis is at any rate a meaningful one, whether it is true or false, probable or improbable.

Obituary

HEREWARD CARRINGTON

We regret to announce the death, at the age of 78, of Hereward Carrington, psychical researcher and author, at Los Angeles on December 26th.

Hereward Hubert Lavington Carrington was born on October 17th, 1880, at St. Helier, Jersey, and joined the Society for Psychical Research when he was 19. He went to the United States in 1899 and later became founder and director of the American Psychical Institute Inc. A prolific writer, he was the author of a great many books on psychical research and allied subjects. Amongst his best known works may be listed *Psychical Phenomena and the War; Death, Its Causes and Phenomena,* with J. R. Meader; *The Invisible World; The Story of Psychic Science,* and in collaboration with Sylvan Muldoon *The Projection of the Astral Body* and *The Phenomena of Astral Projection;* and *Haunted People* and *The Story of the Poltergeist down the Centuries* with Nandor Fodor.

In *Essays in the Occult,* published in 1958, he wrote: "I feel quite assured of the reality of psychic phenomena; the facts as such are, in my estimation, undoubted. Supernormal phenomena occur; they are facts of nature. But as to the second problem—the explanation of such ocurrences—I can only fall back on a sort of agnosticism.

Facts and the interpretation of facts are very different matters; so that, while I feel assured as to the reality of the main phenomena, their final elucidation still escapes me."

DISCUSSION

Following the Lecture by Professor H. H. Price

Lord Dowding, in expressing his regret at having to leave before the Discussion, gave an interesting account of incidents in his own home circle when "communicating entities" expressed surprise at their condition.

Mr. Lucian Landau: Up to the beginning of Professor Price's lecture, I had a little difficulty in correlating the phrase "though man rose from the dead". What interests me most is Professor Price's reference to the out-of-the-body experiences because we badly need a completely new approach to this problem.

Figuratively speaking, we enter this life through one door and leave it through another, and our problem is what is beyond the exit door. Some people say there is another room there; others go so far as to add that there is some sort of communicating passage between that room and the exit door. But I have been wondering whether there is in fact some ante-room there, which one could enter and yet come back and relate one's experiences there.

One of the reasons why I have been thinking on these lines is that I have watched in the past quite a number of people go through that door. Two experiences come to mind. First was my father, who did not believe in anything and was quite convinced that when you are dead you are dead. He was quite conscious when he died and I was present with my mother; we were watching his face, and saw that he acquired that well known post-mortem serenity. There was a fleeting expression of great amazement which was of sufficient duration to be noticed by both of us. In the case of my mother, a few years later, it was rather different.

She was extremely ill and struggling through that exit door for three whole days. I was sitting there and also other people. She could not speak—but she kept pointing in several directions around her bed trying to draw our attention to what she could see. As time wore on it was perfectly obvious to us that the things that she was seeing were becoming more real to her. She was trying very hard to speak to us, but could not. Although I do not like the idea of using drugs, because of any side effects that might be present, I wonder whether the medical process of lowering the body temperature in order to create a state of suspended animation may not lead us to this mysterious ante-room with the way open to return?

Professor Price: Conceivably it might. As to any anteroom of the next world and the dying people apparently being in it, we do want to be quite sure that they are not just having a kind of dream or waking dream or vision, the materials of which are provided simply by their memories. Now it's very difficult to see how you can be sure that it is much more than that. As we are not in a position to cross-examine these poor people, I am rather afraid we shall have to wait and see for ourselves when we get in that position.

* * *

Here members of the audience gave examples of death-bed visions.

Mr. Maurice Barbanell: It seems to me that the simple explanation of survival fits the cases far more than the elaborate theories which Professor Price has produced for us today. They

remind me of the devout lady who went to church and prayed: "O God make it still more difficult for me to believe"! And they also remind me of the story told by Professor Flinders-Petrie, who on one of his visits to Egypt entered the Great Pyramid and to his horror saw a man with a file working away on the stones. And Professor Petrie said "You must not do that; what do you think you are doing, anyway?" And the man replied: "I am trying to make the Pyramid fit my predictions."

These theories seem to me to fall into similar categories. It is all a matter of experience. Professor Price has just suggested that all mediumistic communications could be explained as being fragments of memory. I have been present at some hundreds of voice séances and on at least two occasions have been able to recognise the voices of the communicators as being identical with those with which they addressed me on earth. And I have heard many other people claim to be able to identify their communicators in similar fashion. Well, I do not see how a fragment of memory can speak with a reproduction of its earthly voice.

Similarly, I was present at a materialisation séance where a form which materialised said "They tell me that a signature is supposed to be the best evidence of our identity" and he wrote his signature not once but twice on a sheet of paper and I am assured that it compared, as far as can be checked, with his earthly signature. I do not see how a fragment of memory can write a signature.

In another séance with Helen Duncan, my brother-in-law, who was recognised by my wife, wrote on a sheet of paper an explanation which solved the mystery of his death. He was missing, presumed killed, in the First World War, and the handwriting was identical with his earthly letters from the front, as anyone could see by certain obvious characteristics.

When one is confronted with evidence like that, time and time again, it seems to me much more rational to say people are who they say they are, rather than to adopt the kind of theory which says: "well no matter what you produce, we can explain it away somehow".

* * *

Mr. Boore: Reverting to the death-bed experiences, I have a question to raise and a comment to make and a complaint to utter.

First of all, the question to Professor Price.

Those who advance this theory of the partial survival, of the ex-personal survival, of the closed memory, the completely arrested development; how, sir, do they reconcile that theory with the new experience that arrested development is having of communicating with them on earth?

Professor Price: I'm not accepting this theory, you know. Perhaps we should say it happened without their knowledge; that something from their memory just seeps through. The mind retains it and then it comes out in words. Perhaps very often communicating with the appearance of doing so consciously or purposely is just a kind of leakage. And we know that what I call "telepathic leakage" does, in fact, occur. Well, might not it occur after death too?

Mr. Boore: Thank you. That explains that point as far as it goes. The comment I wanted to make was I think that in trying to prove this question of the secondary body or the solar body or etheric, astral or whatever you like to call it, I do not know if you can do anything to prove it, but I think that to prove a spiritualistic truth we will have to go into certain by-ways of knowledge and pick up little odd bits here and there and so converge upon the main problem. I mentioned one yesterday; of studying old people and being almost able to feel you could see the emerging entity. And there is another purely physical point. If a man, for instance, rubs his finger prints away and then lets them regrow, they will grow to precisely the same pattern as they did before. It is a fact that any damage to the body insofar as it is restored, is restored in imitation of what was lost or damaged; which does suggest that there is a more permanent pattern which the restored flesh is following; that there is something permanent there apart from the changing body.

The complaint I have does not really affect the address we have had tonight. But it has a bearing on this question of disbelief. Personally, I think the greatest enemies of spiritualism are

spiritualists. I do believe there would be a great many more people interested in spiritualism if it was not for the ghastly rubbish that is turned out every Sunday in the guise of trance addresses from the spiritualist churches!

Professor Price: Scars are reproduced in the human body and whatever causes finger prints is also reproduced. This has a bearing on what I did mention, that it is not really at all a simple matter to understand in what sense we have the same physical body throughout this life; in this sense it has always been in a way renewed or re-formed all the time.

Mr. Wilson: I would just like to call attention to four cases which have a very distinct bearing on what Professor Price has been saying.

First of all, the out-of-the-body experiences of Dr. Wilkes (Myers: App. to Chap. VII).

Even those of you who are acquainted with that case may not know of an even better case which is related in *The Medical Journal*, I think in 1905, by Sir Auckland Geddes. It is a case of a doctor who, to all intents and purposes, died. He was pronounced dead, but came back to life and related his after-death experiences. That had the imprint, if it is of any value, of *The Medical Journal*.

The third case concerns an article in the Journal of the S.P.R., round about 1917, in which Dr. L. P. Jacks discussed the question of memory. This has a very important bearing on the subject of materialisations. His pertinent point was: does anybody remember the shape of the back of his head?

The last reference I want to make is to the question of experiments with the subtle body. I gave a lecture on that at a college last term. You will find some very suggestive information on it, and experiments which most people can carry out in an appendix to Stewart Edward White's *The Betty Book*.

Professor Price: As to this interesting question which Dr. Jacks raised, 'does anyone remember the shape of the back of his head?' this is a thing which I often wonder about in connection with apparitions. Does the telepathic agent know anything about the back of his head or even about his profile? This involves one in supposing that the recipient must supply this part of the apparition. But then, we do come up against some cases where the recipient of the apparition is quite unfamiliar with the person who appears, and then what are you going to say?

To me it suggests that the telepathic theory does not cover all the facts.

* * *

Questioner: To tell you the truth, I am disturbed very much by one thing. When we have an out-of-the-body experience or see an astral body, why should it be clothed? This would seem to indicate that it is a made-up body, a sort of imaginative body. I would like to hear Professor Price speaking about clothing of the body which is always one of the principal difficulties in apparitions.

* * *

Professor Price: I suppose that if there is some "subtle body", I will not call it astral (that is going into too much detail I think); and it is not a physical body, I suppose we should have to think of it as much more responsive to the thoughts of its owner than the physical body is. If you think of yourself as being clothed, then you will appear to yourself clothed. It is a rather curious sort of apparitional experience which is two-sided, where the apparition is a conscious apparition, as I think Professor Horncroft calls it, and I think the apparition would be seen as clothed in the way the appearing person saw himself. Which does, I suppose, mean that this extra body has properties different from the physical body. After all, one might expect it would. It is probably more directly responsive to the thoughts and wishes and, I would suspect also, the unconscious thoughts and wishes of its owner, than the physical body is.

* * *

Questioner: Professor Price made a number of statements. He said that there is an increase in religion; that there was a decrease in interest in survival; that there was a return to religion in the general sense; and that public opinion is growing tired of the whole problem. I do not

doubt all these things, but he gave us no shred of evidence whatsoever for this.

The question that I would like to make is whether the premises on which he has based his whole argument is that personality and body have to be identified; I think he said that the biological scientists have been foremost in discrediting survival because they showed the impermanence of the body?

It is not that I want to discredit the biological scientists at all but it really turns on the question of how one views the whole matter of personality. I was talking recently about part of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* which is a description of probably all their deities which are to be met with in the *bardo* or land after death. These deities are, of course, depicted in Tibetan form. Which is again what one would expect. The whole of this report is produced from Tibetan minds, just as the Christian mystics will depict their view of the beyond in terms of Christian imagery. Now I think that the important thing is that the energy which produces these images is something which is unchangeable, and which is a question of personality.

* * *

Professor Price: As to my not having evidence of what I said about religion, of course, I certainly have not evidence in the sense of figures. I was very much surprised to hear of a recent poll in which so much as fifty per cent of the people in this country confessed to a belief in survival; I should have expected the percentage to be much more. But here I just judged from what I hear people say and the arguments I hear people use. I judged also from the fact that a number of people whom I know have become religious, whereas in the 1930s or thereabouts, they were agnostics.

I have noticed a trend in that direction, and somebody, I expect, though not I, could give the figures of church membership and so on. However, if you think that statistical evidence is required, all right, my whole argument is hypothetical; *if* the facts are as I described them, then what should be done about them? Or how should we deal with them? But I do not claim to be a statistician at all. I should not have said these things at all, I suppose. I should have said, very carefully: "My impression is that . . ." With regard to the biological sciences and their bearing on this question, it may very well be that I take the old-fashioned view about this. It may very well be that through these modern developments in physics the foundations of biology itself will be altered. I do not know, myself, enough about physics to guess how they might be altered. If that were so, it might be that the biological facts would seem less difficult to reconcile with the survival theory than they previously did. But I am afraid I am not qualified to talk about that at all—I do not know enough about it.

Questioner: With reference to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* it shows you that there is a large body of opinion in certainly a part of the world that we do not often go to, which consider (a) that there is something that survives, (b) that has a total experience of it and (c) it is worthwhile to try and help that alleged thing that survives to get through the worst part of its new birth. Now I think that is extremely interesting and well worth further consideration. These people have occupied themselves for hundreds of years with the *Bardo Thodol* system of further hells in the next world, and they have been doing it for what they consider to be sound reasons.

I believe I am right in saying that no scientific body in the West has ever taken the trouble to enquire (a) into the empirical experiences that went behind the reason for adopting this method; or (b) even thinking about the matter so far as to see whether there could be any reasonable thing in it.

It is quite clear, to me at least, that if we were to open up an investigation of that character, we would have to adopt the Oriental approach to intuition. The whole difference between Western philosophy and Eastern, is this question of accepting intuition as being valid in its own place. I believe there was a meeting of Eastern and Western philosophers, in Honolulu in 1949, where a great deal of this was discussed. In the symposium at the end,

one of the things that came out very clearly was the fact that most Western philosophers there found it impossible to accept the intuitional approach to the Eastern philosophical systems which are so important in the East.

It seems to me that we could investigate with advantage the empirical experiences of these people that go back thousands of year and the reasons why they base their views on them and why they should go to the trouble of using a *Bardo Thodol* anyway.

Professor Price: One idea that I have is that the Christian church, until the Reformation, and the Catholic and Orthodox churches since, do, of course, occupy themselves very much with this problem in their own way, by saying masses for the dead and so on. And there again, you may ask, why do they do so? Well, I am not learned enough in Ecclesiastical History to say how far back that tradition goes or how it started, and I should be very much interested to find out if somebody could. I also think it is well worth our while to study what Eastern thinkers have said about these matters. We might learn a thing or two, I think; I do not see why not. They are people who are just as intelligent as we are and this intuitional approach is characteristic, perhaps, of many forms of eastern metaphysics.

Perhaps they are more gifted in clairvoyance than we are, either for racial reasons or even, possibly, for climatic reasons. Or perhaps it is the result of Yogic exercises.

I think that is the basis they went on. Well, I suggest the thing to do is for us to find out ways of cultivating such faculties in ourselves. When we can do that, we should be able to check what these Tibetans and others have to say, by our own investigations, and I hope one day we shall.

* * *

Mr. Blewett: It is a very sad fact but rather obvious, that Professor Price has never had a very striking and convincing psychic experience.

Professor Price: That's true.

Mr. Blewett: That is what we have been listening to today. A man without any striking, convincing psychic experience. Now I was fifty before I had one. Why does a poor mug like me get these things, and not people like Professor Price and Mr. George Zorab?

Professor Price: Does somebody know, better than we do, what our respective merits are?

Questioner: Since I have had a psychic experience my life has completely changed. I would like to thank Professor Price for his talk, but you know the reality is in personal psychic experience. I have had one or two and I thank God for them.

Professor Price: I agree that in this field an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory. I never have had what you would call a striking one, I admit it, but what is one to do? Is one not to take any interest in these very interesting and very paradoxical phenomena? Or does one go on as best one can, hoping that one day, perhaps, one's psychic powers will be developed?

From the point of view of the public at large, surely what you should do if you attach such tremendous importance to first-hand experiences of a psychic kind is to look about for ways in which anybody who wants them can experience them.

I suppose at present we have very little idea of how to look for such; perhaps we should cudgel our brains or ask our friends in the next world to see if they can provide us with any hints!

Mr. Maurice Barbanell: I sat down and forgot to tell you the one story for which I stood up! Which shows that my memory's no good anyway! But it is very apposite to the theory of memories explaining away alleged proofs of survival. And it's an experience that befell Sir Oliver Lodge:

One Christmas, when his very large family were gathered around, he said, "We are going to play a lovely Christmas game. I want you to assume that I have died and I am able to come back through a medium and I want you all in turn to ask me the kind of question which, when I answer it, proves to you it is really I who am speaking." The first one said, "Now, father, do you remember when . . ." And Sir Oliver said, "No, I do not remember that at all." And when he had gone right round the

table and they had each questioned him, he could not answer any of their questions. And when it was finished he said: "Children, I am very sorry to tell you, I am not your father."

Miss Frances Bankes: I only want to ask two very brief questions of Professor Price. I understood him to say that amongst the intellectuals, church-going was going up and belief in an after-life down?

Would he agree that among non-intellectuals the opposite is taking place: that belief in survival is going up with these home circles, etc., and that attendance in church for the labouring people and manual workers is going down?

And secondly, from Professor Humphries' remarks, is there not such a thing as the akashic records and are not they made the more probable for us by a knowledge of television vibrations and that kind of thing? Is there not such a thing possible as static memory?

Professor Price: Well, it is not for me to answer the second question about the akashic records. As you know, various speculative persons have had the idea that there might be a kind of cosmic memory. As some have said, if we remember things, we are just tapping this divine or cosmic memory. But I do not really want to talk about that.

The other point is very interesting. I was only speaking about what I guessed to be the trend of educated or perhaps of academic or semi-academic opinion. I think it may very well be that while educated people become on the whole rather more religious than they were, most uneducated people are becoming rather less religious than they were. I think late Nineteenth Century agnostism, for instance, took a long time to seep down through the strata of society and it is now almost all the way down. I think there is an interesting time lag in these matters. The educated classes, I suppose, have recovered by now, or are beginning to recover, from the effects of this Nineteenth Century religious agnostism, but less educated people have not yet begun to do so.

I think it would be very interesting if somebody made a thorough statistical enquiry as to the amount of religious belief that there is now, and in what classes, and also, as to what strata in the population believe in survival.

Mr. Simeon Edmunds: First about these percentages of people who are becoming interested in religion now. The B.B.C. did a television broadcast a little while ago, I can't remember any figures, but they were showing, in terms of the sizes of churches and the sizes of pubs and things like that. And it did show, from the 1920s up to the present day, that there was a steady decline in the people going to church; the churches were getting smaller and smaller and the pubs were getting bigger and bigger. That was one point.

The other thing I wanted to say was, concerning Mr. Zorab's question about out-of-the-body experiences and why weren't people in the nude? Now I have had many out-of-the-body experiences, sometimes I have been in the nude and sometimes I have not. That might be explained, of course, by the fact that I am a nudist.

I should also like to ask a question of the lady who mentioned television and akashic records just now. As a television engineer I should very much like to know what on earth she thinks television has got to do with them, I just cannot see any connection whatever.

Questioner: I gather that the object of our assembling here is to find the truth about these things. I know all about logic—but I do not know where we should prove that the two go together. I would like to remind you of what is common knowledge to us all, of how the archaeologists have discovered the truth about the history of the world. Deep down, there is a little bit of pottery or what-not, leaves and so on and so forth, and from putting these little bits together they find the truth. Which is agreed upon even by the logic merchants!

I suggest that the truth of these matters is there if you look for it. If we take all this array of books and things and the experiences of a century, and if we keep on putting these little bits together we shall get a perfectly shaped vase in the manner of the archaeologists, and thus we shall arrive at the truth.



C.P.S. CONFERENCE, 1958

THE LORD DOWDING Mr. C. C. L. GREGORY General Sir JOHN SWAYNE LADY SWAYNE LADY DOWDING



C.P.S. CONFERENCE, 1958

Back row: Mr. LUCIAN LANDAU
Mr. GEORGE ZORAB

Third row: Mrs. MEURIG MORRIS, Mr. N. V. BLEWETT

Mr. F. R. MAUDE

DISCUSSION: FOLLOWING THE LECTURE BY PROFESSOR H. H. PRICE

Professor Price: There is only just one comment on that interesting remark, as to the relation between truth and logic. In spite of the title of my Chair I am not much of a logician really; these titles do not mean very much. But I will say this on the subject. If you want to reach true conclusions you must have true premises. These premises, I should say, can only be provided by experience of one kind or another, whatever kind of experience may be relevant to the question you are asking. I prefer to say experience rather than intuition. It is only a matter of words, but I am rather frightened of the word "intuition", you know, because people use it whose views really are supported only by their own feelings; whereas, if you use the more modest word "experience", it is very conceivable that you can tell other people how to have similar experiences and so judge for themselves. I do not want to insist upon that, but I think the word "intuition" has been somewhat abused by some people, whereas the word "experience" seems to me, as philosophers say, a more aseptic word.

Mrs. Meurig Morris: Some twenty-seven years ago I underwent certain physiological and psychological tests whilst in an entranced condition. This examination was undertaken by four eminent specialists, one being a lady.

The physiological tests showed that the body temperature and the pulse rate rose very considerably and that, when the body was pierced with a sharp instrument, the mind was impervious to this treatment.

The psychological tests were to ascertain if during the trance condition a separate personality was operating. The conclusions arrived at by the three doctors were as follows: one doctor believed that a discarnate entity was functioning, the second doctor favoured the discarnate hypothesis, whilst the third doctor believed it was a secondary personality of mine. The latter was an atheist and did not believe in spirits.

I am subject to two forms of trance: one when the mind is used by another entity for giving a body of teaching; the other where I have experiences in the subtle world whilst the physical body is quiescent, as if in a deep sleep with the exception of the abnormal physiological changes. In this form of trance there is great mental activity and intense feeling whilst the subtle world is the world of greater reality.

Our personality organism is a mental, emotional and physical one, through which the real person, or real "I" is functioning. It is due to the limitation of this personality organism which gives the appearance of an "I" which is purely empirical, that we find the cause of our present conception of death. It is natural that a greater sense of reality is given to the physical environment than to the mental and emotional ones. For this world is a world of action and it is in this world that our thoughts and feelings are actualised. Nevertheless it is our thoughts and feelings which inspire our actions and therefore this deeper or wider environment plays the major part of our personality life experience.

I have long been convinced, due to my own experiences in the subtle world and observing the working of the personality organism, that the physical world is a mental world. Of course in the entranced state the mind is very much more alive and active and the feelings are intenser. Movement is through mental activity and the environment is in harmony with oneself. It is difficult to find words which will adequately convey the right meaning, but the mind has the power to "formulate" which I would stress is not to create, and a form of "quality measurement" is involved in this experience.

The conclusion that I have come to is this: that I am living in a very much larger environment than I hitherto thought. The states we shall experience after death are really a part of our personality life. Do we really know what the personality is? Do we not experience through sensations, thoughts and feelings, and are these not attributes which are characteristic of the personality as the "I" operates through "substance" which has so many definitions. When I experience through my physical organism, it is an experience of sensations; and my physical brain is an organ that is able, when functioning correctly, to eliminate certain vibrations, which if this were not so, would

make it impossible for me to function in what is termed the "normal way".

As a greater study is made in the physiological and psychological fields it will be shown that the consciousness of those who enter the subtle state is part of the personality life, which in due time will become the conscious experience of all. It is only placed in the field of the abnormal because it is the few who experience and they often are unable to express what is experienced. The proof of survival will have a different meaning than hitherto; it is a fact in nature, all men do survive.

Professor Price: I do hope Mrs. Morris will write down an account of these out-of-the-body experiences that she has had while they are still fresh in her memory, because I think they are of very great interest; after all, we can only get information about such experiences from people who have actually had them.

I notice that Mrs. Morris drew a distinction between the "I" and the personality. Now this is a thing which many mystics, both eastern and western, have wanted to do. I should have thought that this was one of the difficult borderline regions where physical research, or whatever you call it, and religion overlap. I think this experience of the permanent "I" as opposed to the changing and complex personality is one which is denied to most ordinary people, but it would appear that many mystics in many religious traditions have had it. It is very interesting that Mrs. Morris spontaneously confirms what they have said.

* * *

Mrs. Walter Seville: I should just like to tell Professor Price I would like to corroborate the statement which Mrs. Morris has made about feeling that she was still herself. Only once have I ever had this experience of being outside my body. I was reading in bed, about twenty years ago, and although I was not in the habit of going to sleep while I was reading, I suddenly found myself standing outside my bed and looking at my body. I said, "Dear me, this must be death. But—" and I used the words, "but I am I! I am just the same. Why do they make a fuss about death at all, this is all it means," and I just looked at my body on the bed and thought: "Well, you do look a shrivelled thing, anyway! Why do they make a fuss about that? Throw it away. I am I!" I had that creative certainty around me that I was the same when I passed out of my body as I am standing here speaking to you now. Then suddenly I found myself back in my body and shaking very much indeed and wondering what had happened to me, and was it true. It is the only experience that I have ever had in that direction.

Brigadier Firebrace: Professor Price I think has had an extraordinarily difficult task, which he has performed with wonderful skill. He has been under very great difficulty, as most of the time he has been defending other people's theories, which he has done with extraordinary skill, and I may say, great loyalty to his colleagues. A very difficult task. I wonder whether some of the extreme sceptics really believe in what they say. You see, it is enormous fun if you are of academic distinction, to juggle with words. They would say they have faith in what they say, but I remember a definition somebody once gave: faith is belief in something that you know to be untrue

Another things occurs to me: words are given to us for the concealment of our thoughts! Now some time in the future I propose to call a secret session specially for Professor Price, and during that secret session Professor Price will be urged to tell us only what Professor Price himself knows and believes, from his study of the subject, from his very great interest and from the fact that he still eagerly awaits his first psychic experience. Anyway, Professor Price, I think you will join with me in thanking our audience who have put up worthy questions and uttered worthy remarks and my audience I know will join with me in thanking Professor Price very warmly indeed for what has been really an extremely valuable, amusing and intellectual and thoroughly academic performance.

EXPERIMENTAL METHODS IN SURVIVAL RESEARCH

By GEORGE ZORAB

THROUGH the ages and among most peoples the belief may be encountered that under certain circumstances the living can communicate with the dead. All kind of methods were and are still applied to bring about this contact with the world of the dead, and we generally find that the magician, the necromancer, the medicine-man, etc., who believes he knows or has discovered the ways and means to "call up" the dead, assume that those surviving beyond the grave remain essentially the same persons, possessing the same powers and faculties as when still in the flesh. The mighty king remains the same powerful lord, the distinguished prophet is, when conjured up from Hades, still capable of predicting the future, etc.

An example of this conception is the sorceress of Endor who called up Samuel and who, as Saul experienced, was still in possession of all his precognitive faculties.[1] It is the same with the Homeric prophet Teiresias who, as described in the 11th book of the *Odyssey*, was conjured up with the help of certain magical rites to prophesy the future.

Memory and perceptual faculties were believed to remain intact after death, and many instances are recorded in the ancient literature of deceased persons knowing what had happened after their death. Let me mention just one such a case. Herodotus[2] tells us the story of Periander, tyrant of Corinth, whose wife had recently died and who he wanted to consult as to the whereabouts of some hidden treasure he could not find. In those days there seemed to have been one or two celebrated temples in Greece where one could communicate with the dead, presumably with the help of priests acting as mediums.

[1] I Sam. xxviii, 5-25.
[2] History, book V, 92.

The tyrant sent one of his servants to this temple, instructing him to get into contact with the tyrant's deceased wife and ask her where the treasure had been hidden. The wife duly appeared but refused to answer about the treasure, complaining that she was feeling cold in the world beyond the grave owing to the fact that her husband had forgotten to burn her clothes at her funeral. "But," the spirit said, "in order to prove to Periander beyond a doubt that it is really his wife who is now speaking, tell him that I know that he did a certain thing to me directly after my death." The description of the event in question was so to the point that Periander, knowing that only he and his wife could have had any knowledge of what had happened, at once became fully convinced of the spirit's identity and acted accordingly.

What I have just said makes it clear that right through the ages the basic idea of spirit communication, irrespective of the methods which were applied for evoking the dead, raising them from Hades, etc., was to bring the proof of their identity. Periander's wife did so; Saul identified Samuel during the séance with the sorceress of Endor as the medium; the Apostle Thomas became convinced of the resurrected body's identity with the Jesus he had known as his Master when he perceived the wounds of Christ raised from the dead, and so on.

It was Modern Spiritualism which gave the impetus to the survival research on experimental lines of the English and American Societies for Psychical Research. One has only to go through the many volumes of these Societies' Proceedings to know how great a part of the S.P.R.'s investigations between 1885 and 1930 were concerned with the problem of survival. And it cannot be denied that these investigations were based on and made possible by the

claims put forward by Modern Spiritualism, namely that at any time, and as often as one desired it, one could communicate with those beyond the grave with the aid of certain persons possessing so-called mediumistic powers. The spiritualists claimed that anybody who wanted to could obtain proof by modern experimental methods that the human personality survives death.

Year after year the S.P.R. investigators did little else but try to find out whether the spiritualistic claims in this matter were well-founded or not. These experiments were all directed towards obtaining proof of identity. As a matter of fact not the slightest difference can be found between the type of evidence which convinced the Greek tyrant of his wife's survival and that which proved to Dr. Richard Hodgson and his friends that their beloved ones had been communicating with them from beyond the veil. The necromancers of two thousand, five hundred years ago proved to the Greek tyrant beyond a doubt that his wife survived death with all her perceptual powers intact and able to observe his doings. The same happened to Dr. Hodgson and, for instance, to the friends of George Pellew or Pelham (G.P.), whose manifestation through Mrs. Piper's mediumship may be regarded as one of the outstanding cases in favour of survival. The communications coming from an entity alleged to be the surviving spirit of George Pellew were so convincing and gave so much proof of memory still active after death that Pellew's friends and acquaintances were convinced that they had spoken to the discarnate Pellew himself.[1]

For many years survival research in its experimental approach concentrated on proof of identity. The following method was applied. If telepathy could be eliminated as an explanation of phenomena claimed to be produced by the spirits of the dead, then the only alternative was to accept the survival hypothesis. It was this point of view that induced some foremost investigators to write a letter when quite alone, so that only the writer himself knew the contents of the letter. It was thought that if the writer died and after some time was able to communicate the contents of the letter, say through a medium, this fact should be considered infallible proof of the survival of the writer's personality, mind or psychical complex. It was argued that after the death of the writer no living person could know anything about the contents of the letter, so that no medium or sensitive would be able to get at this knowledge by tapping some living mind telepathically.

Posthumous Letter Test

Although the reach of extra-sensory perception (for instance, by means of what is known as clairvoyance and precognition) is considered far more extensive by modern parapsychologists than that of telepathy by the pioneers of survival research, still to date no well-authenticated case is on record of a letter correctly communicated through a medium and purporting to be derived from the discarnate mind of the letter-writer.

Though so far this method of the posthumous message has failed to give any positive results indicative of spirit intervention, modern variants of the posthumous messages are being proposed. Professor Thouless, for instance, suggested for this purpose a letter written in code, the key of which is only known to the writer.[1] Whether, if such a coded letter is correctly decoded by say a medium through whom the deceased letter-writer purports to communicate, this would mean that the spiritualistic hypothesis is proved beyond a doubt, is a question I would not dare to answer in the affirmative at the moment.

The idea of introducing a code was to cut out the possible influence of clairvoyance. In a letter written in the usual way the sensitive could by means of clairvoyance (that is to say, the sensitive's mind can take up direct contact with physical things and events, and in our case it would mean that in some way the sensitive can directly perceive the inked surface of

[1]R. Hodgson, A further record of observations of certain phenomena of trance. Proc. S.P.R., xiii, 1897-98, 283-582.

[1]R. H. Thouless, A test of survival. Proc. S.P.R., xlviii, 1946-49, 230-38.

the letter and "read" the words that letter contains, without the help of any other living mind) obtain knowledge of the contents of the posthumous message. Clairvoyantly perceiving the ciphers or meaningless jumble of letters of a coded document, on the other hand, would not help the sensitive or medium, as such clairvoyant impressions would not bring him or her any nearer to the contents of the letter.

Professor Thouless further remarks that the person writing out such a coded letter intended as a posthumous message should divulge the fact and not keep it secret. Investigators in the field of psychical research should urge the mediums or subjects with whom they are working to try to break the code during the lifetime of the writer, in order to see to what extent extra-sensory perception in its different forms can penetrate the secret of the code while the writer is still alive.

Professor Thouless is of the opinion that if the code of such a letter is not found during the author's life but becomes known only after his death, allegedly owing to the manifestation of the author's surviving personality through the aid of a medium, this would be a sound indication that some stream of consciousness of that author survived after death and could communicate with the living.

I believe, however, that Professor Thouless, in stating what I have just now mentioned, overlooked the fact that most mediums, etc., if not all, are strongly governed by certain motives in the employment of their paranormal faculties. It can hardly be denied that most mediums foster the desire, consciously or unconsciously, to bring the world the proof of spirit survival. So, if they are informed that they should try to penetrate the secret of the coded letter by means of their E.S.P. faculties, and thus prove at the same time the practically unlimited possibilities of paranormal cognition, they will very probably inhibit, consciously or unconsciously, the full use of their paranormal faculties and will fail to discover the code. But the whole situation completely changes when the author is dead and the opportunity offers itself to *prove* survival by decoding the document left by the author as a test for survival. There is now a strong motive to bring the whole battery of E.S.P. faculties into action and to strive to be the one through whose mediumship the long-sought-for proof of personal survival has at last been given.

In my opinion it is a fallacy to conceive extra-sensory perception as falling apart into two groups, i.e. *telepathy* (mind directly contacting mind) and *clairvoyance* (mind directly contacting material things or physical events). We know practically nothing of the *modus operandi* of extra-sensory perception, and our classification of the phenomena as telepathic or clairvoyant is therefore quite arbitrary. Several indications may be brought forward which make me think that E.S.P. can even pierce the stout harness of a coded letter and get at the contents as conceived by the writer.

A Case of E.S.P.

The well-known French psychical researcher, Dr. Osty, recorded the case of the finding of the corpse of the eighty-years-old Mr. Lerasle by so-called psychometric means.[1] This well-authenticated case clearly shows how penetrating E.S.P. can be.

In March, 1914, Mr. Lerasle left his home in a lonely and wooded part of the East of France all by himself. He did not return, and though an intensive search was organised he could not be found. A fortnight after this event Mr. Lerasle's family turned to Dr. Osty and asked him whether it would be possible to find his corpse, as the man was considered to have died by now, by psychic means.

Dr. Osty handed the sensitive, Mrs. Morel, a scarf which the missing man had worn about a week before he left his home for the last time, and instructed her to find the man. At a certain moment Mrs. Morel described step by step, so to say, how the man had walked from his house to the place where he was now lying

[1] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, April, 1914. An extensive summary of the case can be found in Dr. E. Osty's book: *La connaissance supranormale*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 2 ed., 168-175.

on the ground in a certain posture and in the neighbourhood of certain big trees and large curiously-formed rocks. Mrs. Morel had never been in the district where Mr. Lerasle lived, but still her description of the direction the missing man took, of the spot where he had left the path and entered the woods, etc., was so clear and accurate that within fifteen minutes a search party, acting on the indications of the sensitive, found the corpse of Mr. Lerasle, lying in exactly the same position and surroundings as described by Mrs. Morel.

Now what kind of extra-sensory perception is this? Telepathy and clairvoyance, as generally conceived in modern parapsychology, could not have pointed the way in finding Mr. Lerasle's corpse. Telepathy may be excluded, as no living mind had any knowledge of the whereabouts of the corpse, or had seen the old man leave his house. Neither could clairvoyance supply indications of the exact route along which Mr. Lerasle walked to the spot where he died. Every trace of footsteps, etc., had been effaced by heavy rains. But still in some way or other the sensitive was able to construct the route taken by the old man. And this only because Dr. Osty ordered her to follow the man from the moment he left his home till he arrived at the place where he died, and to describe minutely the road he took. If E.S.P. can solve such problems without much difficulty, why cannot it pierce the secret of a code and contact directly the true contents of a coded letter?

I have gone somewhat more deeply into the case of the coded letter to show how difficult it is to plan experiments to test the spiritualistic hypothesis and find proof that a surviving personality is really influencing the medium if we have no idea of the possible powers of E.S.P. As long as psychical research has concentrated on the survival problem we have come up against the same difficulty. Again and again, as our knowledge of the undreamed-of possibilities of E.S.P. deepened and widened, our interpretation of the results obtained in many series of survival experiments had to be revised. What during a certain period appeared to be sure proof of spirit communication was clearly shown up as the result of E.S.P. faculties a few years later.

It is interesting to see how the type of Mrs. Leonard's phenomena comes as a response to what in England in those days was considered the possible reach of telepathy, the only accepted kind of extra-sensory perception. Mrs. Leonard, consciously or unconsciously, was certainly desirous of bringing proof of survival with the help of her mediumship, and this could only be successful if telepathy could be cut out as an alternative explanation. And so we get the *Book Tests* (involving clairvoyance, regarded as very improbable by the English psychical researchers of the early twenties), and the *Newspaper Tests* (involving precognition, considered practically impossible). Perhaps Mrs. Leonard remembered that F. W. H. Myers believed that when an entity communicating through a medium gave evidence of possessing the faculty of precognition this should be considered proof that the communicating entity was the spirit of a deceased person. Precognition was believed to be beyond the powers of those still in the flesh.

For a long time survival experimentation went along the well-trodden paths of survival versus telepathy. Proxy sittings were introduced to eliminate "fishing" and telepathy from the sitter as much as possible. Certainly, very interesting results were obtained with this kind of survival testing but in view of our extending knowledge of the reach of extra-sensory perception these could not compel the still unconvinced researcher to accept the spiritualistic explanation.

An enormous amount of material has been collected known as *cross-correspondences*. As far as can be ascertained these cross-correspondences, appearing in the scripts of several automatists, were not the result of experimental design on the part of mortal researchers but were discovered by accident in the scripts of some persons who were producing automatic writing. This fact surely is a point in favour of the survival hypothesis. On the other hand, indications came forward (the so-called Zevens cross-correspondence basing itself on a letter Mr. J. G. Piddington had written to be used

as a posthumous message[1]) that the spiritualistic hypothesis need not be the only explanation for these cross-correspondences. The testing too, of the classical and other knowledge of the communicating entities claiming to be the surviving personalities of such prominent men in psychical research as Myers, Gurney, Hodgson, etc., gave contradictory results. And though a small group of S.P.R. researchers proclaimed their belief in survival, basing themselves upon the evidence before them[2], no convincing proof of a compelling character could be brought forward.

Round about the thirties survival experimentation found itself in a cul-de-sac. Carington attempted, by applying psychoanalytic methods thought to be infallible, to distinguish by statistical assessment between mediumistic personality splits and from the medium independent entities which then could be proved to be spirits of the dead. Carington did an enormous amount of work in this matter but all in vain as no definite results could be obtained. The results remained ambiguous all the time. Sound evidence that some of the entities communicating through a medium (e.g. Mrs. Leonard) were independent of the medium's personality make-up did not come forward in any way.

A few years before World War II started experimental survival research came to an end. The younger generation of parapsychologists was no longer interested in the problem of the survival of the human personality, a burning question with many of the S.P.R.'s pioneers. This younger generation knew how very complicated the whole survival problem was, and experience had taught them that a clear-cut answer would probably never be forthcoming.

During the last twenty years or so parapsychology definitely turned its back on survival research and concentrated on the statistical investigation of the claims put forward for the reality of extra-sensory perception and psychokinesis.

[1]Alice Johnson, Second Report on Mrs. Holland's script. Proc. S.P.R., xxiv, 1910, 222-259.

[2]For Mrs. Sidgwick's assurance in this matter see Proc. S.P.R., xli, 1932-33, 26.

A New Approach

Interest in survival problems revived a few years ago in the States, and under the auspices of the Parapsychology Foundation, New York, a new and strong impetus has been given to this kind of investigation. Dr. Karlis Osis, now a research director of the Foundation at New York, has worked out a new approach which he believes may give valuable results and ultimately perhaps may bring us a definite answer to the age-old question: If a man dies, will he live again?

Dr. Osis' basic idea may be formulated as follows: Most parapsychologists seem to have the pet superstition that no limits can be set to the reach of extra-sensory perception, and that we therefore shall never be able to decide where the influence of paranormal cognition ends and that of a surviving spirit of a deceased person comes into play. According to Dr. Osis' opinion this is a fallacy. He believes that if we have once found out how far the reach of extra-sensory perception extends and at what point its limits are reached, we shall have got hold of a measuring stick to help us in survival research.

Dr. Osis proposes to find out the limits of extra-sensory perception in the manner to be described. The experimenter A who knows the subject or medium with whom the investigation is to be conducted invites his friend B, who is not acquainted with the subject, to act in the following way. B is to go on a voyage and at a certain moment, say midday, has to take out a deck of twenty-five E.S.P. cards which he places face down on a table. After the agreed time has passed B notes down the sequence of the cards. In the meantime the subject is asked to guess the sequence of the cards in B's deck. If the result of the subject's guessing is significant, B invites his friend C, not known to the experimenter A or to the subject, to go through the same procedure. If the subject again guesses in a significant manner the sequence of the deck of cards C has with him, the same act is repeated with C's friend D, etc., etc. This chain of friends is continued till the moment arrives that the subject is no longer able to get significant results.

Counting the links B, C, D, E, etc. between experimenter A and the person or persons with whom the subject could no longer score significantly, one could get an idea, so Dr. Osis believes, how many links would be necessary to screen off extra-sensory perception. If such tests were repeated with several subjects one could evaluate the average number of links which would be necessary to keep extra-sensory perception at bay. Then by introducing a series of proxy sittings corresponding in some way with the found number of links sufficient to screen off the influence of paranormal cognition and the use of certain code words not known to the sitter but with which the communicating entity is believed to be acquainted, it is thought that the survival hypothesis could definitely be tested. In the assessment of the results of such survival experiments modern statistical methods will be applied.

Though, personally, I am convinced (but I hope that I may be wrong!) that Dr. Osis' method will not bring us one step nearer to the solution of the survival problem, still I am of the opinion that it is indeed a brave attempt to get the survival experimentation into gear again. Even if the results will be entirely negative, then still, we can at least say that we tested out a certain way of approach. In this connection one should bear in mind that failures are as instructive as successes.

If I am allowed to make some critical remarks regarding Dr. Osis' experimental set-up, I would like to say that when it is conceded that extra-sensory perception can skip two or three links without difficulty in order to get at some facts, I cannot see why it should not be able to hop over thirty, three hundred or a thousand links for that purpose. We know by now from spontaneous and experimental cases that extra-sensory perception can hit its object practically anywhere in time and space. There is little doubt in my opinion that the action radius of extra-sensory perception, in width and depth, is such as we at present can hardly conceive. It seems to me that to know with precision the limits of extra-sensory perception is as difficult as to get a clear insight into the boundaries of our Universe.

There is another thing I would like to point out. It seems to me that trying to settle the question of survival simply by statistical evaluation, for instance by calculating the Critical Ratios of the collected results of the various sittings, etc., is of very little value in convincing the scientific world. Quite different factors will be needed for that, I am afraid.

At the present stage of survival research we may confidently state that so far experiments have given no definite and clear-cut answer to the question: "Is a certain phenomenon, claimed to be of spiritualistic origin, caused by extra-sensory perception or by spirits of the dead? Is it animistic or truly spiritualistic?"

Survival Research

Reviewing survival research from 1885 till 1935 it cannot be denied that time and again the results were ambiguous. In view of this fact I have put myself the question whether this is not due to our conception of human survival being all wrong. We seem to have taken it for granted that the Christian-Hellenistic idea of a surviving human spirit, which was taken over by the Spiritualist Movement in 1849, is the correct one. When the members of the Society for Psychical Research started survival research on scientific lines these pioneers accepted without hesitation the survival conceptions of the spiritualists (which in fact were also their own!) and this kind of human survival was pitched against the telepathic hypothesis. It was believed that man's personality survived with all its intellectual powers and capacities intact. As a matter of fact, the testing was really a case of a theological concept versus extra-sensory perception.

Now, if our conceptions of survival are all wrong, would we not get just such ambiguous results as we have had all along? More and more I am becoming convinced that our traditional, and one must concede, very primitive ideas about life after death, are as probably wrong as they are right. I would even say that the probability of their being wrong is a good deal greater. One hundred years ago we believed our conceptions about the constituents of matter to be final and absolutely rock-

bottom certain. Matter consisted of tiny undividable particles appropriately named atoms.

And now look how highly complex these same atoms appear to be. We have even come to the conclusion that matter can be spirited away into energy and *vice versa.*

Now the point I want to make is that if our ideas about matter, with which we come in contact every second of our lives, can be found to be radically wrong within the time of a century, is it then not highly probable that our accepted notions about the human individual spirit believed to survive after death, may be completely wrong too?

If this should be the case then every experimental approach basing itself on the presumption that the human personality survives as a separate unity with all its intellectual and mental faculties intact and unchanged is bound to give results of an ambiguous nature, such as they have been doing all the time. *The reason is that we are all the time asking the wrong questions, and therefore receive answers which are not to the point.*

Now, in my opinion, no experimental method will ever give any definite result, either negatively or positively, if we do not face the problem from this point of view. And if we do so, we may very well come to the conclusion that no experimental method can ever be conceived to give direct answers to what we would like to know about the Great Beyond.

Just as, according to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, it is in principle impossible to establish at the same time with exactitude the position and speed of a particle, say an electron, even so it may be that it is in principle impossible to know anything with a certain degree of certitude about life after death.

There is another thing to which I would like to draw your attention. In the last few years physicists such as my countryman Dr. Kooy, for instance, have attempted to regard survival problems and certain paranormal phenomena (this applies especially to precognition) in the light of modern conceptions connected with four-dimensional space-time manifolds[1]. If there is any truth in such conceptions and if they indeed give a better description of Reality than the more traditional ones, this would mean that past, present and future merge into one, and that therefore there is no sense in separating this life from that beyond the grave. How all these modern ideas and theories will ultimately react on our own concepts of life after death and the possibility of spirit communication, I cannot say.

So far, experimental survival research has not advanced beyond the stage it reached say seventy years ago. It is still, so to say, stagnating in the Christian-Ptolemaic conceptions of the Universe, while modern science, philosophy and psychology have advanced to the General Relativity Theory, the conception of the expanding Universe, the controversy of sense data and psychoanalysis.

I feel strongly that the whole survival problem and its experimental testing will have to be re-examined in the light of modern theories of Man and the Universe. I believe that Psychical Research, too, should devote itself to this task.

Just now I said that survival research appeared to be stagnating and still bound to certain conceptions to which we go on clinging. But this does not mean that the further outlook is absolutely hopeless. Far from it. Most of the realms of human investigation and knowledge pass through such ups and downs, and often for a long time remain seemingly at a standstill. Then suddenly, so to say, a new gateway is thrown open and our knowledge in that special department of science or philosophy is appreciably widened and deepened. Survival research will not be an exception to this rule. And if the forces of disbelief in the problem of survival do not completely take possession of the battlefield, I am pretty sure that advancement in our knowledge (I say again *knowledge*!) will make headway in a not-too-distant future. But whether we, gathered here together, will still be incarnate or already discarnate when the first signs of this advancement will make themselves known, is on the knees of the gods.

[1]See Dr. J. M. J. Kooy's article "Space, Time and Consciousness" in the *Journal of Parapsychology,* xxi, December, 1957.

SYMPOSIUM

Seven of the delegates who had taken an active part during the Discussions were invited to address the Conference at the closing session.

Major Stevens: I feel that it has been a very great honour to come to this conference. I don't suppose it is possible to attend a gathering like this very many days of the year in Great Britain, however much it might be so if you could float round the world from place to place.

Now there is no doubt you have heard four papers of great excellence. We had Brigadier Firebrace with his many evidential stories; we had Mr. Percy Wilson, whom we are very lucky indeed to hear, on the significance of physical mediumship historically; we have heard Professor Price with that remarkably clear picture of the academic mind at work on this subject; and finally we had Mr. George Zorab who introduced that valuable influence of the Continent into our English way of doing things.

Now all those things when added to the discussions you have had, are without doubt of immense value in enabling you to go forward.

We heard about the position of the doubters of survival, both educated and uneducated. Professor Price, I think, has been unfortunate in that his academic circles are those where one is likely to encounter scepticism to a very high degree. Speaking purely personally, I have been wandering around this country of ours for a good many years for the Ministry of Power and it may surprise you that in the most unlikely places, from chauffeurs, from workmen, from everybody you can think of, somebody would voluntarily approach me in every factory I went to asking me about survival. So I don't think I entirely agree with Professor Price when he says that there is a sudden drop in the temperature of interest in survival.

You see, belief, as we heard just now, seems to depend on a capacity to apprehend something and to hold it without being able to give a reason for it. Belief is a sort of knowledge which you don't arrive at by stages, but rather like the great mystics have told us, it comes in a moment; you suddenly know the truth and you could not tell anybody why. It is purely subjective, and the difficulty is to share our subjective feelings objectively with the third party, and that's one of the principal difficulties in psychic affairs.

Now where do we go from here? Perhaps from my point of view the key to the arch that we have to fill is a horrible thing called finance. Finance is probably the weakest link in the whole psychic chain. What we want is people who will definitely found more Parapsychological Foundations and give them a constitution that they can really work without strings. I tried to calculate what they need, probably a minimum of a million pounds. The reason is simple. You are going for the finest brains; you have got to pay them, and possibly to pension them when you have finished paying them, and that is where you need these vast sums of money. There isn't a Foundation on earth that can carry on without funds. So you see we are looking for Lord Nuffields on every tree and we particularly want them to be open-minded and to put no strings on how we are to do our work, because nobody can predict the future or how the leadings of truth will take you into various paths which must not be blocked by legal formulas.

Now that brings me to my last point, which is this. If we are going to progress, we have also to consider the physical phenomena. If we are going to do anything with them we have to make them objective, and I would like to suggest that Mr. Percy Wilson's remarks about light probably indicate the way that we shall be led towards achievement.

Miss Frances Banks: I would like to endorse everything the previous speaker has said about the excellence of the papers we have listened to. I came here partly because I am trying to do a little investigation myself and I wanted to make sure that I was more or less up-to-date

in the investigations that were going on. But I am a little bit baffled by the scientific-proof angle, which seems to become more and more difficult. At the same time I don't think that we really need wait for the test proof, the tied-up-watertight proof, before we go ahead in this. I feel that this is a very urgent religious and sociological problem to which we must apply ourselves without waiting for the last step, as it were.

I myself am convinced that we have plenty to go on. The hungry sheep are looking up and are not fed on this matter. Now one of the great difficulties with these test cases is that you have to become objective and you have to cast out love. And it seems to me that the theme on which all these things rightly function is the beam of love. Conversely, they function on a beam of hate on the left-hand path, but on the right it is always on the warmth and glow of love, compassion, goodwill, or what you care to call it. Now if we are going to apply it to life we must take it from this positive view. Two channels strike me as the most necessary: one is the educational and the other is the religious. We are living in a time when the Teddy boys are causing us some trouble and these boys, and girls for that matter, are not necessarily bad people, but they exhibit great insecurity. They feel themselves in an age when the world may blow up at any moment and they have absolutely no security that life is worth while or that it will survive, or that they have any responsibility for it.

I have been this year to two educational conferences on the teaching of religion and I have met secondary schoolteachers who are almost in desperation to know how they can teach these miracles, these things that don't happen. I said "What is the difficulty, they do happen; they didn't just happen uniquely in the Bible, but they are going on happening now and you can teach them". I am becoming a very subtle person, I don't call myself a this or a that or join anything that is going to label me awkwardly in any way, because I think we are continually having to adjust our knowledge and to try to put it through the normal channels of everyday life. For that purpose I concern myself particularly in education and in the education of the delinquent and the deviant too, and in the Church's Fellowship for Psychical Study because I think it is important that it should infiltrate into the broad channels of our national life. And I think, therefore, we have to make a Christian and more or less orthodox presentation of it: I don't say it is everybody's business to do it that way, but I think it is for some people to make that practical bridge over which we can step.

I think in talking to our clerical brethren and so on, it is well to remember, and to remind them, that this world of actual forms which we mainly discuss in our survival questions is not the final stage. We remember what Lord Darwin said about our mental and spiritual bodies and how they have no form in the ordinary sense; that the form, even if it is projected in symbol afterwards on to the astral plane, does pass out of the astral with a second death. That I think clears up the difficulty for a great many orthodox people. But I do feel that we should go ahead and it is surprising how one can introduce the subject into conversation. If you start broadside-on you are very often sidetracked, but if you begin to tell this little experience or that, at teatime, you will find that everybody else trots one out too and even the clerical brethren eventually will tell you of "just this thing that I have never been able to explain". And when they have told you, you have set up a bond and you have a common platform for discussion. The clergy themselves don't know what the people in the pews are thinking and saying and vice versa. If they would only have the courage to put it over!

People think there will be a storm, from parents, from the pew-holders and so on. If there is, what matter? It will very soon die down. We have the answer to it and it is most important and I don't believe we should suffer half the opposition we think would be aroused if we went about it in a cautious way, using scriptural terminology, perhaps, and the right kind of expressions that appeal to them. We have it all in the Bible and yet in the schools they are often teaching those same Bible stories as meaningless museum pieces. They can hardly

hold the children down, some scripture teachers tell me. One good lady, a sweet young thing, told me that the comments of her girls were absolutely blasphemous and she wouldn't like to repeat them. And another young man said that they had to look round the school to find the meekest sort of boy who would accept the scripture prize. I said "What is your difficulty? These things *can* happen, *do* happen, and the children would be most interested to find and discuss the evidence of their happening. We ought to take them into our confidence".

Colonel the Matheson: I hope there won't be an ugly rush to the doors if I start by reciting a couplet:

> It is not the man who hath the most who gives the most away,
> Nor yet the man who knows the most who has the most to say.

I should say at once that I have a great deal to say, but I know absolutely nothing. I should like to begin by associating myself with the first speaker, and saying how very honoured and grateful I feel at being allowed to come to this conference. I have been extremely impressed by everything that has been said. And I am sure a conference of this type can and does do infinite good right outside its immediate circle and I hope that projection of thought, so to speak, will continue in full force from this room.

I can only give you one or two purely personal views in five minutes or, as I heard a lecturer say the other day, I can only in this short time give you a few impressive glimpses of the absolutely obvious.

I came here believing in survival and I still believe in it now, after what has passed! But the problem of survival to me, curiously enough, is much more related to the problem of living here and now. We have heard about evolution from several speakers and we know that we are changing all the time. You and I are not the same people that we were at breakfast (some of us might be thankful for that on some occasions); we are changing all the time and I believe that the meaning of evolution is a steady advance to perfection on all planes of life, spiritual, mental and physical, and that the purpose of life is this perfection. Every single one of us, whether we like it or not, is fervently engaged. And if you come to think of it, if you are living here and now, or if you have passed on and are living in the next state of consciousness, and advancing from that state of consciousness to another, or if you are living in the summerland waiting to return to this planet or to another life, at every single stage you are living a life. And it seems to me a vital and important thing that we should use our knowledge of contact with the other world for the living of the life in which we are engaged here. That to me is the underlying meaning of the problem of survival.

What a strange thing it is that all religions without exception are founded on one basic fact: the existence of a great creative and motivating power, call it what you wish, it has dozens of different names. All religions also believe in survival in some form, however nebulous. And all religions, I think I am right in saying, believe that a spark of the divine, again call it what you will, resides in every human being.

And my conception of mediumship is also linked to the same business of living the life, that is to say it would seem as if each of us is a potential medium, because the mediumship that we are engaged in is an endeavour, and a very difficult one, to make contact with the great latent powers that lie at the roots, the scope, of every single human being. However much we may live life communally and for other people, the spiritual progress so to say is an individual and very lonely enterprise.

I would end up by suggesting, in all humility, that whatever religion anybody belongs to, whatever creed they hold, whatever dogma they adhere to, every one of us, in his or her own way, has to devise some form of mental, of spiritual, training to try and make contact eventually with the great unknown, invisible powers which lie within and all round. And I would suggest, I don't like to use the word Yoga because it is a word which conjures up all sorts of queer things to various people, that every single human being has at one time or another to devise a yoga for himself and carry through that yogic training throughout his life. On the

outer plane, the training of the mind, mind controls, concentration, and above all, the investigation of that terrific subject, the power of thought. And on the inner plane those practices which are known to all the mystics and sages of the past, meditation, concentration, and in the silence the endeavour to find the power that lies within. I believe the greatest injunction of all time to all men is Man Know Thyself and thou shalt know God himself.

Mr. Blewett: I thought I was following Mrs. Goldney, and I was going to take the opportunity to say that I am one of her admirers, and that I have admired for many years past the way she and one or two others have stuck to their job about proving, if that is the right word, telepathy.

I was going to read a note from a book I came across the other day, in which the writer said that the most remarkable power which his father possessed was that of reading the characters and even the thoughts of those whom he saw even for a short time. He had many instances of this power, some of which seemed almost supernatural. It saved his father from ever making an unworthy friend. That book was by Mr. Charles Darwin, who is noted as a remarkable observer, and he was satisfied a hundred years ago that telepathy was an everyday occurrence in his home.

As a matter of fact we have tended at this conference to think too much of the scientific aspect of it. There are perhaps three lines of approach, there may be very many more, one the scientific, another the common-sense, and I will tell you the third one in a minute. One of the greatest scientists of our time was a man named Schrodinger. If you know anything about mathematical physics you know how great a man he was. He said this about science: "It's ghastly silence about all and sundry that is really near to our hearts, that really matters to us, that knows nothing of God and eternity, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains but the answers are often so silly that we are not inclined to take them seriously".

So if we think of the human or common-sense aspect of survival, of the meaning of life, we are not likely to receive the answer from science.

I read the other day a quotation from Carlyle, who said: "That man is the tadpole of an archangel", and I thought it was a most enlightening thing. It is a very human and very unscientific analogy, but very real. Each of us is the tadpole of an archangel and we are destined to a future and a glory that is beyond our dreams. That is what I mean when I talk about survival.

One of the leading members of the S.P.R. who has been President more than once, I believe, is Professor Broad. He is not a believer in survival and he has said that if there is no survival then this life of ours is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing. This is by a man who has been very critical in his approach to the argument for survival. The fact is that the scientists do not produce proofs. In my young days they proved that light was a wave. In my middle age they proved it was also a particle and I hope to see the time when they will prove that there is some way of accepting, as they do today, both those explanations simultaneously. And if that isn't sword-swallowing I'll eat my hat!

May I, instead of following the scientific or common-sense line, quote you some poetry, and that's the line I suggest we might follow. I do believe that there have been great brains and geniuses in the world of poetry to whom we might well listen. One of them was John Keats. He said, "This world is a vale of soul-making". I think that is a most profound thing. He was a great genius, wonderfully inspired. He said, "Truth is beauty and beauty is truth". That's all we know and all we need to know. And he said the world is a vale of soul-making and I believe that explains the meaning of life and why we are here and why I am going to survive.

* * *

I believe we can go to the poets for our inspiration. And here's another man who believes something similar. Lord Attlee, who in last week's *Sunday Times* said: "Our life is but a little holding to do a mighty labour. We

are one with heaven and the stars, when it is spent to serve God's aim. Else, we die with the sun".

Mrs. Meurig Morris: This Conference has been a most interesting one, because it has dealt with many aspects of the great problem of survival. My own experience has proved that man does not live in a linear way, but in the nature of a spiral, and our conception of death changes when we can liberate ourselves from this linear conception. Man's world of thought and feeling, though stimulated by the things that are around him, belongs to a deeper aspect of environment. What we term life and its opposite death, are but aspects of the One Reality. At the centre of our personality is the Divine Essence or the Real "I".

The scientist experimenting with nature gives to humanity knowledge concerning the physical world, but he is dealing with a relative state and is seeking to understand life in a linear way. The psychologist who makes a study of the human mind is also dealing with a relative world, but upon a deeper level and more in the nature of the spiral. All experiments are made by the experimentalist who must be above the level of his experiments. As the "experimentalist", he is using his mind which synthesises the sensory experiences. He cannot be the mind which he must use in order to formulate his ideas and conclusions. It is something within, beyond the mind, which is the interpreter. As I have said, we have given this *something* many names, Soul, Empirical "I", Ego and many more according to the particular belief and thought to which an individual is adhering.

The Self, or Real "I", is made in the image of God, this being so, great are the potential powers within each one. How often in the stress of everyday life has one been upheld by a love and strength which comes from the "deeps" of our innermost Self. This Self cannot be touched by scientific investigation, but can be experienced by those who are willing to seek the inward way to find it.

Meditation is a method which can lead to such a goal, if the individual is determined enough to pursue the way as he would any other form of study or investigation. This is an investigation of all that constitutes the Empirical "I", in order to find the Real "I" or Self. Such investigation needs an ethical watchfulness upon our thinking and actions, as a preliminary for preparing the field of our mind for deeper exploration. It is very difficult for many who lead busy lives to give much time for meditation each day, and many in the early stages may find it a little difficult to meditate for even half an hour. A very good method as a help for beginners is to commence with an active "seed meditation". When rising in the morning take a seed thought of a spiritual quality, or ideal, and dwell upon the value of this thought, then by the use of the will, remember it at certain times during the day. This helps to purify the mind and prepares it for a prolonged period of meditation which can be undertaken later. It also brings into being a form of detachment and quietness, which is very helpful to those living an active life.

The biological law that "function precedes organism" is a very apposite one for those who follow the way of meditation. The function of the "seed thought" with its continual activity within the mind and the constant desire to be at-one-ed with the Self in *self-consciousness*, can be the means of preparing a channel, or bridge, between the higher and lower minds.

The investigation of psychic phenomena in order to discover the laws which govern them, or the way of meditation which enables man to know more about himself, are two methods of approach towards the same goal.

This goal is to know more about life which is the source of all activity. Christ said: "the mystery of the Kingdom is within you"; but He also said, this Kingdom had to be established here on earth. I think this must be the purpose underlying all our strivings to know, though we may not be conscious that this is so. Such a purpose must have meaning, and I believe that this Kingdom can only come into being by the true "livingness" of humanity.

Dr. Chisholm: I am grateful for this opportunity of saying how very much I have enjoyed being at the conference and how valuable it has been for me as an ordinary doctor to hear so

many different views expressed by so many eminent people.

If I might be allowed just to say something of a purely personal point of view about this subject, knowing practically nothing at all about it, I feel there has got to be a general context in which both the facts of science and the facts of psychic phenomena can be fitted. And what I do ask as a doctor and as a scientist, if I may call myself that, is that we should apply all the possible means of physical research that we have at our disposal to examining the phenomena that are manifested, so that we can strengthen the case for the real facts of psychic experience by getting rid of so much that is possibly due to some kind of artifact or something else which was not observed by less careful means of investigation.

That is one point I would like to make. The other thing is that it seems to me that in all psychic investigation the question of communication is one of the great difficulties, and it is difficult enough for us sleeping and dreaming to remember what life is like awake, and for us when we are awake to recall, although there are exceptions, what we have been dreaming about. How much more difficult is it then for a person to pass from the state of being in the physical body into the state of being in the etheric body or whatever other experience there is beyond. I think that when one realises that even on this earthly plane communicating with people who have a different language is quite difficult unless you have the means of communication, one realises still more how difficult it must be to communicate between the different levels of experience.

Mr. George Williamson: I cannot this afternoon summarise my thoughts; they are too fresh in my mind, but there are just one or two things that I might perhaps usefully say. I started thinking about these matters when I was very young; when I was only seventeen I was trying to study Egyptology and so my life went until twenty-five years ago I married my wife. Now my wife is a very strong psychic. Up to that time I had always had very grave doubts of anything spiritual at all. But twenty-five years living with my wife have completely altered my outlook. I now realise that spirit is something very real and not the hypothetical expressions of opinions which come from books or one hears from people who sign themselves mystics and so on. Belief in the spirit world and belief in survival doesn't come easily and it doesn't come as the result of individual experience. It results I think from a steady building-up, experience on experience, eliminating this, eliminating that, till eventually one acquires a philosophy.

Of course one does have individual experiences which are outstanding and which are I am sure completely convincing to the individuals to whom they come. To touch a lighter note for a minute, I would tell you of one experience I had not so many years ago. I was Chairman of the Cape Town Psychic Club, which my wife and I were instrumental in founding. A farmer from up-country came along to us one day with a difficult problem. He could hardly speak English and I had to get an interpreter to talk to him for me. He explained that he lived on an up-country farm and that he had been in the habit of conversing with his sister through a Johannesburg medium in regard to the position of certain treasure which he knew was buried somewhere or other on his farm. Unfortunately the medium had died, and could I put him in touch with a medium who could carry on the search. Well, it so happened that Lily Thomas was out in Cape Town at the time, some of you may know of her, a well-known psychic in London, and I was able to bring them together and arrange for an interpreter to be at the séance. He went along to this sitting and I think he told the medium what he wanted. He wanted to get in touch with his sister and he wanted to be given the information. Instead of which, what did he get? Without any hesitation, there came through that medium, his wife, a very fearsome Afrikaans lady, extremely heavy in build, a good buxom type, and very determined and strong-minded. And she said to him "You something something something silly ass! I've spent twenty years of my life trying to prevent you from wasting your money and going after these silly things and I'm no sooner dead than

you have to go to a medium and spend your money trying to find out where this treasure is when you know it isn't there at all! Furthermore, you are making things worse. You're running after that darn silly little something something who's angling after you for your money, and before you know where you are you'll be married and you'll be damn sorry for it". Well now I think that gentleman at least went away convinced that there was survival.

But being a little bit more serious, one feels that as one acquires experience, the value of psychical research, take it by and large, isn't to enable one to communicate with those who are gone. The value of psychic research lies in its demonstrations, and I think it does demonstrate to all of us who indulge in it in any form, the fact that we are not animated corpses, but that we are human souls temporarily inhabiting ever-changing human bodies. If we are that, then of course the problem arises, what are we really and where do we go and what is going to happen to us when we shed this body? Well I have not any time to go into that very deeply, but I think mainly we are minds. The "I" is undoubtedly, and we are minds either creative via our imagining, or receptive of the imagination of others, and largely the world today is the result of the aggregate of human imaginings. I imagine I am here, you all imagine you are here and between us we agree and to us it is perfectly real, we are all here. But equally I am quite convinced that we are elsewhere at the same time. And when we go out of the body I think it will be just the same. You hear that each goes to his own heaven or as it may be, and that I think is true. The ardent churchman thinks that he is going to a certain type of heaven, as the Salvation Army used to say, the bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling for you and not for me! I am going to heaven, and the heaven I go to is the heaven of my imagining. It is true of the Moslem, it is true of all of us, we may build up a nice little ivy-covered cottage, the roses on the wall make me love mother more and that sort of thing and we have a lovely rose-covered cottage to go to. So it is. We imagine we meet our beloved. We do in our own minds, it is just as real to us whether that beloved is there or whether he or she is not. On the other hand, if he or she, the beloved, is thinking of us in exactly the same way, then for the two of us we achieve reality and that is a very much greater measure of reality to us than if we just think it by ourselves.

Well now I haven't time to elaborate that as I would have liked to have done, but I hope that may give some of you a thought which you can take over and ponder on. And I perhaps would just remind you before I sit down, of Douglas Fawcett's book on divine imagining, which I think is of great value. The *Oberland Dialogues* and the *Zermatt Dialogues,* are well worth study in this connection.

But to finally conclude, I am absolutely convinced of the truth of survival and I hope, in the words of the American poet, that when my time comes I shall find myself, by hands familiar beckoned unto my fitting place.

In closing the Conference the Chairman, Brigadier Firebrace, first thanked the speakers and drew attention to certain points in the lectures before continuing:—

Brigadier Firebrace: It seems the problem with this conference is that it probably has converted no one from the standpoint he took at the beginning, but that was not the object of the conference. It was in order that we might learn from each other, and that I think we have. That we might understand each other's point of view a little better. The main problem, the main contest if you like, of this conference has been telepathy versus survival. Well, I could say that the result was a draw; but on the other hand each one of us, probably in his heart, feels that he has won. Now we will not take a poll on it, we will just leave it at that; each one of us, I hope, having learnt something from the other side and thus how to work better in his or her line.

We have heard how to win the Derby and that put forward as a very good opportunity of experiment. It can be done. I tried one year, the only time I went to the Derby. And I tried all the black arts that I know, because you must have confirmation one from the other. I tried the tarot cards, such extra-sensory percep-

tion as I possessed, the use of the pendulum, a horoscope of the race time and numerology. And I got the first four horses. Now I am not doing this as a profession and I am not going to try it again because I am confident that the next time I should be wrong.

Now one of the difficulties that has, I think, been shown up partly by this conference is the difficulty of words, the definition of words.

I think Dr. Zorab referred to that; he said "clairvoyance as I understand it and not as Dr. Rhine understands it". It is very difficult. Is E.S.P., for instance, confined to incarnates? Can you have E.S.P. with the discarnates? Some people say you can. Does E.S.P. cover both? Or is E.S.P. patented and all rights reserved for incarnates? No, there are many problems and many bad words that we use. I think psychology is a very bad word which has come into general use. I feel we should almost have a small conference of experts to try and get down to some common vocabulary. The word telepathy in certain quarters is almost regarded as a rude word. None of us accepts that state of affairs.

At the College many of the speakers have shown that they are on the side of survival, but the College of Psychic Science does not exist for that only. One of our aims is to study the question of survival. And although many of our members have come to the conclusion in favour of survival, there are other members who have not come to that conclusion and even members who entirely disbelieve in demonstrated survival. They are all members, and that is the object of the College; to afford such facilities for the study of this important problem. We hold that having studied it, I think I must underline those words *having studied it;* you see, it's terribly easy to give your opinion on practically anything when you have not studied it; it is slightly more difficult to give a definite opinion on certain important problems. We want our members to study it and to make up their minds. We want a lot in the College, we have ideas and programmes (I almost consider rebirth for the College from this day), but we need members, we need, as one speaker has said, money, and we need people who will work.

Now that is much more difficult in these days than in the leisured times of the past, when people like Myers had a private income and could, in the intervals between writing poetry, give all their time to study. Most of us cannot do that, but we do need thinkers and we need workers and it is often easier to think than to work. Work is very difficult for us; one of the difficulties of this life is that the whole world revolves far too fast and still there are only twenty-four hours in the day. So if any of you are not members and can come and help us, well we would be delighted to see you. In any case we hope to see all of you again next year, because I think I can use a little precognition and say that some time, some place, it is better in prophecies to be a little indefinite, we shall be meeting again.

C.P.S. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

THE following announcement has been issued by the Research Committee of the College of Psychic Science:

The series of sittings held at the College with Mr. William Olsen has now come to an end and will not be renewed, as Mr. Olsen is not willing to allow himself to be tied to the chair with two separate pieces of rope, instead of a single piece, as is his custom.

In the opinion of the Research Committee of the College, it is impossible, with a single piece of rope of the length provided by Mr. Olsen, adequately to control the hands and arms, but this can be satisfactorily done with two separate pieces, even of the same total length. This was the only change requested by the College, but Mr. Olsen refused to accept it.

BOOK REVIEWS

By Dr. L. J. Bendit

Music, Its Occult Basis And Healing Value, compiled by Lionel Stebbing.
How to Overcome Sleeplessness, by Walter Buhler. (New Knowledge Books. 25s. and 4s. 6d.).

WHENEVER I am asked to review books emanating from anthroposophical sources, I have to overcome a certain difficulty which makes objectivity hard to reach. I have to remind myself each time that the writers live with blinkers on; they are undeviatingly, and hence very narrowly, devoted to one man, who fills their whole horizon. Nobody else, it seems, from Vedic times on, and not even H. P. Blavatsky, from whom Rudolf Steiner quite obviously (to anybody but his devotees) derived his basic ideas, has ever said anything about Spiritual Science. In their humourless way, his disciples attribute to him complete knowledge of man and the universe and, ignoring history, imply he is the sole originator of everything worth knowing. This naturally leads to complacency among those who feel themselves to be his heirs, and so the elect among lesser men, with the result that their writings are apt to be deemed important and profound even when they are not. Something of my trouble arises, undoubtedly, from my profound respect for Steiner when he was at his best (I am told he later became arrogant and self-opinionated in a way he was not at first); for he was surely a profound student and a true seer. I cannot but feel that the idolatry he now receives would shock the real man, if only because it tarnishes the value of his work and tends to bring his name into disrepute.

The above may seem both irrelevant and highly personal. But in fact it is one of the points of criticism of these books, and moreover, enquiry shows that other people too find just the same trouble in reading literature of this kind. So it is both relevant to these booklets and a generalisation about their source.

The first contains twenty-eight essays in about one hundred and seventy pages of mimeographed quarto paper, plus an introduction, personal notes about the contributors, a sketch with large gaps about Rudolf Steiner's career, and a good bit of advertisement. There are interesting points here and there among the essays. But, quite evidently, none of these can go deeply into any aspect of the subject in so short a space. We know, of course, something of music's appeal. But here it is elaborately fitted to a certain system of thought about man and his nature. This may be correct enough from a deeper level, but it somehow takes away from the spontaneous appreciation of music, whether heard or performed, when it is treated in this way. On the healing side, there is no concrete material apart from some generalisations of obvious things: for it is quite clear that mood is affected by music, and that the performance of it is also of value in some cases. Indeed, experiments are being made in a number of hospitals, specially among mental patients: these are not mentioned here, the hospitals being ordinary and not those of the sect. One has, of course, always to judge the claims of any system or theory of healing by its results, concretely examined, without wishful thinking. Here we are left very much in the air.

The second booklet, of fifty very small pages, has some useful advice on the difficult problem of insomnia. Care in the use of drugs is advocated, as indeed it is in any ordinary book or article on the subject. And there is no doubt that warm feet are important. In the same way, certain people benefit from warmth to the "solar plexus". But whether the suggested compresses of sulphur or extract of poppy plants (otherwise an opium-containing preparation) has any special value, I cannot say, not having tried it. On *prima facia* grounds, it seems doubtful, as well as damp and messy. We are also told about the virtues of relaxation, of a harmonious mind, of tuning oneself into the rhythms of nature: familiar enough principles. But the author never gets down to grips with how to achieve this aim.

For the publishers to describe this as "The most important book ... on sound sleep and its cultivation", even if it can be rightly called a book rather than a pamphlet, is to show complete lack of sense of proportion, as well as ignorance of what is happening in the world outside.

The World Is My Ashram, by Edmund Bentley. (Copia Productum, 4s.)

THIS booklet is a reprint of a series of articles and lectures by one who, rather than live in an *ashram* (a hermitage or religious community) considers, rightly, that one can carry one's own inner sanctuary with one into daily life in the world. The material is, of its kind, good, but lightweight; as one might expect from the fact that the articles appeared in *Psychic News,* which caters for the popular and the sensational rather than the serious mind. The author skims lightly over the surface of such subjects as Rescue Circles, Magic, Human Affinities, and the Occult Path. Harmless and perhaps of use as a very first introduction to real study.

But the book is very badly produced. (What, by the way, does the publisher's name, "Copia Productum", mean? As Latin it seems a little odd.) And why put the author's photograph on the cover? It does not seem very good taste and, moreover, to show an author's face is not necessarily a good recommendation for any book.

SCEPTICISM, GULLIBILITY & KNOWLEDGE

By SIMEON EDMUNDS

(A Lecture given at the College of Psychic Science on January 6th, 1959)

I KNOW of no subject which interests people of more diverse views than that which brings us here tonight, namely, Psychics—and, whilst various societies are devoted to certain aspects of the subject, this institution, the College of Psychic Science, is unique in that it draws its members from numerous schools of thought, including all shades of opinion from the unquestioning faith of the most devoutly religious Spiritualist to the coldly critical attitude of the scientific researcher.

On our Council we have several members of the Society for Psychical Research serving together with prominent members of the Spiritualist movement, and among our members I could name followers of many branches of Christianity; I could name Jewish members, Theosophists, at least one Buddhist and many who have no religious conviction whatsoever.

This, to my mind, is a very good thing. Such diversity of opinion brings to our meetings and activities a vitality that would be lacking were we all of like mind. The clashes and arguments during our discussions provide the irritant, as the grain of sand in the oyster stimulates the growth of the pearl—to stimulate our search for truth.

But, there is a very real danger that the strength of our convictions may blind us, and obstruct us in our search; that our differences may degenerate into a situation of bigoted partisan versus bigoted partisan; that our minds may be so filled with our own preconceptions that there is no room for enlightenment.

Let me give an example: The recent conference at Brighton, as those of you who attended will, I am sure, agree, emphasised the fact that a large bone of contention is the question of the survival of human personality after death. It is over this question that, broadly speaking, those interested in Psychics divide into two camps, i.e., those who believe that survival is proved, and those who do not. Fair enough, but we also have those who are *convinced* of survival, regardless of evidence and those who *refuse* to be convinced, regardless of evidence.

At one extreme then, we have the more inflexible type of psychical researcher condemning the more ardent Spiritualist as being guilty of believing anything he *wants* to believe, and at the other extreme we have the fanatical kind of Spiritualist accusing *all* researchers of being destructive, hypercritical, and of rejecting any evidence that is contrary to their own preconceptions.

At this point it might be as well to remember the "man in the street" who, with little knowledge and even less interest, groups us all together as "nut cases" for bothering at all.

But talking of "nut cases", what is there really to choose between thick-skulled scepticism and gormless gullibility? Both are equally obstructive to the acquisition of true knowledge.

It seems to me, therefore, that a little air-clearing concerning these different and seemingly irreconcilable attitudes may be of help to us all, whatever our shades of opinion, in assisting us to follow the middle course, that is, to keep open minds.

Let us then consider some of the obstacles to clear thinking. The biggest of these is, unquestionably, prejudice; in my opinion the root cause of the disastrous state of world affairs today.

Consider, for instance, racial prejudice, and remember Belsen; colour prejudice, and remember lynchings, the appalling disclosures by Trevor Huddleston, and nearer home, the Notting Hill riots. Consider also religious prejudice and the Spanish Inquisition; class prejudice and bloody revolutions, and political prejudice closing men's minds to the common needs of humanity, and leading us dangerously close to the abyss of total destruction. And the worst of these evils is, I submit, religious

prejudice, not only because so many of the others stem from it, but because it is in itself the greatest barrier of all to human understanding and enlightenment.

(Here I must emphasise that I am condemning religious prejudice, *not* religion itself).

Lest I be accused of exaggeration, let me remind you of such glaring examples of fanaticism as the burning alive of so-called heretics and witches, the persecution of religious minorities, the Muslim-Hindu riots, the miseries of the Indian Caste system, child marriage and the practice of *suttee*, and the opposition by Hindu religious leaders to the abolition of such barbarisms; the resistance on religious grounds to the emancipation of women, not only among Mohammedans; and, less sensational, but equally obstructionist, the attitude of the Church towards any scientific discovery that appears to conflict with its dogma.

Think now of Galileo, whose invention of the telescope enabled him to confirm the theories of Copernicus and Leonardo that, contrary to the Church's teachings, the earth is not the centre of the universe. How, when the representatives of the Church accused him of heresy, he invited them to observe for themselves. They replied that they would not dream of looking through such a blasphemous instrument. Think also, how more recently, after Darwin and Alfred Wallace had propounded their theory of evolution, when the discovery of various fossilised remains appeared to confirm this, the Church pronounced that these things must have been "planted" by the Devil in order to mislead those with wavering faith.

Many people think that such intolerance is a thing of the past. On the contrary. Let me remind you of the current attitude of the Catholic Church which forbids its members to enquire into Spiritualism, denouncing its phenomena as the work of the Devil. Let me remind you also of the Church of England's unfavourable report on Spiritualism, and its more recent report on spiritual healing. And let us not forget the hysterical outcry from the churches and the Press in retaliation to Mrs. Margaret Knight's mildly rationalist broadcasts on Scientific Humanism as recently as 1955.

Make no mistake, religious prejudice is still very much with us.

So much at the moment for prejudice. Now let me touch on another source of misunderstanding, namely the misuse of technical terms by those unqualified to appreciate their true meaning. Whilst admitting the necessity for borrowed terms in professional jargon, there is no excuse for the loose application of words which already have a precise connotation. The most common example, I suppose, is that of the irresponsible use by Spiritualists of the term "vibrations".

Vibrations

One often hears a speaker or a medium refer to "vibrations" in the apparent belief that these are used for the transmission of communications from the discarnate. It is common to hear such expressions as "purer vibrations", "finer vibrations", or "higher vibrations"; or from a demonstrator of so-called clairvoyance, "He comes to you on a love vibration", or "The vibrations are weaker, the power is going", and so on.

Now, in a world where optics, acoustics and electronics play increasingly important parts, we have learned quite a lot about vibrations, and by definition a vibration is something which has certain properties. The most important of these are; frequency, which is inversely related to wavelength, amplitude, and waveform, and comparisons can be made with other vibrations by consideration of such qualities as polarisation and phase. We know what vibrations are. The word's purpose is to describe certain established phenomena.

So when we hear of a "pure" vibration, its only real meaning can be that it is without harmonics, in other words, that its waveform is sinosoidal. From "higher" or "finer" vibrations we can only infer that a higher frequency or a shorter wavelength is meant. Of such expressions as "love vibrations", we can only, thinking of sound or light or radio transmissions, ask for more information about the vehicle through which "love vibrations" are propagated, and the methods of transmission and reception.

Are we sceptical then, when we say, "Instead of using expressions calculated to have emotional effect, please give us some information that makes sense. Tell us about the frequency of these vibrations, if not in megacycles per second or in angstrom units, at least in some way that is intelligible".

Now please don't misunderstand me, don't assume that I am merely trying to be destructive. I believe in survival as strongly as any of you. There is enough sound evidence, I think, on which to form such a belief in a logical manner without resort to such pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo.

We often hear this sort of thing even from some of our best mediums when they purport to explain how communication takes place, and many people, impressed by the quality of their mediumship, accept these explanations regardless of their validity. On the other hand there are very many intelligent people who are completely alienated from the subject of psychics through hearing such childish and inadequate explanations. I cannot over-emphasise the harm done to this movement by such irresponsible and ignorant statements.

Faculty of Mediumship

It would seem that the faculty of mediumship is not peculiar to any one type of individual. Some sensitives are highly intelligent, but so many are far from it, and mediums are therefore not *necessarily* qualified to give a reasoned explanation of the phenomena in which they play so important a part. And why should they be?

After all, we do not expect Kreisler or Heifitz to be able to explain *how* it is that when they play the violin, such wonderful sounds are produced. For such an explanation we should have to consult the expert in acoustics, who while possibly unable to play a note of music, is conversant with the nature of sound waves, the laws of harmonics, and the mechanism of the human ear.

In the same way, the person who understands most about the working of mediumship (though goodness knows we all know so little) will be one who, while possibly having no pretensions to mediumship himself, has at least formed his opinions from an objective study of the facts.

Unfortunately, the detached enquirer who, in his desire to evaluate propositions put forward by a speaker, asks relevant questions, is often accused unjustly of destructive scepticism. Let me cite a few examples from our meetings here:—

A certain lecturer stated that a number of scientific bodies were affiliated to an international spiritualist organisation. When afterwards a questioner asked him to name one such scientific body he was unable to do so and, floundering, stated that he did not carry an encyclopaedia in his memory. How much better, surely, had he admitted forgetfulness and offered to furnish the information at a later date, thereby strengthening his case instead of weakening it by evasion. And yet to my certain knowledge the questioner was accused of being sceptical and even of baiting the speaker.

On another occasion a lecturer who claimed to be a scientist, made in the course of his talk, several statements of a sweeping nature but offered no evidential substantiation at all. One of these was the admonition "Do not dabble in Yogic practices, as this may well set you back incarnations". I gathered that he did not mean we should all end up flat on our backs in flower-beds.

But, joking apart, you will agree that so sweeping a statement called for some elucidation. A question was therefore couched as follows:—"The speaker describes himself as a scientist, should he not therefore give some evidence to support his statement?" Instead of answering, the speaker made it quite obvious that he resented the question. But surely it would have been the height of gullibility to accept so wild a pronouncement without question.

I could give many other examples where critical questions, asked in all sincerity with the object of clarifying an issue, have been received as though actuated by a spirit of destructive malice. In point of fact, the cynical sceptic does not ask questions, he summarily dismisses new ideas, firm in his belief that he knows it all already.

You will have observed that speakers such as our President Brigadier Firebrace, Mr. Lucian Landau, Mr. Percy Wilson, and others of like mental calibre, are never hypersensitive to reasoned questions or criticisms; on the contrary, they welcome them as providing opportunities for expressing their ideas more fully and for amplifying any points that may not have been quite clear.

I think one may well assess the mental quality of a speaker and the value of what he has said, by the way he reacts to critical questions.

Another barrier to the free exchange of ideas, and therefore to the acquisition of knowledge, is the human failing common to us all, of assuming that what we accept as authoritative is necessarily accepted as such by our neighbours. For instance, Christians naturally quote their Bible, and there is, of course, nothing wrong with this. What is inadmissible, however, is their use of Biblical quotations as authoritative evidence in support of an argument when talking to people who may be non-Christian and to whom the Bible is just another book. Equally inadmissible, of course, is the attitude of the anti-religious person who dismisses any precept, however sound, if it is of religious origin.

Whilst these questions of religious belief are delicate ones and usually considered as best avoided, if it is knowledge we seek we cannot afford to forget that many religious beliefs conflict both with the known facts and with each other. For example: whilst both Christian and Jew worship the same God, the Christian also worships Jesus as the son of God. The Jew, however, rejects Jesus and still awaits the Messiah.

This is but one of many such religious contradictions and their full absurdity can be realised only when we remember that such convictions are largely determined by accident of birth.

To return to the question of the divinity of Jesus. Here we have two flatly contradictory dogmas and, to quote Aristotle, "The propositions A is B and A is *not* B cannot both be true together", further, "Of the two propositions A is B and A is *not* B, one must be true and the other false". This, of course, is what, in logic, we call the Law of the Excluded Middle.

One often hears it said, sometimes by tactful peacemakers, sometimes by those who honestly believe it, that all religions are roads leading to the same great truth. I hope I have shown this well-intentioned concept to be a fallacy.

So, returning to my title, I have tried to illustrate some of the obstacles confronting us in our search for knowledge, obstacles existing not only in the minds of our fellows, but, more dangerously, within our own. I have tried to show that these obstacles are invariably the result of prejudice. We all tend to be sceptical over some matters and gullible regarding others, because these two failings are but different facets of one and the same evil, namely prejudice.

Whatever our shades of opinion let us, therefore, endeavour at all times to keep open minds, to examine each problem, each question and every particle of evidence with unbiased objectivity. Let us even admit occasionally that we DON'T KNOW. For the more we know the more we realise how little we know, and to admit that we DON'T KNOW is to prepare our minds for the reception of true knowledge.

A BOOK REVIEW

Meditation under the guidance of Rudolf Steiner, by Arnold Freeman. (Sheffield Educational Settlement. 6s. 6d.)

A VERY useful book giving a short and concise account of Rudolf Steiner's life and a general outline of his teaching, which, in view of the bad translations of most of his books, is very necessary. Actually the chapter on meditation only comes at the end of the book and could, I think, have been given more space with advantage; although it is more in the nature of an introduction, and clearly the reader is expected to read Steiner's own works if he wishes for more detailed instructions. The author gives us a picture of the stature of Rudolf Steiner, the vast sweep of his intellect and of his spiritual vision and the practical uses to which he put his exceptional gifts. As an introduction to his work this book can be highly recommended.

H. K. CHALLONER.

AN EXPERIMENT IN RADIESTHESIA

By L. J. BENDIT

RADIESTHETIC practitioners claim to be able (a) to diagnose and (b) to treat disease. Their findings are often based on the use of a specimen consisting of a few drops of the patient's blood soaked on to a piece of white filter paper, sent from any distance. And the diagnosis contains a large number of items, some few of which (only) ever correspond to clinically recognisable diseases. But, on the other hand, many other reactions are said to be present, and to refer to specific conditions—e.g. of the endocrine glands, etc.—which, however, are not clinically evident even by the subtlest of tests.

It was felt, however, that, in view of the claims, it would be useful if some tests were made; and it appeared that, as a first attempt, it should prove easy for blood specimens, taken at the same time, from any one person, to have sufficient consistently recognisable reactions for them to be distinguished from others. (For the moment the matter of successful treatment was left aside: I have never yet been able to find any practitioner able to give case records which would satisfy an entirely objective assessor; but this does not mean they do not exist.) Hence this preliminary experiment was undertaken, fully realising that the material provided was not enough for statistical evaluation. On the other hand, if the claims of radiesthetic workers were valid, there should be a high preponderance of success even in so small-scale an experiment.

It was thought expedient to work in such a way that telepathy, the workings of which are exceedingly insidious, should be made as unlikely as possible. Hence I asked Dr. X to provide me with eight specimens of blood, taken from four different people. These were of both sexes, and some were recognisably ill, some were not. He put the small pieces of blotting-paper (handled only with forceps) in a small envelope, and the latter into a larger one. He put numbers on the *front* of the larger envelope and sent the packet to me. I then took the packet out, seeing only the *back* of the envelopes, and asked my wife to shuffle them as if they were cards. After this I put letters, at random, on the back of the larger envelopes, opened them and wrote a corresponding letter on the smaller one inside. I then sent the packet of small envelopes to two experienced operators successively, keeping the larger ones (still face downwards) in my desk. In each case, I held back one specimen, so that the operators received seven specimens: three pairs and an odd one. I did not look at the results sent me in a sealed envelope until both had sent in their readings to Dr. X who had the key.

The results were: *Operator A* picked out the odd specimen, and paired one set of bloods correctly, being wrong in two. *Operator B* picked out the single specimen but was wrong in each of the three pairs.

This experiment failed to show results which might not be attributed to chance. But I want to add the following comments:

1. A single such experiment on so small a scale is by no means conclusive. Indeed, many more are needed to get at the real facts.

2. It may be that other operators* of radiesthetic apparatus may think the test was too difficult, or in some way unfair. If so, I shall be glad to hear from them, as also to receive suggestions as to the kind of experiment which seems reasonable and which they would be prepared to undertake.

3. I may perhaps be allowed to express my disappointment, since I feel (unscientifically, perhaps) that radiesthesia, despite its more extravagant advocates, has reality in it.

Dr. X is a registered medical practitioner in active practice, and both he and I worked entirely *bona fide*. I am not giving his name simply in case he should be involved in further experiments, when, if only because of the possibility of telepathic rapport, it is best for there to be no clue as to his identity.

*The two who did the experiment accepted it as reasonable.

THE MANOR HOUSE EXPERIMENT

By Major D. B. Stevens

THE Report on this Experiment has recently been published and makes very instructive reading for all who are interested in the study of extra-sensory perception. The Experiment was conducted by the Research Committee of the College of Psychic Science, who appointed Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E., as experimenter in charge, with Sir John and Lady Swayne to assist him. The object of the experiment was to conduct the study of extra-sensory perception under strict test conditions so as to find out under these conditions how far proof of its existence in its various forms might be obtainable. It was not desired to conduct simple "card calling" tests because there have already been so many of these. It was felt that, although these tests possess the advantage of giving results which can be treated statistically, mere repetition of them would not add substantially to our knowledge.

Accordingly, it was agreed that tests should be made at sittings between mediums and sitters, conducted in such a way as to prevent the medium knowing the identity and sex of the sitter. It was also arranged that those sitters invited to take part in the experiment, who had no other connexion with it except in this capacity, should not know who the medium was with whom they sat. All the conditions under which the experiment was conducted were carefully designed to ensure that the mediums were unable to know anything about their sitters. The premises at which the experiment was conducted seem to have been ideal for the purpose in many ways, as a perusal of the Report will show. Dr. M. Austin lent these premises which were a flat containing her consulting and treatment rooms which, with the rest of the rooms, could be arranged as two separate sets of apartments. One wonders if perhaps many of the impressions received by the mediums, which did not achieve recognition by the sitters and others present, may not have been due to the phenomenon of "remanence", so well known to dowsers. No doubt Dr. Austin has numerous patients visiting the premises daily and impressions of their personalities and of those with whom they are *en rapport* could remain there and impinge on the consciousness of the mediums. That the experimenters realised the possibility of this sort of "psychic interference" is evident because they changed the rooms used by sitters and mediums, as recorded on page 4 of the Report.

The methods adopted in assessing the evidence claimed as valid by sitters and others connected with the experiment, seem to have been reasonable in the circumstances. The experimenters found that they were in much the same position as a jury in a British Court of Justice. Accordingly, their assessments could have no absolute value. They state that they have tried to apply the same standards of judgment throughout, so the assessments should have a comparative value. To this reviewer, at least, it seems no ill thing to have got away, for once in a while, from the urge to present statistical pictures of work done. These are human situations with which we are dealing, not just fields of Force.

The experimenters state that there are definite indications that some form of extra-sensory perception was in operation between the mediums and the sitters. The information set out in the Report certainly justifies this claim. As is quite usual great difficulty was felt in trying to attribute impressions obtained by mediums directly to spirit communicators. As the Report rightly says, sitters cannot usually recognise the validity of statements made by mediums unless the subject matter was already within their own knowledge.

Numerous instances of telepathy were recorded as well as four of precognition and a



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convincing case of survival. In view of the strict test conditions the successes achieved must be considered very encouraging.

It may well be felt that further efforts ought to be made to find out whether some, at least, of the impressions got by the mediums, which remain unidentified by sitters, cannot be recognised by some of Dr. Austin's patients and visitors. In one instance a clear impression of Fitzmaurice of Orkney came through. There must be many who will recall Mrs. Fitzmaurice of Orkney at the World Service Group headquarters, 13, Chesham Place, S.W., in the days before 1939. To trace the link whereby this impression was received during this Experiment might well prove rewarding.

In this short notice little can be done to present a proper evaluation of the work performed and the successes achieved. It is to be hoped that a full critique of this well-designed experiment will be undertaken and made available to readers of *Light*.

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY

By W. H. BOORE

WE are told that, in assessing the validity of psychic phenomena, we should give due regard to their "antecedent improbability"; in other words, we must suspect what seems unlikely. On the face of it, this looks very much like bringing prejudice to bear on our enquiries; yet I am not sure that prejudice of a cautionary kind is altogether a bad thing. Many spiritualists would be better advocates if they were less credulous.

But I think the principle of improbability is sometimes wrongly applied, and that we regard as unlikely much that, on fuller consideration, we ought to actually expect. We can, by an examination of many simple and natural facts, greatly modify the scope of antecedent improbability; we can, as it were, reduce the ratio of improbability to implication. Psychic phenomena, if greatly multiplied, might mitigate the tendency to unbelief; but the multiplication would have to be very great indeed for such phenomena to be looked upon as common events. Meanwhile, of course, we cannot hope to reduce the antecedent improbability by reference to para-normal evidence which itself contains it. We can, in fact, only lessen the antecedent improbability by looking for psychic significance in the ordinary, accepted things of everyday; we must see whether the ordinary things make the extraordinary likely; we must find out whether there are hints of an ultimate destiny in the events of daily life; such events as getting hurt, or growing old, or meeting people.

If, for instance, we scrape our skin so that its outer surface is rubbed away, it is a fact that when it heals, the new surface will be an exact replica of the old. Criminologists avail themselves of this fact in dealing with fingerprints; for however thoroughly a criminal may obliterate the prints on his fingers, they will grow again exactly as they were before. If, however, more than surface damage is done, and the cut is deep enough to be an unforgettable experience, then the unforgettable experience becomes an ineradicable scar.

But we know that the physical substance of the body is changing every minute; and that these changes accumulate, in every seven years, to a complete change of body. Does not, then, this evidence of persistent pattern and retained

experience suggest the antecedent *probability* that there is something in man that, through a world of decay, persists without loss; that there is, behind the flesh through which it shows, a pattern, a form, an identity that lasts for a while, for a long while, perhaps, indeed, for eternity.

The facts contained in the preceding paragraph are paralleled in all nature to an extent that makes it seem likely that all life has some extra-physical capacity. If, for instance, a lobster loses its claw it will grow a new one; and that new one will try to imitate all the markings which made the original claw different from any other lobster's claw in the whole world. The biologist will tell you that the peculiar characteristics of that claw, that the peculiar characteristics which give to any fragment of life its own uniqueness, were contained in the genes from which it sprang, and in the chromosomes that made up those genes. Now I do not deny that he may be right. But when I find the scientist in his credulity accepting the antecedent improbability of the unique adult personality arising from the minutae of genesis, I marvel that he can deny the antecedent probability of the spirit generating from the flesh.

Now for growing old; bodies age, but men ripen. And the process of ripening can be perceived in those cases where the body remains healthy enough to show it. I had an uncle who, at the age of eighty-four, refused the medical treatment that would have relieved his symptoms, in favour of a major operation that would effect a permanent cure. The word "permanent" was his own, and, at that age, was significant indeed. His complaint did not cause him either inconvenience or suffering; but he wanted a "permanent" cure. I knew him well enough to realise that, while he did not mind being frail, he did object to being imperfect. He wanted his bodily condition to be a true, if feeble, record of his personality.

This old man had always had an excellent tenor voice. When he was ninety years of age, some six years after his "permanent" cure, he took to writing hymns in his native language, Welsh. The hymns were good enough to be accepted and printed by a Welsh journal, and even to be set to music by a Welsh composer. But the old man's reason for beginning this new career was most interesting. He had, so he told me, sung hymns all his life; now that his voice was beginning to fail, the only thing he could do was to write them. The man of praise went on, although the singing tongue was faltering. His infirmities he took as opportunities; and something other than the flesh used its frailties as an instrument.

This same old man, at the age of ninety-two, attended the funeral of an old crony. "Well," a friend said to him, "old Harries is finished." The old man's reply came like a flash, "Old Harries is completed." From this one can gain some idea of the maturing of his wits and the self-consciousness of his spirit. He was, until the day of his death, an emerging personality; in his last few months showing greater mental resilience, humour and developing character than ever. One could almost see the strengthening spirit coming out of the weakening husk. Or, as a relative once put it very succinctly: "He got more like himself every day of his life."

Old Age

We cannot, however, draw conclusions from a consummated life like his, unless we are equally willing to study the worst manifestations of old age. I once knew an old man, the last four years of whose life were spent in a senility so bad as to amount to idiocy. He had to be watched, because he was quite irresponsible; his memory had vanished; his intelligence gone. But one afternoon, about three years after the onset of this trouble, a startling thing happened. The old man had spent most of the morning sitting on a clothes-horse, like a goblin on a toadstool. But early in the afternoon he turned to his wife. "Mary," he said, in a voice that startled her by its normality, "what a trouble I have been to you this last few years. I don't know what came over me." For the rest of that afternoon he was lucid, intelligent, and completely normal. Next day he had relapsed into senility, and he died about twelve months later without recovering. But it seems to me that the episode contained the antecedent probability that the self, the personality, the man

remained complete behind the shattered appearance; and, what was more, that it remained objectively aware of the vagaries of the body and brain it could no longer control.

Some philosophers suggest that the body is a part of the personality if not, indeed, the whole personality. In this, it seems to me, they are looking to the consequence, not the cause; to the organism, not the function. The persistance of both bodily patterns and blemishes; the self-consciousness which rises above the flesh of which it is objectively aware; these suggest that the body is an expression of the personality, not a part of it; that the flesh is something which the spirit "does". Natural things make the supernatural antecedently probable. And those who assert that the body is the personality are guilty of recognising a friend by his overcoat.

THE GHOST-HYENA

A True Story

By C. ASHMORE BAKER

TOWARDS the end of last century one of my brothers, who was an officer in the Egyptian Police, was stationed in the district of Quena, a locality which at that time was much frequented by tourists and travellers on account of the several temples and other objects of historic interest to be found in that stretch of the Nile. One of the principal attractions was the beautiful temple of Quena, standing not far from the river-bank.

At the time of which I write, it was a favourite custom among tourists to ride out in the evenings on donkeys to see the temple by moonlight. One day, some tourists came to my brother to complain that the donkey-boys would no longer undertake this particular trip after sunset. My brother, feeling that it was his duty to look into the matter, sent for the *Sheikh* of the donkey-boys and asked the reason for this refusal.

"It is the *affrete, Effendi,*" the man replied.

"What *affrete*?"

"The great ghost-dog, *Effendi.*"

"What nonsense! There are no ghosts, and especially no ghost-dogs. Tell your boys that if they will not take visitors where they want to go to, they will lose their licences to be donkey-boys."

"They will not go, *Effendi.* It is better to lose one's work than to lose one's soul."

"Very well, tell them to come to the rope and see me."

The "rope" was an arrangement instituted by my brother by which the donkey-boys were separated from the tourists by a rope barrier instead of allowing them to mix indiscriminately and noisily among the visitors to the inconvenience of both. By this arrangement a tourist was able to select a boy whom he knew and preferred.

At one o'clock punctually, the *Sheikh* turned up with his boys, and my brother told them to squat while he asked questions. "Now, what is all this nonsense about ghosts?" he asked the *Sheikh.*

"It is not nonsense, *ya Effendi,*" replied the man. "I myself have seen it. It is very big and walks without a sound, and all the donkeys who see it run away and refuse to go again to the temple, however hard you beat them.

"At what time does this ghost dog appear?"

"As soon the moon rises. We think that it is the spirit of Hathor, the ancient Moon Goddess."

"Will you come with me tonight and show me where it appears?

"By Allah, no, *Effendi*!"

"All right, I will go alone."

"Then Allah be with you, *Effendi*."

So just before moonrise my brother rode out to the temple. He examined the courtyard, rode round the building and made as thorough an examination of the building and courtyard as the comparative darkness of the newly risen full moon permitted and, having seen nothing that the most nervous tourist could cavil at, set out for home. He noticed, however, that his horse was obviously nervous about something. He examined the harness to see what was worrying it, but could find nothing wrong and remounted.

Presently he saw, or thought he saw, a shadowy form walking along the path near his off-side and keeping pace with him to the evident terror, or at least perturbation of his horse, which was fidgeting and shying. Whether dog or hyena, he could not decide. Then several things happened almost simultaneously: The "ghost" beast closed in towards his horse, which reared violently; Guy fired at the shadowy figure with his revolver. The bullet went into his own knee!

My brother's horse carried him home with the usual care of those arab ponies (who really know more about what they are carrying than the riders suppose), and at Luxor he was attended to by one of the leading surgeons of the day, who happened to be visiting Egypt at the time, and who took him in charge until he was fit for duty again.

Guy later on succumbed to the plague of the country, cholera.

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Lectures

MR. F. R. MAUDE, Vice-President of the College, once remarked that it was interesting to observe that the College had no Winter Session, only Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Reviewing the Spring Session, now three parts completed, it is interesting to look back on the variety of subjects dealt with by the lecturers. These included the plain title "Ghosts" by Mr. Alasdair Alpin MacGregor, "Mediumship" by Mrs. Grace Boyers, "Materialisations" by Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, and one or two more complicated titles such as "The Physiological Pattern as a Basis of Understanding" by Miss Beryl Hutchinson, "The Future of Paranormal Research" by Major D. B. Stevens, "The Etheric Body" by Miss Frances Banks and "Numerology and Nomenclature of the Scriptures" by Mr. Ben Herrington. The Session still has to be concluded by Dr. Laurence Bendit with his lecture under the title "Some Psychological Considerations about Phenomena". These and other Lectures and Demonstrations gave a varied fare to both the novice and the pundit.

Study Groups

TWO Study Groups have been held during the Session, one conducted by Dr. C. S. Nicholson on "Comparison of Religions Throughout the Ages", and the other by Mrs. Grace Boyers on "Mediumship".

The Council have decided not to continue the Study Groups during the Summer Session, but to resume them in the Autumn, when it is hoped to open the College more frequently during the evenings for the benefit of members who wish to exchange library books and to meet other members.

Future Work

A FULL report of the Manor House Experiment has already been published and is available either on loan or by purchase to anyone interested. The Research Committee

have under consideration certain projects which will be organised for the Autumn Session. Only members will be allowed to participate. Any member interested to know more about the experiments should apply in writing sometime before the end of the Summer Session.

Visit of Dr. Gilbert Holloway and the Rev. June Holloway

AS this number of *Light* goes to press, we have news of a visit from Dr. Gilbert N. Holloway and his wife, the Rev. June Holloway, who are Ministers of the New Age Church, Miami, Florida. Both are speakers and both possess psychic gifts, including healing, of which we have had very good reports from friends in America.

On Tuesday, June 23rd, at 6.30 p.m., Dr. Holloway will speak on "Intuition, Clairvoyance and Prophecy with Demonstration Experiments", and on Wednesday, July 1st, at 3 p.m., the subject will be "New Developments in American Psychic Science and Spiritual Phenomena". His wife appears with her husband at all meetings and will perhaps demonstrate her own mediumship. M.W.H.

BOOK REVIEWS

Four Modern Ghosts, by Eric J. Dingwall and Trevor H. Hall (Gerald Duckworth, 15s.).

A LUCID and well-written book, invaluable to anyone who intends to carry out investigations of spontaneous phenomena or to assess the findings of other researchers, in particular in cases of alleged hauntings or poltergeist activities. Written by two of the authors of the Society for Psychical Research's report *The Haunting of Borley Rectory,* it examines thoroughly the many problems and difficulties involved in investigations of this nature, and sets about resolving them with the detached objectivity that is the hall-mark of the good researcher.

Commencing with a broad outline of modern techniques and theories in the field of psychical research, the authors go on to examine four widely different cases, stating in detail the methods of investigation employed, the conclusions reached, and the reasons for the formulation of these conclusions. The four cases considered are, in order, the Yorkshire Museum case, the "Rosalie" manifestations claimed to have been witnessed by the late Harry Price, the Runcorn poltergeist case, and the Ousedale Haunt.

The meticulous care with which the significance of each piece of evidence is assessed and the way in which the facts are marshalled in the conclusions, deserve the highest praise, quite apart from the actual cases which are of considerable interest in themselves. An important point made is the absolute necessity to carry out investigations, whenever possible, before unqualified enquirers, dishonest notoriety seekers and irresponsible newspaper reporters are able to cause confusion, whether by embellishment, mal-observation or downright fraud.

The authors state that their intention is to assist students in evaluating material, and I can think of no book more valuable to anyone engaged on, or hoping to be engaged on, research of this kind. I shall keep this book. SIMEON EDMUNDS

Principles and Practice of Radiesthesia, by Abbé Mermet (Vincent Stuart, 25s.)

"RADIESTHESIA" is a "scientific"-sounding name for dowsing or divination, and this book is an attempt to present the subject in a "scientific" manner. The author makes his position clear. He tells us: "I am neither a physicist nor a biologist, nor do I pretend that I am able to explain the phenomena of radiesthesia", and one may well wonder why a man, so obviously aware of his limitations, should want to write a book on a difficult subject, the problems of which he is, on his own admission, unable to elucidate.

The book indeed tells us nothing new about divination, and advances no new hypotheses. Abbé Mermet makes a great effort to present the subject as a purely physical and "scientific" phenomenon, but does this rather less skilfully than other equally obstinate exponents of the art have done before. He frankly admits his dislike of any different ideas on divination, imagining that they are bound to be connected with "spiritualism, occultism and all kinds of magic", so adding prejudice to his other failings. In common with many other authors who think as he does, he is a seeker of truth, but it must be the kind of truth of which he will approve. And so,

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unable to get completely away from the obvious fact that divination is a mental phenomenon, he creates a "mental ray"!

One may say, with a great deal of justification, that it does not matter whether a dowser, successfully tracing a missing person, imagines that he does so by detecting a radiation from a map. His achievement is as great as if he imagined that the late chief Copper Beach guided his hand. If, as Abbé Mermet, he does this to help people, without a thought of reward, he deserves our admiration. But he need not advertise his theoretical ignorance by writing a "textbook for practitioners and students".

Obviously, Abbé Mermet was a dowser of great ability, and the many examples of his successes, quoted in the book, make interesting reading, unhappily spoiled by his "explanations" and hypotheses which are likely to please a few cranks and confuse those who are genuinely trying to understand the nature of divination. L. L.

Concentration, by Mouni Sadhu. (George Allen and Unwin. 15s.).

I STARTED reading this book with much interest; but, by the time I was half-way through it, this interest had flagged. Not only are there too many italics, but I dislike having a proposition thrust at me and being told, "think about it", at intervals. And there is too much suggestion of what are the virtues of the book, and what is to be expected if the method is followed exactly, although one is told to "expect" no results if one wants to learn concentration. It is, in short, a diffuse book on concentration: full of contradictions rather than of the paradoxes which are the essence of spiritual philosophy. There are excellent things in it, and when I read that the primary purpose of concentration is to lead on to spiritual insight, I had great hopes of it. But it then discourses on many aspects of thought, mind, magic, healing, etc., without going to sufficient depth in any of them. And by the time I got past the introductory chapters (some seventy pages) to the exercises in concentration (another seventy), I was distinctly confused. And as to the exercises themselves, I have no doubt that they would teach one concentration if one could bear the tedium of doing them; but I think that after that one might have to unlearn a lot in order to be able to pass on to real meditation and the enlightenment for which this "square-bashing" is said to be a preparation.

Maybe my disappointment is due to the after-influence of another book, rich and deep, which I reviewed in the last issue. But Mouni Sadu (a European despite his Indian pseudonym), though experienced, seems to have left out here much of the wisdom which one associates with the name of his guru, Sri Ramana, known as the Maharishi.

L. J. BENDIT.

Initiations and Initiates in Tibet, by Alexandra David-Neel. (Riders, 18s.)

THIS is a reprint with a number of additions to bring it up to date. Mm. David-Neel is probably one of the greatest living experts on the beliefs, religious practices and life of the Tibetans, for she has lived and studied there as a Tibetan under Tibetan teachers and has adopted a Tibetan for her son. One of the chapters on the important "cultivation of attention" is actually compiled from notes made by a learned Lama. We are thus given a sober, factual and detailed account of numerous aspects of Tibetan society and of their methods of spiritual development, which have been so often distorted and misrepresented by ignorant writers who have sought only to enlarge upon the mysterious and the magical and have never troubled to make any real attempt to understand the deep symbolism which hides profound mystical truths, nor the severe practical training which those who seek Initiation have to undergo.

The study covers a vast field of complex and subtle thought and the short chapter on Cosmic Consciousness holds, I feel, the key to many metaphysical problems. A number of misconceptions should be cleared up by this book which is written clearly and with as much simplicity as is possible when dealing with such a subject. At this time, when Tibet is emerging from age-old seclusion and obscurity, the author's personal knowledge of its history and tradition and the information she has to give about the Dalai and Tashi Lamas should be of especial value. H. K. CHALLONER.

That Ghost I Saw, by Danton Walker. (Dobson, 15s.).

DANTON WALKER states, most emphatically, that his book doesn't set out to prove anything. He is not out to instruct, but to entertain, and he does just this admirably, and in spite of his assertion he does succeed in imparting much interesting and useful information on a subject in which we all have a profound interest.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Living Magic, by Ronald Rose. (Chatto & Windus Ltd., 18s.).

AN absorbing account of the adventures of a parapsychologist and his wife who investigated the psychical practices and beliefs of Australian aborigines.

Dr. Rhine in his foreword says, "It is rarely that one finds a book of scientific exploration interestingly written. The careful, scholarly author tries to evaluate as he writes and all too often loses his reader's interest by his tedious academic qualifications. Ronald Rose, however, will take his readers with him every fascinating step of the way, even through his final experimental chapter".

With all of which I heartily concur, in fact it barely does justice to the author's skilful exposition and easy style.

Assisted by a native interpreter, a lovable character rejoicing in the name of Tjalkalieri, the author and his wife journey into the wildest parts of central Australia, making a thorough and critical study of the primitive magic of the tribal aborigines, analysing strange phenomena involving witch doctors, totem animals and objects, psychic curses and psychic killings, magic cords, fantastic feats of telepathy and seeing at a distance, and extraordinary demonstrations of the understanding and use of hypnosis.

Also examined are the "love magic" ritual, the training and initiation of youthful magicians, the role of women in these matters, and the effect of such beliefs on those aborigines who attempt to assimilate Western cultures and habits. A chapter entitled "Life with the Dead" is of particular interest in that it records cases remarkably similar to those we term poltergeist activity, apparitions, clairvoyance, talking with the dead, materialisations and other phenomena usually associated with the séance room.

Finally a description is given of the E.S.P. tests made, and of the conclusions drawn from the results obtained. The pattern of the tests and the form of questionnaire used are given in two appendices. There are thirteen excellent photographic illustrations, some of them showing vividly the primitive conditions under which the aborigines live.

The ending of chapter fifteen appeals to me, and gives a hint of the conclusions drawn by the author after his researches. It reads: "It is certainly true that aborigines have not developed a mode of reasoned thought in any substantial way resembling ours. But could it not also be true that aborigines have plumbed depths of the mind, rich in their particular rewards, that we have left relatively unexplored? And might it not also be true that, while they find it difficult to adapt themselves to our way of thought, we might indeed find it impossible to achieve theirs?"

This is the most fascinating and refreshing book that I have read for a very long time.

SIMEON EDMUNDS

Abraham Lincoln Returns, by Harriet M. Shelton (Evans Publishing Co., $3.95).

AND this is, without question, the worst book I have read for a very long time. The author claims that it was written inspirationally, dictated by several spirits including that of Abraham Lincoln, and I daresay she believes this to be true. I do not, and I am confident that any reasonable person reading it will not believe this.

The style throughout is slushy and sentimental, with liberal doses of such expressions as "Great Band of the White Brotherhood", "Keeper of the Portal", "Spirit of the East" and "Heavenly Missionary". There are many "guides": "Abdul", "Meslom" and "Red Blanket" are typical names, and expressions such as "quiet time" and "unseen audience", are honoured with capitals.

The author claims to have been told by spirits that she was "being prepared for a fine inspirational work", that she was "like a beacon light", "a worthy vessel in which to pour the light of understanding", and that she had been "anointed and appointed", and "stood alone in the thing she was doing". Not exactly modest, is she?

The section dealing with the life of Lincoln is not quite so bad, as the writer is merely describing previously recorded events, but even here the "pretty-pretty" phraseology is still employed, and it is consequently difficult to sort out the actual information, much of which, if decently written, would be quite interesting.

Marconi and Edison, she claims, have also identified themselves to her. They apparently are working out a method of making communication easier but need a scientist on this side to help. Another puzzling statement is the following: "The mode of getting about in heaven is highly exciting, for we may travel as quickly as thought, *even venturing out into the universe beyond*".

I understand that the author is over eighty years old, and I have no wish to appear unkind, but I do sincerely believe that rubbish of this kind is responsible for driving many sensible people away from Spiritualism, and that such publications should be strongly discouraged.

SIMEON EDMUNDS

The Kingdom and the Power, by Louise Burlbutt de Wetter. (Pagent Press Inc.)

THIS book comprises a selection from among the many messages given to the author through various Guides in the spirit world. In the first part they deal with life on earth and how to meet its difficulties and there is much wise and practical advice which should be very helpful to the bewildered and

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Obituary

FRANCES EDITH LEANING

Miss Mercy Phillimore writes: There still remains a small company of friends, readers of *Light* and members of the old London Spiritualist Alliance, who counted among themselves a figure of interest who departed this life on March 16th at the age of 88.

Frances Edith Leaning was a member of the Council of the L.S.A. in the early 'twenties for a short while, and became for many years a valued contributor to *Light* under the editorship of David Gow. She had been a keen Theosophist and like not a few in those days took up a study of Psychical Research to seek evidence, if any, of some of the claims of Theosophists. This study led to the wider implication of psychic phenomena accepted as Spiritualism. Edith Leaning became an ardent but critical believer. She accepted the underlying truth of the variety of manifestations from a study of printed records without seeking personal experience. Many a fascinating article from her pen appeared in *Light*. Her ready tongue was equally fascinating and revealed wide knowledge, enlivened with penetrating humour which was kindly without a trace of satire. Her informative lectures which she gave to the L.S.A. are still remembered.

She produced a valuable study of "Hypnogogic Images", the name given to visions of places and people seen by many in the drowsy state which precedes sleep. Her paper was published by the Society for Psychical Research in their *Proceedings,* May, 1925.

Her interests ranged to history and archaeology. When living in Tadworth, Surrey, she heard many rumours of a ghost at Tadworth Court, a manor dating back to the time of Domesday Book and owned at the time by Lord Russell of Killowen, who was the last Lord of the Manor. She made an exhaustive study of the Manor and the legends of the ghost, which was printed in 1928 under the title *Tadworth Court;* but, alas, she found no satisfactory evidence of the ghost.

Edith Leaning's short time as a member of Council of the L.S.A. was followed by her late husband, Sidney Leaning, who took her place and gave many years of devoted service to the organisation.

orrowful and those who find the problems of everyday beyond their power to solve. The second part consists of a description of life after death as experienced by different people at different stages of development, so that a general, overall picture is produced. Although in the main the information seems to agree with that given in other books on the subject, several theories emerge which certainly do not agree with the general occult approach. For instance the ordinary theory of reincarnation is not admitted although it is said that if "God" (who is treated in a very personal way in the main, although towards the end a higher conception is suggested) so decides, occasionally we return for another term on earth. But this leads to the alarming theory that if eventually "souls" do not succeed in becoming sufficiently enlightened to choose the spiritual way, they fall under the dominance of the spirits of evil who, it would seem, are even more active in the after-death world than here. In such an eventuality the "soul" can become "lost". This is utterly contrary to the occult teaching which says that it is only the highly developed Adept who deliberately and with full understanding says "evil be thou my good" and allies himself to the destructive aspect of the universe, who can go down to oblivion; but this is very rare indeed. However, generally speaking this book should help to mitigate the fear of death by an assurance that life hereafter holds immense possibilities of interest and activity and that death is a beginning rather than an end. It is written deliberately, so we are told, in very simple language so that the more profound truths it contains can be understood by all.

H. K. CHALLONER.

The Twelve Blessings, by George King. (The Aetherius Press, *Price not stated*).

THIS handsomely printed pamphlet purports to give reports of twelve "blessings" of the Master Jesus, while "overshadowing" the writer. There is some further material by the "Master Aetherius" and "Saint Goo-Ling". It differs in no way from many other such writings emanating from the headquarters of the numerous subtopian cults, except in making more than normal claims to authority. Naturally, in these days of space-travel ideas, flying saucers, etc., this theme is being exploited more than before (it is nothing new) by a number of mediums, and this is of course supposed to be material from other planets. It is a pity, however, that when one has read it, nothing remains in the mind.

This may be due to the obscuration of the reader's mentality. And if one can "find the world in a grain of sand", there is no theoretical reason why the focus of the universe may not be in a suburban parlour: is it not said that Christianity was born in a stable? But we are also warned that there are many false prophets, so when one is confronted by such material as this, one must take it or leave it according to one's mental honesty and integrity. In this case, I can do nothing better than leave it.

L. J. BENDIT.

The Cat of Bast and Other Stories of Mystery, by William E. Thorner. (Regency Press, 15s.)

ACCORDING to the publisher's blurb readers "will not fail" to acclaim this author "as a great writer whose powers to hold and enthral rank him with the foremost story-tellers of our time." In actual fact the stories are not very good and anyone expecting tales of the quality of M. R. James, Oliver Onions, Edgar Allan Poe or Ambrose Bierce, will be sadly disappointed.

W. M.

Never Forever, by Bernard Conyers. (Regency Press, 12s. 6d.)

THE story of this novel is placed in the year 2050. A scientist has discovered an elixir which will prevent a person becoming any older than he is and will prolong life at this point of development indefinitely. The Cabinet has to decide whether or not to release the secret and let the public have the elixir; and the probable effects of what would happen if they did are shown in a film which is described at inordinate length. There is, of course, the inevitable "foreign power" whose agent has gained the affections of the Prime Minister's secretary with the intention of discovering and stealing the formula which the English, apparently, are thinking of keeping, temporarily at least, for themselves. The members of the Cabinet (each of which represents one of the Zodiacal Signs to a remarkable and highly improbable extent) are the main actors in the story which, after a chase in an aeroplane, ends happily after a decision has been reached that the formula must be destroyed or at least retained in secret. The book is laboured and far too long; nothing is left to the imagination, every conversation being recorded almost *verbatim* and every action painstakingly set down. The film, which is very confusing to the reader, goes on chapter after chapter; the fanciful Zodiacal names given to each member of the Cabinet make the characters sound singularly unconvincing, which they are, to anyone in the least conversant with astrology. No one could represent absolutely either his rising or his Solar Sign. If the author had been more skilled it might have made a good thriller, for many of the ideas are interesting and original.

H. K. CHALLONER.

CORRESPONDENCE

Aluminium Utensils

Sir,—I trust you will allow me to refute some of the criticisms of my book *Aluminium Utensils and Disease,* made by your reviewer in your December, 1958, issue. I would point out that the reviewer is by no means an expert in radiesthesia, and all such experts are well aware of the dangers of self orientation and take steps to avoid it. Only an individual who is an expert radiesthetist is in a position to give an opinion on this aspect.

The reviewer also mis-states in asking why gases in the air, silica in pots, vapours from plants and flowers, do not produce similar harm. The reason is plain—only a homoeopathic potency can cause disease if ingested for long enough, and such examples are not made up of potency energy for they are plain chemical substances. I meant to raise no bogy, but my work has taught me only too clearly how dangerous the use of aluminium in cooking may be to a large proportion of people.

It is never wrong to raise a banner which can wave in the breeze and point the way to better health.

H. TOMLINSON, M.B., CH.B., M.R.S.C., L.R.C.P.
London, 26.1.59.

Dr. Bendit replies:

Dr. Tomlinson does not advance his case by gratuitous (I might well use a stronger word) comments about a colleague's abilities. He knows nothing about me, and would be very unwise to challenge me to a duel on the length and depth of our respective studies whether of homoeopathy or radiesthesia.

He still does not explain why aluminium should, by some mysterious process, become "potentised" whether in solution or in vapour, while other and definitely "poisonous" materials do not; or, alternatively, why aluminium should get the blame while the hundred other vegetable and mineral products all about us do not.

Physical Phenomena

Sir,—May I briefly and collectively make this rejoinder to three correspondents in the December *Light* in *re* my critical survey of physical phenomena as survival evidence:

(1) Mr. Songhurst (p. 168) may not recall my assurance that interested "agnostic physicists" (his term), *et al.,* are not permanent sceptics at all, or else they would hardly trouble to affiliate with leading psychical research societies.

The logic of a routinely scientific approach is predicated upon their high regard for caution, which is *so* necessary when the question is either the markedly difficult one of securing adequately genuine physical transcendence of normal laws or the infinite one of man's survival after death.

To eliminate "provedly fraudulent and abusive mediums" would still leave (among others) those whose granted sincerity is nonetheless commingled with "clairvoyant" utterances of what I termed "veriest drivel divinely inspired". (You can "distinguish a rotten apple from a healthy one" much easier than you can mediums). And I appreciate the objective remarks of the Editor which subjoin Mr. Songhurst's (p. 169).

(2) *Re* Mr. Wiseman's personally embracing his materialised wife (p. 173), there could have been little else than pure faith to impute "her" identity. This is not enough for any considered judgment, as I specially attempted to illustrate in the Essay.

Yes, Crookes did purpose to verify the "Katie King materialisations" *per se,* but he did not accept the survivalistic belief which Spiritualists love to ascribe to him, as a perusal of the conclusion of his chapter on "Theories to Account for the Phenomena" in *Researches* (Two Worlds, 1926), p. 114 will show.

(3) I appreciate the correction Mrs. Hankey has brought forth (p. 175) *re* Mr. J. H. McKenzie and the former "British" College. May I remind his

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dmirers, however, that intellectual honesty is not lways accompanied by much ability at detecting raud when fraud is present, or even matters of logic. But let me express regret to have called him "credulous" (p. 105) for he indeed deemed fakery as intolerable as I.

Permit me to make a brief typographical correction regarding p. 107, footnote 2:—this should have concluded as follows: "...especially since its perfect production by trickery can be equally incredible".
U.S.A., 12.1.59. W. E. Cox.

The Problem of an After Life

Sir,—I greatly appreciate the kind remarks of Catherine M. Washburn on my article entitled "A New Approach to the Problem of an After-Life". But it is evident that the hypothesis of survival will not be accorded an appropriate degree of probability, one which is extremely high, unless the position is clarified.

The main approach is a "factual" one and consists *of verified earth-memories* that could not have been obtained by normal means. Many highly competent thinkers, after years of study, chiefly of evidence of this type, have considered the matter to be proven beyond reasonable doubt. Nevertheless, the demonstration falls short of absolute "scientific" certainty, since there is some (admittedly very slight) possibility that the communications that contained all such earth-memories did not emanate from the dead but were obtained by the mediums, either by telepathy from the living or by "reading" some Cosmic Memory.

Bligh Bond, in U.S.A., endeavoured to supplement this type of evidence by stressing the significance of "the *personality*, its force or *purpose*". This approach, obviously a valuable one, is not sharply distinct from the former. It was undertaken in a more systematic manner by Kenneth Richmond (*Evidence of Identity*), Zoë Richmond (*Evidence of Purpose*) and H. F. Saltmarsh (*Evidence of Personal Survival from Cross-Correspondences*), three excellent books that were published by G. Bell & Sons Ltd. (1938, 1939), as well as by H. A. Dallas and others in Great Britain. It is worth while to note the reactions of our most eminent philosophers. Prof. C. D. Broad (in the Thirteenth F. W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture) concluded that the best cross-correspondences "seem *prima facia* to suggest the persistence of something which forms plans and initiates them between successive sittings". It is evident that, in such cases at least, there are clear indications that something more than mere bundles of memories ("psychic factors") survives the death of the body, and that that "Something" possesses not only *memory* but also the personal characteristics of *thinking* and forming plans, of subsequently *willing* and implementing those plans and of *feeling*, accord-

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to the degree of success achieved. Prof. H. H. ce concluded that the survival hypothesis has "a :y considerable degree of probability".

The occurrence in communications of *apparent, yet gnificant, trivia* constitutes good evidence, but only those with intimate knowledge of the communi- ator. Others are left either "quite cold" or actually ntagonised by these details.

Physical phenomena may give valuable support to other evidence. The case cited by Professor E. Bozzano in *Discarnate Influence in Human Life* (p. 152), in which a death-compact, made by two men, that included the breaking of a lampshade, is surely unassailable. Moreover, no physical phenomena can be dismissed as due to telepathy, Cosmic, Memory, etc.

The data to which I drew attention in the article were new and were not related in any way to those that were stressed by Bligh Bond. They did not consist of cases that indicate "the *personality*, its force or *purpose*" (e.g., that concerning the Chaffin will), but of the *experiences* that the supposed dead said they underwent during, and soon after, transition. These "experiences" included first, a panoramic, non-responsible, "review" of the past earth-life, secondly, a momentary "black-out" or coma, at the moment when the body was shed, a sensation which, if slightly lengthened, seemed like going through a dark tunnel, thirdly a "sleep", fourthly an awakening to a "level" of consciousness that had "supernormal" elements (e.g., telepathy and clairvoyance), and fifthly, a second, responsible "review", i.e., the "Judgment". These experiences, which have no reference to any *purposes* of surviving souls, when suitably analysed, seem strongly to support the theory of survival.

Whereas the "factual" evidence of verified earth-memories, the evidence of purpose, and that based on apparent, yet significant, trivia is *all* very slightly vitiated by the possibility already mentioned, i.e., that it might be due not to the dead but to the mediums' telepathic powers or ability to "read" some hypothetical Memory of Nature, my analyses yielded evidence that is entirely unaffected by such possibilities. If my data and the deductions drawn therefrom are admitted, the method of approach is important on that account. It has further value in that (if admitted) it gives some indication of the nature of the early after-life, of what happens to us.

The only theories that are susceptible of "scientific" proof are in the realm of the mathematical sciences. Nevertheless, in biology we have a theory—that of evolution—which is *practically* certain, since there are innumerable evidences in its favour and no serious objection to its acceptance. I venture to suggest that the theory of survival is in precisely the same case: it is the only one which embraces the enormous mass of diverse facts and there is no serious objection to its acceptance. *Although outside the "scientific" category, survival, like evolution, is a practical certainty.*

ROBERT CROOKALL, D.Sc., Ph.D.

Chippenham, 24.12.58.

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