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- **Can some Scientists see Straight?**
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- **The Status of Communicators**

and other articles and poems

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Editorial

If one cares to look at it closely, the present is an astonishing thing. It lasts just about as long as it takes to pull a trigger or to drop a stone from a height; and both these actions are irreversible. In the blink of an eye, they become the past. There is nothing one can do to wipe them out, though sometimes one can mitigate their consequences. One can be sorry for pulling the trigger, one can try to make reparation and thus alter the emotional pattern; but one cannot recall the dead.

As a rule, of course, the present is much less dramatic . If one thinks of life as a film, the present is the single picture that flashes through the gate of the projector at the rate of 24 frames per second. The film tells the story by means of a visual trick. Each picture is a still; and one needs about 100 stills to see anything at all on the screen. Run 24 stills at a normal speed, and the eye does not take it in, though the brain may well do so. That is what is known as subliminal suggestion.

Life, therefore, is a bit of a conjuring trick. It does not seem mysterious until one begins to peer at it. What is the present? It is the pressure of millions of people, of millions of natural processes, most of them unknown, upon a single unique being: oneself. How one reacts to these pressures is a unique and personal equation: most of it unconscious. One is what one is at any one moment, though one is different immediately afterwards by what one has learned this time.

This is the heart of the mystery: the relation between past and future. It only seems undramatic because it appears to be commonplace. We are so accustomed to living in it that we hardly notice it at all.

And what of the future? So far as most of us are concerned, it does not exist at all until the moment it flashes through the gate to join the past. Since we are not aware of the story until it emerges into consciousness, the future is rather like a fantasy. However solid it may seem, we do not *know* that a car will not knock us into a mortuary the next time we leave the house. It is a region of hope and fear, and we enter it betting on the past. So we try to influence its approach by encouraging the hopeful

bits while avoiding the unpleasant ones. We do it all the time. It is one of the mechanisms of living.

This would be complete enough if it were not for one strange thing: second sight. There have always been exceptional people who could see the future more or less accurately. Up till now, it has been possible to discount them as poorly-recorded freaks: the chaos that would descend on orthodox materialism has encouraged the doubters to pooh-pooh. Yet, such comfort may be drawing to an end. In a book review in this number, I mention the case of Varna Dimitrova, a middle-aged Bulgarian peasant who is also a seeress. For the first time in history a Government has been wise enough to employ her under the eye of a scientific commission of enquiry. There has been a ten-year testing of her powers. The scientists in charge take the names of her clients and keep in touch with them to see how accurate her prophecies are. She tells them when they will die, and how. She has been 80% right.

It would be interesting if the Scottish Office spent a few thousand pounds over a similar number of years with some "wise women" in the Highlands.

Now this, if true, requires a new approach to past, present and future. Naturally, many people deny the facts themselves because they shrink from the agony of re-thinking their whole philosophical position. Galileo and the Cardinals again.

Is there any reasonable explanation? I believe there is at least the beginning of one . . . in the old oriental idea of being bound to the wheel of life. I would change the metaphor slightly and say that most of us are bound to the *rim* of the wheel of life. What is there so odd about a wheel . . . or for that matter a ring? Surely, it is the only structure which is a symbol of both Time and Eternity? Revolve the rim of the wheel in the dust and you have a straight line: the symbol of past, present and future. Lay it on its side, and it becomes a circle, the symbol of eternity.

Is it not possible that Varna Dimitrova and her like have an altered angle of vision? Is it not possible that she sees peoples' lives from their axis, and so what is going to happen to them? After all, if everybody behaves as they are at any one moment there is a reasonable basis for prophecy . . . if only one could see enough.

It is still a tremendous mystery, and probably always will be, but that is no excuse for not probing what is part of the human destiny.

"Breakthrough"

H. V. BEARMAN

In the week preceding the publication of "Breakthrough," the English edition of Konstantin Raudive's book, Messrs. Colin Smythe Ltd. invited representatives of the Press to meet Dr. Raudive, question him and form their own opinions. One of the representatives of a Sunday paper with a circulation of millions arranged for two experts from Pye, of Cambridge, to attend with him. They brought screened equipment to eliminate radio reception and during a demonstration by Dr. Raudive admitted to hearing the voices and being quite unable to offer any physical explanation to account for them. I spent some five hours with these gentlemen and, near midnight, was questioned by the Press representative, who thanked me and made no other comment. Next morning, one of the managing directors of Colin Smythe Ltd. telephoned me and told me that the investigators were fully convinced and that the Sunday paper in question would publish a feature article on the subject. In point of fact, not a word was published! The Editor, perhaps, considered that it was not in the interests of the paper to give currency to facts which might lead his readers to believe in the probability that there is a life after death—and perhaps, too, it does matter how we spend our life on earth.

Another Sunday paper so manipulated factual information as to make it appear that nothing worthy of attention had come to light.

One of my friends has given some forty broadcasts concerning the "voice phenomenon" and had not another of my friends told me that in "Late Night Line-up," at 11.10 p.m., there would be something on Television about "Breakthrough" I should not have seen or heard any of them—for I've searched the programmes vainly for any reference to the subject. (We have long been aware that the B.B.C. presents matters of this kind in a way which creates prejudice in the minds of viewers.)

There has been no "breakthrough" so far as the mass media is concerned and I think a long haul must be endured before the truth finally emerges.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I offer to lovers of truth a number of facts and considerations which indicate real progress towards the solution of the undoubted perplexities connected with the phenomenon dealt with in the book.

Professor Hans Bender, from the very beginning of his study of the voice phenomenon, has been disposed to believe that somehow the "voices" were the product of what we call the "unconscious mind." How the human mind can affect a magnetic tape in such a way as to cause it to register voices which are sometimes identified as of those who have died, and which name those who are experimenting, nobody can imagine, at present. That they are voices, Bender admitted earlier on and to-day nobody who has studied the facts questions this. Recently, however, Prof. Bender has made public his acceptance of the fact that the voices are of paranormal origin. Some have jumped to the conclusion that he thereby admits that they are the voices of the dead. That is not so, however. For him, it means that, so far, no normal explanation can be suggested to account for them. That, indeed, is progress!

Some of you have probably by now read my article, "Full of Surprises"; I have there offered what may be thought good reason to believe that both Mr. Colin Smythe and Mr. Peter Bander, Joint Managing Director, have provided evidence which makes it unnecessary to cling to Prof. Bender's and other psychologists' predilection that the unconscious mind may be responsible for the phenomenon.

Now while I do not think critics are justified, I quite understand how some of them might suggest that the evidence of directors of the publishing firm must be discounted since they have a vested interest in the matter! Perhaps, therefore, critics may be more impressed when they learn that Trinity College, Cambridge, having received the reports of David Ellis, and interviewed him, have renewed his grant to investigate the phenomenon for a further year?

This, of course, does not imply that the College representatives or Ellis have formed any definite views, yet.

Another item of progress of which truth seekers will like to know concerns the physicist, Prof. Alex Schneider, one of the contributors of papers read at a Congress, known as Imago Mundi, held in Puchberg, Austria, last September. Among his observations on the voice-phenomenon were suggestions as to experiments which might be attempted in what the Germans refer to as a Faraday cage but experts in this country call a "screened room." He said it would be very interesting indeed if voices could be obtained in a cage. Well, on the 26th March this year, voices were produced in a screened room! A world-expert, associated with the experiment, afterwards wrote to Colin Smythe stating that he could offer no physical explanation of the

phenomenon. Further experiments along similar lines are desirable, however, not so much to confirm that voices can be obtained, but to narrow down the conditions governing their production in order to discern, if possible, how they are produced. Here, again, a long haul may be involved.

Those who have already acquainted themselves with the contents of "Breakthrough" will know that a large number of people, many of recognised status, have heard and understood what the voices say, and some of the experimenters have been quite independent of Dr. Raudive—which is of some importance, for the voices themselves frequently make remarks which indicate a desire for his presence. Now, it may be true that in some way Dr. Raudive does contribute to the success in effecting communication on the magnetic tape. There is abundant evidence that psychical phenomena are facilitated by certain types of people—notably mediums—and there seems no doubt that many folk are mediumistic without being aware of the fact. Therefore, Friedrich Jügenson, who first encountered the phenomenon, and others who have received such communications, may well be of the type referred to.

Whatever we may learn by continued research as to how to obtain better quality voices (in which connection attempts have been made to reduce the background noise on the tape and make the voice stand out; and we are interested in a claim from an engineer on the Continent concerning an improved technique which may lead to something more like dialogue becoming possible), the point has already been reached where scientists in this country, as well as abroad, concede that the voices are paranormal; that they are indeed voices; and their owners' remarks create the impression of issuing from intelligent beings. Opinions differ as to whether the voices are those of dead persons —as in the case of Prof. Hans Bender (who thinks survival of death too unlikely to be a fact)—and many still await a possible alternative explanation of this remarkable phenomenon which at present is shrouded in mystery.

Of course, one encounters bigots who are strongly opposed to the whole idea of investigating evidence of communication with the departed and who insist that impersonation is the explanation of the alleged personalities who purport to identify themselves on a taped message. Serious investigators are not interested in theorists of this kind who, after all, are not disputing the fact of survival or, at least, the existence of intelligent discarnates—intelligent enough to impersonate!

For my own part, what frankly surprises me is that Prof. Bender and other eminent and intellectual specialists should find the idea of survival of death so incredible, seeing that leading neurophysiologists have changed their attitude during the last fifty years and see, in the structure and organisation of the brain of man, something more like an *instrument* of mind than a *source* of mind. Then, too, Dr. Robert Crookall's massive evidence of out-of-body experiences, and much else in psychical phenomena, might well convince anybody capable of weighing evidence that, however much a person might desire permanent oblivion, the dissolution of his body offers flimsy prospects of ensuring it.

Readers of "Breakthrough" with knowledge of electronics will find plenty of technical information in the book; and while it may be true that anybody with an ordinary tape-recorder can obtain "voices," the fact is that few of those known to me have succeeded in noticing any on their tapes in their experiments. However, since Dr. Raudive himself, after many years of experience, admits that he has found additional "voices" on tapes which he had earlier listened to without spotting their presence, novices must not be surprised if they fail in early experiments made in a spirit of curiosity.

On the occasion when the Pye experts were present at Dr. Raudive's demonstration, I recorded the proceedings on my own tape recorder. My tape clearly reproduces Sir Robert Mayer's invitation to his most loved friend, Artur Schnabel, the musician, to provide "just one word of identification, if possible." I also clearly hear my own voiced request of a similar kind. About twenty minutes of experimentation, with microphone and diode, was involved, and then Dr. Raudive at once began to play-back his own tape. I heard my own voice say: "My name is Victor Bearman and I would much desire . . . " or some such phrase. Dr. Raudive stopped and replayed immediately he reached my name, and I heard him say "Kurla." He repeated the replay and verified the word. Peter Bander entered the room at that point and put on the headphone and listened. He pronounced "kurla," as did a young man among the guests, when he used the headphone. I am told that the word "kurla" is Latvian for "Your ear is deaf."

Next day, at Cambridge where I was attending a conference, I played back my own tape and only by repeatedly listening to the few words containing my name did I come to suspect that there was indeed a slight additional sound at that point on the tape. As, indeed, my ear is deaf, I was not surprised that I could not identify the word "kurla"; but the same evening, Mr.

Lovelock, a physicist member of our investigating committee, listened to the same playback; and although he located the sound after a few attempts, he could not identify the word. I subsequently learned that Dr. Raudive had continued his examination of his recording into the small hours and located some 200 voices. An account of the demonstration was published in the local press and the revolution count numbers are given at which various words on the tape, quoted in the text, occur. Among the paranormal intrusions, I recall reading the name Schnabel, "Artur," and the phrase "we are here." Sir Robert, I understand, was immensely impressed. Personally, I am somewhat nonplussed! At least three people identified the word "kurla" (and the tape will find its way into the archives after full analysis and can be listened to and judged by other investigators in due course). But what does "kurla" signify? It is true that I was sitting at the table, wearing a hearing-aid; and all present could have been aware of my defective hearing. But did Dr. Raudive, or any of those sitting round the table with me (and conscious of the fact that I wore a hearing-aid) cause the word "kurla" to coincide with my name on the tape (after all, only Dr. Raudive knew Latvian), or was an unseen observer present and somehow able to effect significant evidence of the fact?

Mr. Ken Attwood, one of the Pye experts who supervised the demonstration, appeared on Television at Dublin on 22nd May for the purpose of answering questions, since he was understood to accept the phenomenon as genuine. I have read the transcript of the interrogation and while he said he wished to carry out further experiments, he declared that, at Gerrards Cross, he set out to prevent the so-called "voices" appearing on the tape but utterly failed. He explained that he was sceptical when approached by a London newspaper and went to the demonstration prepared to break down the mystery. This transcript of the Dublin broadcast, running into seventeen pages, contains a reference to a certain Pam Collins who had tried to record something on her tape the week before "to see what would happen." The Producer, Gay Burne, admitted that, before the evening's broadcast, the tape had been listened to "upstairs" and declared to contain the message: "Your mother, Gay, your mother." He disputed this, saying: "I can hear nothing except hissing," but admitted that those present "upstairs," including two technicians, claim to have heard the words. Peter Bander began to point out that it takes time to accustom the ear to hear, when he was interrupted by a sound technician who said: "I heard it." "You heard it, you Dennis? You are quite convinced

you heard this?" asks Gay Burne. "Yes, yes," came the reply. "Loud and clear?' asks Gay Burne. The technician's reply struck me as evidential; it was this: "Of course not loud and clear, but distinctly." A final shot by Gay Burne follows: "Are you quite convinced that it is a woman's voice saying 'Your mother, Gay'?" To which the technician replies: "Yes, this is what I heard," adding "Of course, I cannot swear that somebody has not rigged the recording, but this is what I heard."

Perhaps time will permit of two further facts which have emerged from the investigation of the phenomenon:

The words expressed by the voices, whether in foreign languages or in English, can be *misheard* and independent listeners might interpret them differently. The difficulty is increased by the brevity of the phrases and use of a single word, sometimes. In normal conversation we judge what is said partly by the context in which it was spoken. If you overheard someone say the single word "park," you might immediately envisage trees, grass and paths; another person might think of "car park." Now a critic, referring to the alleged recording of Winston Churchill's name on tape, scornfully insisted that he and others he had talked to interpreted the tape as saying: "Mark you, Make Believe, My Dear, Yes"; but B.B.C. people said it was a quotation: "Make thee mightier yet." One would think that there could be no confusion between the two sets of words, but I have heard the tape as given on Television and the rhythm certainly proves "Make thee mightier yet" a possible interpretation—in which case its association with Churchill is readily appreciated! David Ellis rightly assumes that independent interpretations of new voices on tapes ought to be experimented with; a number of persons would then write down what they thought the words were without first being aware of what anybody else believed them to be.

Then, too, I should mention that by means of technical equipment, called "visible speech oscillator," voice-prints can be produced which reveal that speech, like fingerprints, has unique characteristics, and one characteristic of the voices under investigation is that they extend beyond the limits of voice-prints of ordinary people like ourselves. This fact seems to have convinced Hans Bender that the voices are paranormal and is a most significant feature for the scientist—indicating that the voices are not the product of the kind of beings we know on earth.

Philip Rogers, who has been receiving voices and other sounds on his tape recorder for years (in Yorkshire) of a similarly mysterious nature, holds the view that they are associated with

U.F.O.s (unidentified flying objects) or "spacemen" of some sort. That phenomenon, however, is not the one we are concerned with under the title of "Breakthrough," which itself has demonstrated that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Inspirational Writing

C. HARRISON

INSPIRATIONAL writing, as distinct from automatic writing, provides one of the many intriguing by-ways of psychic investigation. Its particular psychical basis is not, however, widely recognised: but apart from that basis, some of its more recondite aspects can scarcely be understood. Not all great writing, of course, is inspirational in the sense here implied. In fact, genuine writing of that character is somewhat uncommon. The greater part of our literature is obviously contrived or essentially rational. Then again, what some writers regard as inspiration derives from the subconscious or unconscious levels of their own psychological make-up, breaking into the conscious level with the force of novel insight or spontaneous illumination.

Genuine inspirational writing is of another and more distinctive category; and those whose work is directed and disciplined by it constitute that select group of writers whose works quicken human thought and create dynamic ethical or cultural movements. The light that came to them enlightens others, and has a particular place in the economy of human progress.

Inspiration, as such, embraces all classifications of human interest, cultural, aesthetical as well as philosophical, religious, mystical or occult. Perhaps it is the poet or the musical composer who is most conscious of the impact of inspiration; though by no means exclusively so. Briefly reviewing the wide field of inspired writing, one thinks of Plato, with his *nous* or *daimon* which, conceived as an unseen spiritual *alter ego,* dominated his mind; or the great composers Bach, Mozart or Beethoven, all of whom composed under an intense sense of inspirational influence. Mozart is said to have conceived his works as a whole, and not as successive musical phases. He notated his scores rapidly and with the greatest facility. Among novelists and poets, one thinks of Charles Dickens, who is reported to have written his masterpieces like a man possessed; William Blake,

with his profound mystical insights and visions, Francis Thompson, who was so rapt in inspirational creativeness that he was utterly regardless of his physical circumstances; Wordsworth, who was so immersed in solitary communion with the Universal Whole that he felt at one with it and keenly sensitive to its mesage; Coleridge, who wrote *Kubla Khan* at white heat after waking from sleep; while in the sphere of religion, instances of the powerful influences of insight and inspiration are beyond reckoning. But over all are those great religious innovators who founded world-faiths under the influence of a variety of revelations which served the particular needs of the people to whom their theopneustics were given. Indeed, the biography of inspiration is as vast as time.

Restricting our attention to inspirational writing, like all forms of human mediumship, it imposes a distinct degree of passivity and receptivity. This, however, does not mean that personal mental aptitude or intellectual qualification do not really matter. Inspiration, in fact, is a co-operative activity, in which passivity involves self-utilisation, both on the level of consciousness and sub-consciousness. The faculties and aptitudes of the individual are essential to the operative effectiveness of the forces or the entities which inspire, though the activities of those forces or entities are by no means confined to or by natural abilities. Sometimes the most unlikely subjects are chosen as vehicles of inspiration, and by their works confound the wise and the learned. Nevertheless a clear distinction has to be drawn between the outflow of ideas which can be attributed to an unusually enlightened and pliant mind, and those for which the author can claim no personal merit at all. Of such are the prophets, the seers and the innovators: the men who inspire other men; who make truly revolutionary impacts upon human thought or conduct. Of such, too, are those who work less spectacularly in the sphere of ordinary human conditions and situations, where men need more immediate individual guidance, instruction, encouragement or stimulation: for the work of inspiration embraces all human states, ordinary or extraordinary, personal or social. The pen of the truly inspired writer is obedient to the task imposed, taking no account of relative degrees of importance.

Inspiration involves both effort and effortlessness. Sometimes the inspiration is so complete in form and content that it needs no literary skill or critical appraisal. At other times, while supplying the essential substance of the message, it leaves formal expression to the accomplishments of the one inspired: though always the effectiveness of the resultant message depends upon

the fidelity of the writer to the spirit and purpose of his inspiration. It is the inspiration that matters first and last. It sometimes happens that the medium is quite an ordinary person of average intelligence and ability who, once under the spell of his inspiration becomes quite another sort of person. He picks up his pen and ideas begin to flow through his mind almost or completely independent of his own volition and ability. His consciousness is heightened; his mental powers are intensified, and the words seem literally to write themselves. How many works have been written in this way we shall never know.

Truth is always at hazard where mortal man is concerned: but its validity is eternal. An inspired thought may be ignored or rejected: but it cannot be destroyed. Those servant-spirits who are the agents of what Jesus called "the Spirit of truth" do their work in the certainty that what they have to say through their human mediums, though it may have to wait its time, will have its place in that ultimate pattern of things where "truth abides in fullness." Human measures of value and importance are often arbitrary and partial. What matters is not the *degree* of value and importance, but the contribution a man can make to the totality of human knowledge and experience. Inspirational writing, as such, may not demonstrate (as most other forms of mediumship do in greater or lesser degree) the reality of human survival: but it does demonstrate most powerfully that extra-terrestrial forces exist which can and do assist mankind in its tireless search for truth and reality—which, after all, is its highest and most enduring quest and purpose.

The Experimental Study of Survival

An excerpt from a forthcoming book to be entitled: "From Anecdote to Experiment in Psychical Research."

ROBERT H. THOULESS

THERE are a number of topics in Parapsychology which remain in the observational stage because no one has so far been able to devise experimental methods for their study. In others the evidence is mainly observational although attempts have been made to submit it to experimental control. Amongst the latter is one problem that has, from the beginnings of psychical research, been regarded as one of its key problems, that of the possibility of obtaining evidence as to whether human beings survive, in any sense, the death of their bodies. That there is survival in some sense is taught by all the religions; it is also supported by a good deal of observational evidence. Yet to many it has seemed so certain that human consciousness is a

function of an intact nervous system that they have ruled out as impossible the idea that any consciousness could survive the death and corruption of the nervous system.

This is not a situation to be resolved by argumentation even on a philosophical level. Philosophical arguments for or against survival turn on the implications of language. It is not in this way that questions of fact can be settled. We cannot decide what is the case by considerations drawn from the socialised habits of thought which underly the implications of our language; rather we must be prepared to modify our habits of thought and our customary ways of using language in order to make them conform to whatever facts we may discover.

It is obvious that there is one kind of empirical evidence that could provide incontrovertible evidence of survival; this is the actual experience of our own consciousness going on after our own bodily death. But we must wait for our death before we can know whether we have that experience; we cannot have it in this life.

Some people do, however, claim to have in this life an experience somewhat related to the post-mortem experience of continued conscious existence. This is what is called the "out-of-the-body" experience.[3] This experience may occur while the subject appears to be asleep or unconscious but it may also occur in the waking state. Its distinguishing feature is the fact that the subject appears to be elsewhere than in his body, and the body itself may be seen as an object within his field of vision. Such experiences may seem to one having them not direct evidence of the survival of death, but convincing evidence that he is of such a nature that survival is not an unreasonable expectation. They are not convincing as evidence of anything to other people than those experiencing them since they rarely give verifiable information that would indicate that they were not merely hallucinatory. To give generally acceptable evidence of survivability it would be necessary that such experiences should be brought under experimental control. Such control has not yet been achieved.

The observational evidence for survival derived from the appearance of ghosts and other apparitions has not much force as evidence that people do survive their bodily deaths. There is much evidence that seeing a ghost is a genuine but rare experience, but little ground for supposing that a ghost is the surviving element of some deceased person. Even when what is seen is the apparition of some relative or friend who has recently died, there are strong arguments against the view that

the spirit of the dead person is there as a visual object.[9]

More cogent evidence comes from communications ostensibly from the departed that are received through mediums. The *medium* is a woman or man who is considered to act as intermediary between a living human *sitter* and a once living *communicator.* The contact between the medium and communicator may appear to be direct as when the medium speaks by *direct voice,* that is, apparently with the voice of the communicator. More commonly there is another intermediary, ostensibly in the spirit world, called the *control.* There is some experimental evidence, obtained by Whately Carington, that communicators are secondary personalities of the medium,[10] although they may claim to be Red Indians, Greeks, Persians, and so forth. The control usually reports the presence of deceased relatives and friends of the sitters, gives messages from them to the sitters, and reports their answers to question put by sitters. The medium may be in trance or semi-trance and may communicate what is said by the control either by word of mouth or by automatic writing or by some such method as spelling out by pointing successively to different letters of the alphabet.

There is no doubt that statements and answers to question purporting to come from the departed are given in mediumistic seances and no reason for supposing (except in rare and purely fraudulent cases) that they are conscious fabrications by the medium. It has indeed been abundantly shown (in the case of Mrs. Piper and other good mediums) that the information supplied about relatives of sitters unknown to the medium has gone far beyond the medium's normal knowledge. If their source was not the ostensible communicators, it would have to be attributed to the extra-sensory capacities of the medium. Without a suitably designed experiment, it is difficult to see how a rational choice between these two alternatives can be made.

To suppose that the choice is simply between extra-terrestrial communicators and the medium's psi capacities is to make the alternative too absolute. It is possible that both factors might enter into mediumistic communications as well as such other factors as the medium's own habits of thought and also the habits of thought and extra-sensory capacities of the sitters. If there is any factor of communication from the communicators, this may be diluted to any extent by such other factors, normal and paranormal. An answer to the key question of whether there is any evidence for communications from the departed in mediumistic material depends on the investigator's ability to filter out such an element from all such possible irrelevancies.

If the question as to the reality of this element is answered affirmatively there remains the further quantitative question of how large it is in comparison with other factors. A satisfactory answer to these questions demands more refined techniques of enquiry than mere attendance at mediumistic seances.

There may be real communication from the departed which is very imperfect as a result of dilution from such sources as the thought habits of the medium, the expectations of the sitters, and so on. The situation from the point of view of the communicator may well be as described by (ostensibly) F. W. H. Myers communicating by automatic writing through Mrs. Holland: "I appear to be standing behind a sheet of frosted glass—which blurs sight and deadens sounds—dictating feebly—to a reluctant and somewhat obtuse secretary."[4]

In the same way, when Mrs. Willett was the ostensible communicator through Geraldine Cummins, she referred to the communications as a "mixed grill" composed of memories of the medium and the communicator, and spoke of herself as being in a sense compelled to select from the memories of the automatist.[2] If this was communicated by Mrs. Willett, it is of special interest since her own experience in this life as a medium might have been a help to her in understanding the problems and difficulties of communication.

The evidence from communications received through mediums has appeared very convincing to many people. Two lines of evidence may be distinguished; evidence by *recognition* and evidence by *information.*

The characteristic of evidence by recognition is that the sitter is convinced of the reality of the communicator by recognition of such personal characteristics as ways of speaking and even (in direct voice communication) of characteristic intonations. The feeling is that of being in direct contact with the deceased personality. Such experience of recognition seems understandably convincing to the sitter experiencing it. It can carry no conviction to anyone else, particularly when they remember how illusory experiences of recognition can be even in every-day life.

More commonly the evidence that convinces sitters of the reality of their communicators is their ability to give some identifying information. If someone were telephoning to us and we were uncertain whether he was the person he claimed to be, he might assure us as to this identity by producing such an identifying bit of information: "I'm John Smith, you know, who used to ride a piebald pony called Peg." If we are in doubt as

to the identity of ostensible communicators, they may attempt to satisfy our doubts in the same way.

Not all information given in a seance is useful for identification; that part which can be used as evidence of identification is of very uneven value for that purpose. The informational content of a seance can be classified as follows:

(1) Information that has no value as evidence because it is on matters that could be within the normal knowledge of the medium.

(2) Information that is of little evidential value because, although true of the communicator, it is true also of many other people. Such information, for example, as "Your grandfather died as an old man after a long illness" can be shown to be acceptable to a large proportion of sitters. On credulous sitters, it may have an effect disproportionate to its real value as evidence.

(3) Information as to some particular fact known to the ostensible communicator which can be confirmed by one of the sitters or by some other person. This is the kind of information that obviously points strongly to the ostensible communicator being the person he claims to be. The evidence is not, however, coercive if we admit the possibility that the medium can get such information from the minds of the sitters by ESP. Information of this type is, of course, evidence of some kind of paranormal acquisition of knowledge, but not necessarily from other-world sources.

(4) Information as to some fact (subsequently confirmed) known to the ostensible communicator but to no other person. This most striking kind of evidence does not often occur spontaneously although there have been cases. It is more easily arranged experimentally, as when a communicator tries to reveal the contents of a package he sealed before his death. In the early days of psychical researches such information was regarded as of very high evidential value since the early psychical researchers were inclined to regard telepathy as the only form of ESP to be considered. Since, however, we now know that psi knowledge of an external fact is no more beyond the power of a gifted percipient than is psi knowledge of another person's thought, this evidence is of no more force than is that of the third kind unless the possibility of the medium having acquired the crucial information by ESP has been in some manner excluded. This exclusion of the possibility of ESP can never be complete in a spontaneous mediumistic communication; it will be later considered how it can be achieved in an experimental

situation.

Although it is, in principle, possible for authentic information of the third and fourth kinds to be explained by the sceptic as due to the medium's own extra-sensory powers, this explanation may appear, in the most striking cases, a highly improbable one since it assumes an ESP capacity in the medium greater than there is any other evidence for. The least that can be said for good spontaneous mediumistic evidence of survival is that it creates a strong *prima facie* case for some part of the communication coming from the ostensible communicator. Of recent cases which contribute strongly to this evidence, I should be inclined to pick out the "Palm Sunday" case[1] and the communications received by Geraldine Cummins ostensibly from Mrs. Willett.[2]

If the most striking mediumistic utterances do seem to show evidence that they may come in part from an other-world communicator, it remains true that they seem to be diluted to an unknown extent by the psychological this-world factors already mentioned. In the less striking cases these factors may predominate to such an extent that one can feel no conviction that anything is coming through from the ostensible communicator. In all cases, correct information, from whatever source, is mixed with much misinformation, and evidence by recognition is confused by an admixture of uncharacteristic responses. While such misinformation complicates the problem of evaluating mediumistic evidence, it is not inconsistent with real activity of a communicator if it is considered that the communication is, at best, a composite product in which such factors as the thought processes of the medium may play a part. It must also not be forgotten that the communicator himself may suffer from defects of memory and some changes of personality after his bodily death.

It is clear that there are enough uncertainties in spontaneous mediumistic material to suggest the desirability of an experimental attack on the problem of survival. Either evidence by recognition or evidence from information may be made the basis for experiment. The first of such experimental enquiries to be considered here is the attempt of Whately Carington to reduce to experimental terms the problem of identification of communicators by recognition.[10] The essence of his method was to use the responses of communicators to psychological tests as a means of identifying them instead of relying on the subjective impression of recognition by the sitter. The intention was to discover whether what was ostensibly a single communicator would give, through different mediums, responses which were more similar to each other than were the responses of ostensibly different

communicators. If it were found to be so, this would give reason for supposing that a communicator X coming through one medium was the same individual as communicator X coming through another medium. It would not, of course, prove that he was the individual he claimed to be, but Whately Carington had also the idea of a more extended experiment which would provide evidence also on this question.[11] He had a plan of doing psychological tests on living individuals and after their death to see whether, as communicators, their responses to the same tests showed a significant resemblance to their responses during their life. This experiment was, however, never carried out.

In the more limited experiment on the resemblance of communicators coming through different mediums, Whately Carington thought that his case was proved. Further study of his numerical results showed, however, that this was over-optimistic; his positive results turned out to be the result of serious errors in Whately Carington's use of statistical methods.[7] When correctly evaluated, his results showed no more tendency for communicators to resemble themselves than to resemble other communicators. They provided no evidence that the different communicators were distinct personalities.

Whately Carington's experiment was a courageous and praiseworthy attempt to solve a difficult problem. There is no reason for taking its negative result as final. Other workers may repeat Carington's laborious plan of research by more fruitful methods and they may get more satisfactory results. No one seems as yet to have tried to follow the path laid down by Whately Carington; there seems here to be a field open for experimental research but it is not an easy one.

More commonly, parapsychologists have preferred to do experiments on identification of communicators by information. These have involved choosing the item of identifying information, generally by the use of a package containing information and sealed in the communicator's life-time. Before discussing these "sealed package" experiments, however, something should be said of another attack on the problem of survival which is, at least, semi-experimental. This is the system of "cross-correspondence" which was reported in the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.* from 1906 onwards.

If this was an experiment, it would appear to be one that was arranged from the other side of the grave. The general idea was that separate items of information were given through different mediums which items were without significance when considered separately but fitted into a coherent whole when

taken together. This feat was taken to be beyond the telepathic powers of the mediums concerned, and therefore to be evidence of a single mind acting on all the mediums, which mind had the necessary knowledge to arrange the connection between the items. The principal identifying characteristic of the items supplied was the amount of classical knowledge that was required for fitting them together; this knowledge was certainly possessed by the ostensible communicators: Verrall, Butcher and Myers. I have not myself sufficient classical knowledge to judge the value of the evidence from the cross-correspondences, but some competent judges consider that they do demonstrate the unifying activity of the surviving mind of a classical scholar.

If this was an experiment devised by these scholars on the other side of the grave, I think it must be judged to be a badly designed experiment. It has provided a mass of material of which it is very difficult to judge the evidential value, and about which there are varying opinions. It reproduces, in fact, the defects of spontaneously gathered mediumistic material in a somewhat intensified form. A successful experiment should give a more clear and unambiguous answer to the question it is designed to answer than does spontaneous material; otherwise the experiment is not worth while. When judged by this criterion the cross-correspondences would seem to fail as an experiment.

The sealed package experiments were attempts to make experimental the problem of identification by information. If the deceased person has put something into a package whose contents are known to no one else, then we have a specified bit of information which we may hope to recover from him through a medium after his death. A message was so sealed by F. W. H. Myers before his death but the nature of the message was not afterwards discovered through a medium but only by opening the package. Sir Oliver Lodge left behind him a similar package but, although there were many subsequent seances in which Lodge ostensibly communicated (in some of which I was the sitter), it proved impossible to get a plain statement from him as to what was in his envelope. When this was finally opened it proved to contain an account of a finger habit acquired from the five-finger exercises of his childhood which remained with him all his life and was, he said, known to nobody else.

It is not, perhaps, surprising that the communicator may find it difficult to remember the particular bit of information that he put into his sealed package. In this life, we use our material brains for the purpose of remembering. If there is a disembodied communicator, he has lost this material brain which he left

behind in his grave. He no longer possesses this convenient mechanism for the storage of information; the brain may not be essential for remembering and yet the loss of it may interfere with effective remembering. Some of us are in the habit of remembering appointments by writing them down in a pocket diary; we could, no doubt, have remembered them without the diary, but, since we have formed the habit of relying on it, we shall find it difficult to remember our engagements if the diary is lost. It may be so also when we lose our material brains at death. The task of remembering a specific memory may be a difficult one; if anything of the sealed package type is to be attempted, it is important that the experimental material should be simple, striking, and easy to remember.

It is odd too that, in the experiments of Myers and Lodge, better success was not obtained by the clairvoyant powers of the medium. Too much weight should not be attached to this failure, but, so far as it goes, it suggests that the psi capacities of mediums may be less formidable than they are commonly assumed to be.

It is true that certain writers have claimed that neither the Myers package test nor that of Lodge were as complete failures as they were supposed to be since the message delivered through the medium, although not identical with that enclosed in the package, had some relation to it.[5] In the Myers package, for example, both the sealed message and the seance reproduction of it had something to do with love; but one was concerned with the house where lived the lady whom Myers loved, and the other was concerned with Plato's *Symposium*. The resemblance is somewhat remote and one cannot say with confidence that it is not accidental.

The mere fact that there can be such discussion means that the experiments have failed in their main object, for the evidence they have produced has the same sort of uncertainty as that produced in ordinary non-experimental sittings with mediums. The point of doing an experiment is to do something better than this; it should produce evidence which approaches the ideal of an unambiguous proof that communication was received that could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of a disembodied communicator.

The failure of the Myers and Lodge sealed-package experiments should be considered as a challenge to the psychical researcher to design something better.

There are a number of defects in these two sealed package experiments. First, there is the fact that, if they had been

successful, there would have been no way of ensuring that this success was due to communication of information from another world and not to the extra-sensory capacities of the medium. Arguments could, no doubt, be put forward on both sides, but there is no experimental discrimination between the two possibilities. Secondly, the experiment is not repeatable; once the package is opened, the experiment is over. Those in charge of the experiment may be doubtful when to open the package. If it is opened too early, the experiment may fail although the communicator could have got through the correct message in a later sitting. If the package has been opened and examined there can be no later sitting. What one needs is to devise a task for which there can be an indefinitely large number of verifications without spoiling the experiment.

It was in an attempt to remedy these defects that I devised what I have called the *cipher test*.[8] This was intended to fulfil the following requirements:

(1) That the information to be communicated should be simple and easy to remember.

(2) That is should be of a hit-or-miss type; the answer should be either clearly right or clearly wrong.

(3) The likelihood of hitting on the right answer by accident should be negligibly small.

(4) It should be possible to try out any number of wrong answers without spoiling the experiment as it is spoiled by the premature opening of a sealed package.

(5) The design should be such that a discrimination can be made between success through the medium's ESP and that which must be attributed to communication from the departed.

For the purpose of this test, I have prepared in cipher two passages in the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.* (vol. XLVIII, pp. 258 and 342).* The passages are: INXPH CJKGM JIRPR FBCVY WYWES NOECN SCVHE GYRJQ TEBJM TGXAT TWPNH CNYBC FNXPF LFXRV QWQL and BTYRR OOFLH KCDXK FWPCZ KTADR GGHKA HTYXO ALZUP PYPVF AYMMF SDLR UVUB. The methods used for encipherment are described in the articles already referred to. The object of the test is to see whether, after my bodily death, I can communicate the keys by which the passages can be deciphered. It will not be my intention to communicate the content of the enciphered passages; that I have already forgotten. What is to be communicated is the keys required for decipherment: a passage from literature in the first case, and a pair of words in the second. The methods of encipherment are such that these keys cannot be discovered by any rational process.

This test seems to fulfil the first four of the required conditions mentioned above. It does not matter how many wrong keys are tried out; the passage will not be read by means of them and the subsequent reading of it by the right key is not prevented by these failures. The test may not indeed entirely get over the difficulty that imperfections of post-mortem memory may make it difficult for my disembodied spirit to produce the required keys. But this difficulty is made as small as possible by the simplicity of what had to be remembered and by the fact that any number of attempts to remember can be tested.

The design of this experiment also makes it possible to fulfil the fifth requirement, that of discriminating between explanation by the medium's ESP powers and by a surviving communicator. This possibility arises from the fact that any number of erroneous attempts at the key can be made without spoiling the test. Attempts can, therefore, be made to get the keys through mediums while I am still alive. Several such attempts have been made and all have been unsuccessful. If, therefore, the keys are correctly given by a communicator purporting to be me after my bodily death, the fact that they are so obtained and could not be obtained during my life-time, will be a strong (though obviously not conclusive) ground for supposing that that communicator is indeed myself.

In order to carry much weight, this experiment should be carried out by a number of persons. There are difficulties in the preparation of enciphered material and, so far as I know, only one other person has made a similar test. It is satisfactory that Dr. Ian Stevenson has devised a test on similar lines involving simpler material.[6] What is deposited in Stevenson's test is a combination lock, on which the combination has been changed by the person intending to communicate to a number known only to himself. The matter to be communicated is the number to which the lock must be set before it can be opened. This form of test has the advantage that the material is easily available and requires less labour in preparation than does a cipher. Already a number of individuals have contributed locks for this experiment.

All such experiments, derived from the original sealed-package tests, can go no further than establishing experimentally the fact of survival. The further problem as to the nature of what survives will be the next experimental problem in this field when the fact of survival is demonstrated.

Obviously the experimental study of survival has still a long way to go. There are promising leads as to possible directions

of experiment. The path opened by Whately Carington, for example, still awaits further exploration. It would be a big break-through if anyone could devise methods of communication that did not involve a human medium, but there is no hint yet of how such a development could take place.

* There is also an earlier passage on p. 253 which is now withdrawn from the test because its method of encipherment proved not to be unbreakable by rational methods.

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Paranormal Progressions

Verbatim tape-recording of a Talk at the C.P.S.

SIR KELVIN SPENCER

I WANT to start off by defining the way in which I am going to use two terms. I am going to use the term paranormal to cover all aspects of manifestations, physical or mental, which are not at present recognised as real by orthodox science. That means that I shall use paranormal to cover ESP, telekinesis, telepathy, clairvoyance, Spiritualism and a whole lot of other things. I am not arguing that this is the correct way to use the term, but just as a matter of shorthand convenience I am using the term paranormal as a portmanteau word.

The second term that I want to define is one that I've already used—orthodox science. And by orthodox science I mean the science which finds expression in the Royal Society, in the British Association and in publications such as *Nature*.

In this very difficult subject of the paranormal, the person doing or talking about or listening to research is part of the whole endeavour. Therefore I make no apology for giving a brief

sketch of my background and therefore my mental approach to this subject.

I am one of the generation that fitted the first world war in between school and college, and after that war I took a degree in science at London University. Following that I had thirteen years as a boffin at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. After that I spent the remainder of my career, until I retired in 1959, at various government headquarters in Whitehall, trying to administer scientists. Not only was I associated with and got to know well, scientists within the government service but, as you will know, it is a custom and a very good custom for many government departments to invite eminent scientists from the outside world to serve on advisory scientific councils. And I had the job of being secretary, or chief executive or member of quite a number of these councils throughout my odd thirty-three years in the service; which meant that I got to know a number of the top ranking scientists.

One of the things that surprised me more and more was the way in which the great majority of them had completely closed minds to the paranormal. This initially, when I was at Farnborough, was quite shattering to me. During the first world war I, in common with my generation, lost a number of friends and relations, and some of you will either remember or will have read of the sudden outburst of interest that there was in Spiritualism from 1917 onwards. Conan Doyle was one of the major exponents and then there was Oliver Lodge and Charles Richet. During the years I was at college I absorbed all these books and I thought the recognition of the paranormal as a respectable and important field of endeavour must come soon. Surprisingly enough, it hasn't come yet. Throughout all my service career I only found about half a dozen people whom I got to know well, who were willing to take this subject seriously. This in spite of the fact that in the 1920s Eddington and Jeans had pointed out that the whole basis of materialistic science was nonsense. You remember Eddington's famous phrase that matter was really nothing more than thought in the mind of an immaterial God. Now that book by Eddington was published in the middle 1920s, and a month ago, in preparation for this talk, I had a chat with a Professor of Physics at Exeter University, and I asked him whether this was still so. And after thinking a bit—and of course once you start splitting the atom, and splitting the proton and then mentioning all those curious subnuclear particles you can get the conversation delightfully muzzy, but when you get to bedrock and you say "Yes, but at the bottom, what is

matter?" he had to admit that there was nothing to add to what Eddington said. Now I want to drive this home by reading out two extracts. The first is from A. N. Whitehead, written in 1933. He said this:

"Scientific materialism is an assumption which I shall challenge as being entirely unsuited to the scientific situation at which we have now arrived. It confines itself to certain types of fact abstracted from the totality of experience. When we pass beyond the abstraction, either by more subtle employment of our senses or by the request for meaning and for coherence of thoughts, the scheme breaks down at once. The narrow efficiency of the scheme was the very cause of the supreme mythological success."

That was Whitehead in 1933. One would think that a person of Whitehead's eminence, making such a categorical statement, would make some sort of a stir in the pond of orthodox science.

I now come to a second quotation, much more recent, 1968, Alister Hardy. He says:

"Is it not possible that modern humanistic man, excited by the success of the scientific method and exalted by liberation from the absurdities of mediaeval thought, has been carried away into a new realm of dogmatic folly only a little less absurd than that which preceded it? Could he be making a gigantic mistake?"

I remember about fifteen years ago I put the substance of this question, but not expressed anything like as well as Alister Hardy, to Sir George Thompson, who was then the chairman of one of the advisory councils I was concerned with. He, as you may know, was one of the leading figures that followed up Rutherford's work which led to splitting the atom and all the benefits which civilisation has gained from that: Hiroshima, poisoning of the environment and so on. And I remember saying to Sir George Thompson, "Surely we must take account of the purpose for which we do research and whether the research makes sense." And after discussing the matter for some time, as is not unusual he got rather impatient and said, "Well, at any rate *it*," referring either to atomic energy or to physical science in general, "at any rate *it* works," and as an illustration he pointed to atomic power stations. Now we in 1970, when we look round the world, can any of us say *it* works? I should have thought that every time we switch on the wireless, every time we look at the papers, we can see that it *doesn't* work. I think that what Alister Hardy says here is absolutely right. "Is it not possible that modern humanistic man, excited by the success of the scientific method

and exalted by the liberation from the absurdities of mediaeval thought, has been carried away into a new realm of dogmatic folly only a little less absurd than that which preceded it. Could he be making a gigantic mistake?" Now my answer to that is a most emphatic *Yes*. He is making a gigantic mistake. This answer, however, although it may be acceptable to the present audience, is by no means acceptable to orthodox science.

Since I retired in 1959, I've had the privilege of being on the Council of Exeter University and therefore I'm able to be a member of the Staff Club, and I've taken the opportunity to have discussions with a number of the professors of physical science and psychology, leading up to the points I've just been making; and with one exception, they all of them carry the conversation to a certain point and then become restive and remember that they have to dash away to a lecture.

The other day, the Department of Psychology at Exeter University moved into a new and swagger building and I got the professor to show me round. It's been equipped very lavishly with all the devices that modern psychologists want. Among many other things it has a dark and completely silent room in which the victim can be isolated from all external disturbances, except those disturbances which are part of the experiment, and then the human guinea pig is instrumented in a most lethal way. He has wires attached to him in all sorts of places so that every reaction of the body is capable of being monitored; and the way in which they use this chamber is to put the individual in there for so many hours, and when they think he is sufficiently cooled off they tell him through a phone that he's got to press a button every time two flashes come on and he mustn't press a button every time one flash comes on. That's the type of experiment, and what they're getting at is the way in which alertness diminishes as the time of exposure in this dark room is extended.

Well, after he'd been explaining these things and showing me many other gadgets, I couldn't resist saying to him, "This seems to be just the ideal equipment that one wants to get factual information about telepathy. Have you got this in your programme?" So he said "Telepathy, telepathy, oh no, there's nothing in that, you know, there's nothing in that." Well, there was a lecturer there who thought perhaps there might be something in that, so we got a bit of a discussion going. I found that the professor had read next to nothing on the subject, but of course you know that the people who dogmatise mostly on paranormality are the people who've read least about it. But the lecturer had read something and he thought perhaps there'd be

something in it and he was rather beginning to take my side when the professor clinched matters by saying, "But you know if we found that there was something in telepathy it would cut the ground from nearly all the other work that we're doing in the Psychology Department."

Now I think that this era of lunacy is, in fact, coming to an end. That may be wishful thinking: after all I thought that in 1919 and here we are in 1970 and it hasn't come to an end yet. But there are reasons from within orthodox science itself why we may now take courage and hope that it is coming to an end. There are more and more things being disclosed by orthodox science which prove to be dead ends; orthodox science can make no progress, it gets so far and then it can get no further. I'll mention a few of them; I've already mentioned one, which is the ultimate nature of matter. That I regard as a most fundamental issue and the way in which orthodox science has completely disregarded that seems to me quite extraordinary. But there are many others. There's the body-mind relationship; now you would think that psychologists in particular were extremely interested in that. A few of them are, but the modern fashion in academic psychology is behavioural psychology, in which you undertake the sort of experiments that I've just been sketching out. You find out the reactions, the physical reactions, of the person you're experimenting on, to certain conditions. But any interest in introspective psychology is pretty nearly dead, so far as I know, in academic circles.

Then another line on which orthodox science can make no progress is the whole subject of instinct: instinct in insects, birds and fishes. Just take fishes as one illustration. I understand that salmon spawn in a certain river, they then go away several thousand miles to the centre of the Atlantic to grow up and then they come home to the same river to spawn. Now this is a fact which orthodox science has proved again and again, by labelling fishes. I know a number of them engaged in this work. But when you ask them to put up some sort of a framework, some sort of a theory on which one can start to arrange these facts, they are completely at a loss. So that is another dead end, as I regard it, which orthodox science has reached.

The last illustration that I'll give is the endeavour, which has been gathering momentum more and more in the last thirty years, to find the cause and the cure of cancer. You know that that has led medical research people a very long way into the depths of mysterious nature. They're no longer content just to confine their research to cancer itself, but they go in to the whole

question of what it is that makes a bit of matter act as something living and what is the controlling factor in a living organism that makes it develop in a particular way. Orthodox science has no intellectually respectable answer to that question at all. The molecular biologists and the biochemists have found out a great deal about it and I don't want to decry the work that they have done and are doing in this field. I think that it can be very valuable, I think it is likely to be extremely dangerous. But to think that they are going to get at the heart of the matter along the lines of orthodox science seems to me analogous to trying to explain the beauty of Westminster Abbey by taking it to pieces and putting the stones under a microscope; alternatively, to try and explain the spiritual impact of music by taking to pieces a gramophone or examining the grooves on a record. So, just to sum up, I think there are grounds for thinking now that orthodox science is realising that it cannot capture within its net a sufficient part of the totality of human awareness to continue to make it a worthwhile field of endeavour. It must widen.

We come up against the diffijculty as to how this is to be done, and also perhaps the prior question: Why bother to do it? I am going to take the second question first—Why bother to do it? I think that it's overwhelmingly worthwhile, because I regard the paranormal as an extremely important part of human awareness. I regard it as an extremely difficult field for research endeavour and the total effort, research effort, which is at present going into it is derisive compared to the effort needed and compared to the effort which is being put into orthodox science. I instanced a moment ago the laboratory of the Professor of Psychology at Exeter. Now that's only a drop in the ocean compared with the vast paraphernalia of scientific laboratories both in government and out of government control, much of the equipment of which is available for research into the paranormal. And my present objective is to try and capture the interest of the younger generation of scientists who, unless they are winkled out of their rut, will become orthodox scientists. I think there is quite a chance of doing this. There are a large number now of post-graduate students working in various fields of orthodox science who are looking for new territories to conquer. At present they are rather discouraged because, as I said, there are very few professors who are likely to steer them in this direction. But as we all know, students sometimes have a mind of their own, and perhaps a sit-in strike on this particular issue, to insist on some of the apparatus available being used for research over a wider field than it is at present used for, would be a very good

thing. Now for this to happen, one must start, I think, with some paranormal phenomenon which is firmly in the field of orthodox science. It is asking more than we're likely to get if we ask the young scientist, who still has a reputation to make and probably a doctorate to achieve, to throw overboard all the techniques that he spent four or five years learning and jump immediately into an entirely different field, a field which I believe is known as mental phenomena. So I think the most hopeful line is to start with a paranormal phenomenon firmly in the field of orthodox science.

Now, of course, there are many such phenomena. They all start with the simple table tilting, table rapping experiments that I expect many of you have direct experience of. The great difficulty, hitherto, has been that these phenomena cannot be produced to order; and so having got an orthodox scientist sufficiently interested to set up photographic recording devices, you then find that you cannot produce the phenomena. The literature of paranormality over the last 110 years is littered with disappointments of this kind. Furthermore, on the few occasions when the phenomenon happens to have coincided with the facilities for recording and observing it, the monitoring of the devices has often been open to criticism.

It is only within the last ten years or so that laboratory techniques have been sufficiently developed for it to be possible to record a large number of manifestations, of different aspects of manifestations, on the same time scale. So, if one could get the paranormal manifestation more or less to order, we could then, in a suitably equipped laboratory, have a self-validating record of a number of things that were happening at the time that manifestation took place. Just to mention a few of the things: you could measure the various physiological characteristics of the medium; you could measure the physical charateristics of the air space between the physical object which was being moved and the group of sitters; you could measure the humidity of the air, the temperature of the air; all these things could be instrumented and recorded so that there would be no opening subsequently for the usual criticism of fraud, or incompetent experiment. This has already been done in the psychological laboratories of the sort that I've just referred to, but the sophistication of the technique can be indefinitely increased.

You're still up against this second difficulty of producing the paranormal physical manifestation to order, and this of course is a very serious difficulty. But some of you may have read a paper by Colin Brookes-Smith and D. W. Hunt in the June

number of the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, and the work there recorded, which took place between about 1965 and 1968, has since then, I understand, been carried forward in a significant way. Very briefly, a doctor in the Exeter region, a doctor of medicine, who was interested in paranormality, thought that it might be possible to get a group of about half a dozen people to meet regularly, about twice a week, and see whether they could train themselves firstly to produce a simple physical manifestation and then to control that manifestation. And they took the usual manifestations of a tilting table and a moving table and a levitated table, all the usual sort of things one comes across in the literature. The significant thing was that after about ten months of this rather gruelling work he discovered that they were beginning to get results; and once they started to get results there seemed to be a reinforcement of those results. The team got confident, they got confidence in themselves, and they were able to produce these results more or less to order. Well, at that stage the group broke up for one reason or another—and so the work was put on one side. It wasn't published but it was circulated privately, and it came into the ken of a dentist up north, and he thought that he would try this technique. He got a group together, and what seems to me very significant is that whereas it took the original doctor ten months to get control of all manifestations, he was able to achieve the same pitch of reliability in four months. Then again the group broke up. I remember that it didn't go out with a whimper, it went out with a bang, because after having got a number of successful manifestations, they laid on all the technique for photography and the like and they thought they'd got magnificent results and were in process of developing the film in the same seance room, in darkness of course, and the chap who was looking at the film in the red light saw some very striking records on the film, and he shouted to one of his co-workers: "I say, come and have a look at this—we've got it at last." And at that moment the table on which he was doing the development levitated itself, all the hypo and the developer was spread over the floor and he himself got mouthfuls. That wasn't the reason for that particular group breaking up, but I thought it would be rather fun to let you know that there was that incident.

I understand now that there is another group that is following on the same lines and I have every hope that they will achieve controllable physical manifestations within even less than four months.

There may well be good reason to think that at long last

denial of the paranormal is wearing thin. I think the best point of attack on the citadel of orthodox science is via the younger physical scientists. I think you must start wholly within their own physical science field; I think that that is now just becoming possible along the lines I've indicated by a control of physical manifestation, fully instrumented.

Now I want to raise what to me is a much more interesting aspect of the whole subject. Because, don't let us kid ourselves, this work that I've been describing, this research work, is deadly boring. I expect many of you have taken part in it. I don't know whether any of you have taken part in the card guessing games—I'm sure you've all read about Dr. Rhine's work, which has been followed up by so many people, and the many years of mathematics that have been poured into it to show that there was something faulty in the random numbers. The work is very boring and one feels that it's not really getting to the heart of the matter. The paranormal is something much more than guessing a card more often than chance would indicate; it's something much more than lifting a table without any physical means; it is in fact somthing quite fundamental to human awareness.

At this point I want to read out another extract, two extracts; they're both from Tyrrell. The first comes from his book, published in 1930, *Grades of Significance*. He says:

"The avenue of intellectual enquiry is not a road to pure truth. Reason, unassisted, when in possession of one grade, can never attain to the root conceptions necessary to open a higher grade to its use. These root conceptions must first be grasped by intuition or by the mystical faculty."

Then another quotation from Tyrrell, this time from his book, *The Personality of Man*:

"We seem to be faced by no less a possibility than that the scheme of space, time, matter and causality may be only a department of nature and that there may be another order of things behind it which occasionally shows through."

When you get to that stage you realise that orthodox science must enlarge its field to embrace many aspects, and the most important aspects, of philosophy, metaphysics and religion. There is a book called *The Psychology of Folk Lore* by Marritt, published in 1920, and this is a quotation from it:

"The moral of the history of primitive religion is that religion is vital to man, as a striving and progressive being. It is the common experience of man that he can draw on a power that makes for righteousness, the sole condition being that a certain fear, a certain shyness and humility accompany the effort to do so."

I think that that's extremely important; and why so many physical scientists have got negative results in such experiments that they have done in the paranormal is precisely because they have not had that certain shyness and humility in approaching paranormal research. They have made the entirely unjustified assumption that the further extension of the techniques of orthodox science will ultimately explain everything. It's interesting to note that it was not an assumption made by the forefathers of modern science. If you go back three centuries you'll find that the scientists then were quite clear that they were only concerned with a department of nature, they were only concerned with things that they could measure and check by test in a laboratory. But then gradually over the last three centuries that has been forgotten. It has not been forgotten by some of the most eminent scientists but it has been completely forgotten, or never known, by the man in the street. The man in the street has absorbed now, through his education and through his reading, a dogma that orthodox science, although at present it cannot explain everything, ultimately will be able to do so. And the ordinary man seems incapable of grasping that that jump is entirely unjustifiable: the jump from saying that science is definitely confined to those things that can be measured and numbered, the jump from that to saying that the further extension of that sort of science will ultimately explain the totality of human awareness.

The totality of human awareness is much more important than the field of orthodox science. This has been recognised by the great religions of the last 6,000 years, by all the great poets and the great musicians. And I would like to end this informal discourse with two well-known quotations from Wordsworth, written about the year 1800, one of them taken from his famous ode on *Tintern Abbey* and the other from his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.* Wordsworth refers to:

> Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;
> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized,
> High instincts, before which our mortal nature
> Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,

Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

And the other quotation is:

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Poets on the Ether

A. KING, PH.D. (Miss)

DURING the latter part of world war II, in London, an old friend and I received a few short communications in verse, among much other varied material, by the "alphabet and glass" method which we know is not always reliable but which *can* bring interesting results. *Verse* received in this way is bound to be less evidential than anything else and might be thought by some to be a wholly subconscious product. On that point I should like to say that at least from the purely conscious standpoint the verse we received was foreign to the style and temperament of the sitters, and only one of these ever attempted poetry.

Most of the verse (some was unrecorded) came from unknown communicators or was nameless. But let us first look at two short snatches of verse received—if one accepts the names attached to them—from *known* poets of the past. May I say that we certainly did not consciously seek these names and in fact they would not have been our first choice. Those who might have been, we never heard from; and that is a point worth noting.

The first to communicate was "William Wordsworth," who, however, did not give his name right away. Without theorising why he rather than another should have communicated, I will leave the words spoken, or rather written, to the readers' judgment. They began:

"Am here." Then followed immediately:—

"Map your paths my children, map your ways.
The woods are dense and dark the days.
All your great leaders left became
A footprint and a cross of flame."

Then followed something which did not scan well, as we commented:—

"Let wise and visionary harmless minds
yet open doors to beauteous kinds
of life and love and liberty."

He continued: "Dear friends, I am Wordsworth. I am the English poet who filled the Lakes with banalities." (When we objected, he went on): "Ah, you understand. We need not exchange compliments. Life is far greater than poet's vision. Life is too magnificent to hold with words.
Ah, I am lame with words, like the beggar at the rich man's gate;
But Dives' riches touch God's beggars not.
A holy life and joyous mind
A kingdom is for ever to itself."

(Here communication was interrupted.)

The present writer could not but admire the idea and the wording, though in rather old-style English, of the latter part of these lines. They were not at all in her own style.

A strange verse was then given us in the name of the poet *Shelley,* and just before we got it someone had spelt out on the board: "Bysshe is making a verse for you." We should never have thought of the poet as "Bysshe" although we did immediately know that his full name was "Percy Bysshe Shelley."

From such a poet one would have hoped to receive a striking description of his present surroundings; but what we did get was simply this:—

Death hides my earthly fancy, in some vault
The vine entwines its lace within my bones.
Halls deem'd closed to light have overshadowed death with beauty.
No more shall ash take youth to Lethe
When we shall conquer darkness.

Why go back to describe the position of his former earth-body "in some vault" (where, in fact, I learned on investigating

afterwards that only his ashes—or bones—had been buried, because his body, washed up from the sea some time after he had suffered shipwreck, had been burnt on the beach). It was not at all important to us—unless he wished to give it to us as evidence. Possibly one might assume that the idea fascinated him—the idea of the living vine, of life, growing up out of his ashes, in darkness: ("Halls closed to light"). Perhaps it was a simile for his own growth out of a dark Earth to a state of light? I do not know; and must leave it to experts to judge whether it is Shelley at all.

We had a second quite short piece from the same source later. It might be thought somewhat more like Shelley's style, though it was evidently slightly "mis-heard" by us or mis-spelt. This may not even have been meant for verse, but simply poetic prose. Unfortunately it tailed off, as so often happened:—

"Bysshe Percy. Beloved hear me.
I call all elfin (?) souls at rising year,
Conduct your life by light.
Let none loose (armies*) nameless hosts
with want and fear.
May sun and love abide in years of *K*rist.
No strife. . . ."

(*Would seem to be superfluous. Was perhaps corrected to "hosts.")

If verse at all, this seems to be a very loose kind.

In the course of our glass-and-table experiments we never again—as far as we could tell—had another communication from "Bysshe" and so were unable to compare the style with anything later or to get an idea of why he should have introduced himself as "Bysshe, Percy" without using the far better-known name of Shelley. Actually, as will be seen, there was no conversation at all with us—simply this verse.

As to the small amount of verse of *unknown* authorship which we received, most of it had a strangely foreboding note; as this, which also appears to have come from a Buddhist source with defective English. (It contains some obvious errors either of transmission or reception. We could not guess the real meaning and so they are left, here, just as received):—

(The flow was continuous; the lines are of course arranged *now* as rhythm seems to demand):

Awake, awake, O patient and weary people,
Awake and be dawning to man's blithe day.
Be brave and yet vigilant, brave and yet tender. . . .
By all you meet, by any you talk with,
Know the day comes.

All is well, so well, O hearts, well indeed.
Vast is the dallying frame of *emeraneum,*
Fast goes the wheel of the spinner unto *allblaughting*
Flowing in tranquil falling measures.

(Interjected here, with a different movement: "Beauty is of kinds, but you cannot appreciate all or understand all.")

Do not fail therefore to give yourselves to . . .
Many voices sing the Buddha's praises,
And for this he is always rejoicing.
Always he sends out waves
of all-enveloping love.
Darkness comes, darkness goes, and then light breaks
Over a waste of darkness, very black,
Black as the wing of the bird of night.
By our insight and our anxiety
to help the sons of men,
A bush of burning fire shall burn
And flame till all the heavens are red,
And you shall yet see the sons of men
coming in great glory.
Come, (O) children of the dark age,
Come, and in that darkness shine.
Poor you are and yet rich—poor you can never be.
Be glad, dear hearts of gold, be glad,
And shout to heaven your joy.
Avaunt darkness! Away death!
Come light, come life!
Death is not. Life is.
Be glad. Be glad, Be glad.
Pay with uplifted voices
your mead of praise. Sing! Shout!
All hail the highest god and highest man!
Say no more: "We die"
But behold, we live, we live!
We here, you there—all one
In a great and mighty chorus.
All hail, life, light, joy!
Amen.

The style is so entirely unlike anything we should remotely have thought of producing that we do not feel justified even in ascribing it to that famous literary ghost, the subconscious. The two friends who were looking on seemed to dislike it, which is perhaps not surprising in rationalists, and my fellow-operator was surprised and perhaps rather amused. Yet despite the obvious

mistakes and the roughness of the metre, it seems to the present writer to have here and there a certain strange beauty.

This was not the only verse with an oriental flavour which we received. Quite the most curious (script since lost) was one with the constantly returning chorus of "Sing, O pines," which went on so endlessly that we had deliberately to stop it at last. But we were interested in the very great exuberance of this and the piece already quoted—something that went beyond anything that would have been natural to the sitters.

Besides the more serious verse there were occasional couplets of a frivolous kind. They seemed absurd and pointless, but that in itself is not a reason why we should allow them to throw discredit on everything else; though one *could* no doubt argue that we were picking up from old texts, snatches of ballads, etc. The following might lend colour to this:

> Made me mad when he took my gal."
> "Hal, Hal, good king Hal

It is certainly not in elevated style! It is, in fact, just the kind of thing to be found in some crude old ballad even though it may well not be that. But even if it were "picked up" in some way from print it seems very doubtful whether the same could be asserted about the other verse matter already quoted. And certainly neither of the sitters would have felt proud to claim conscious authorship of the "Hal" couplet. Not that they would have had any objection to a little of the lighter side as such; it could be rather a relief, in those days of war and tension.

We formed no real theory about verse from "unknowns," either serious or frivolous, and in any case we had not enough material to go upon. Poets, whether known or unknown, were not frequent communicators; and as to *good* poets, that is perhaps not surprising. It would be rather a boring proceeding for them, even to judge from our own feelings sometimes about the tedious process of receiving this type of communication; and there were other reasons than just to make poetry why the one or two good poets—if you accept that they were whom they said—approached us; clearly they were stating ethical precepts, however briefly.

As with prose, so with the poetry or verse; the writer cannot refrain from drawing attention to the question of differences in style. With verse even more so than with prose, it is a very difficult thing to get away from one's native style, as anyone who has tried it will know. The following is another example of a style received while operating with a different friend—a young male teacher from the north of England, who was "no poet," over the board shortly *after* the second world war. It is

given quite unrevised, and readers will no doubt notice how curious the language is and how different again the style:—

Dust of dead speech lies over the nude hills.
Rigid, uplifted, bare they stand,
Their bare bones stark.
Ye people, turn to God!

See how the darknes flies
Before his bright and august eyes!
Brags the loud tyrant,
Struts the proud prince,
Rearing the war-horse throws his foaming neck.
Tarry not here young man in lover's arms.
To other arms you must,
And with a dauntless glowing* heart
Strike like a giant, head and hip and thigh.
Spare not the evil one
but in true mercy strike.

Rare is the morning after the fight,
Clean-washed and kind it smiles. Joy!

Again, what can be said? Certainly, that it was *very* far from the thoughts and styles of those who recorded it. It was given promptly, without pause.

* Or: lowering.

The Status of Communicators

(Windsor C.P.S. Conference, July, 1971)

PAUL BEARD

IF the telephone bell rings, naturally the speaker is expected to identify himself. In post-mortem communication, necessitating something far more complex than a telephone, it is not enough to know the speaker's identity. One needs to estimate the speaker's present status or stature. This involves a complex of four factors, overlapping and hard to keep separate, each bringing its own kind of difficulty. These factors are what I want to talk about.

The first concerns the communicator. How much does a communicator *know*? Does he himself always know how much he knows, and how can we know what he knows? A post-mortem F. W. H. Myers points out—you will notice I say *a* post-mortem Myers, and not the post-mortem Myers—that a newly dead person knows as little of the real nature of the world now around

him as an infant does of life on earth; the difference of course is that on death he has his adult thoughts and feelings to help him find out. The evidence shows it to be a myth that on death all is shown, that death is the great revealer. So in asking how much a communicator can be expected to know, let us put him into one of three rough classes: he can be a tenderfoot, or an intermediate communicator, or a senior one, perhaps ancient but not decayed thereby. On the contrary he could have gained an expanded consciousness as a result of his longer experiences. Indeed, part of his consciousness and experience could lie beyond our present ken, and so be incommunicable to us: we can't know about that. The remaining three factors all involve difficulties and obstructions in finding out this status of the communicator.

The second factor is this: whatever he knows, how much of it, or putting it another way, how much of himself can a communicator impart? He can be unable to transmit it accurately because hampered by the process of communication itself.

Allied, but again to be distinguished from it, is our third factor: how much of what the communicator means to say becomes distorted by the sensitive, who is after all a limited human instrument of perception; distortion can come about unconsciously, but also consciously.

The fourth factor—one overlooked more often than it should be—is that much of what is said can be misunderstood or otherwise altered by the recipient.

So we have four factors, and I would like to say a little about each, taking them in the reverse order. May I just repeat them: (1) misunderstanding by the recipient; (2) distortion by the sensitive; (3) the hampering process of communication as experienced by the communicator; and (4) our real quest: the communicator's status and stature.

Communication is best thought of as expressing a difficult and delicate human relationship; and all human relationships, as we know, are imperfect.

Coming now to factor (1), the recipient. Not to put too fine a point upon it, how can what is imperfect on his side of this delicate relationship adversely influence the situation? He will assess his communicator by the value-judgments implied in what he says. But suppose the recipient resists these stubbornly, because they conflict with value-judgments of his own he desires to continue to hold; which probably are much more comfortable to hold. How far is he disinterested, how far does he indeed welcome the truth of the situation, is he passionately enough concerned about it? He may not want the truth; he may go

further and try to force it into his own direction. Let me give a barefaced example. Most sensitives encounter clients who seek approval for love affairs they anyhow intend to start. The talk can then be of twin souls. Or it can go like this (as it did on one occasion): Can you assure me my husband is going to die within the next 12 months? The client wants absolution, not advice.

It is not easy to be ready to find out what the communicator really is attempting to say, not 50 or 75% so that it can be comfortably edited later on, but as near to 100% as any imperfect human being can get, and unfortunately the communicator's meaning, as reported, may well be not too clear. There may be some confusion about his area of reference; but if so it is no good just preferring to believe it refers to the area one wants it to refer to.

Another challenge is the communicator focussing perhaps on a blind spot in his listener. Nothing is harder to estimate correctly, after all, than one's faults and virtues; it is so easy to take the one for the other. (He is obstinate, I am strong-minded.) The communication sundial must be able to record other than sunny hours if there is to be the basis for a good communication; the listener must bring his real self to the encounter. This is as hard as it is in the intimacies of human relationships on earth. The benefit of the situation is that in some cases the communicator has moved on further than the recipient and thus finds it easier to be himself. It is an early way of recognising his status.

It is an advantage, too, that the recipient no longer needs to keep face towards his communicator in quite the same way as with someone on earth. But a very real imaginative participation is needed to find the real meaning behind perhaps very imperfect words: here unfortunately a good many psychical researchers fail.

Factor (2): The sensitive, working either consciously or in trance. Let me dispel right away any idea that a trance guarantees that the communicator will then be in full control of the medium's mind, and that it will therefore reflect 100% of the trance operator's intention. Not a bit of it; the medium's mind may be more subdued but will still be on the scene, and to that extent, by omission or commission, playing a part in shaping the material. The degree of trance control, too, waxes and wanes during a session; one needs to watch for the optimum moments. The medium's mind can be observed at times asserting itself, or popping up momentarily like a jack-in-the-box. The process of inner tuning which is required of a sensitive can be very exacting; in the case of some sensitives it extends for several hours before

the trance. It is often insufficiently performed. Mrs. Gladys Osborne Leonard once recognised to her horror that some words spoken in trance and then reported to her had been read by herself that same morning in the daily paper; from that time on, she would never read the paper before working; unfortunately this sort of self-discipline is rare. When the medium is conscious instead of in trance, her task can be compared to that of a translator, but one who is often only allowed a fleeting glance at her text.

The larger the stature of a teacher-communicator, the greater the degree of renunciation called for from the sensitive; the time factor too enters in here, a long period, possibly as much as twenty years apparently being sometimes needed fully to attune the sensitive to the deeper rhythms of the teacher's perceptions, or to overcome deeply-rooted emotional antipathies, such as to reincarnation. To me it points to the existence of a mind at work independently of the medium to find, over a term of years, a sensitive in her everyday self stoutly denying reincarnation, whilst her trance control goes on teaching it. Usually in the end the trance control prevails, and I would suppose him then better able to go on to express deeper aspects, present all through those years in his mind, but hitherto incommunicable; this whole question is one of subtlety, and little work has been done to investigate it. Fortunately, it is the nature of many sensitives' minds to be plastic in the extreme—just how much one finds out when dealing with them in everyday situations—and this is a help in overcoming resistances. Later on, the opposite difficulty can be seen gradually to arise; the teacher's material having been passed through the sensitive's mind so often, her mind takes on those ideas for itself, both through reading the transcripts of her addresses and through the very transit, even if she is in deep trance. The careful listener recognises that some material is basically though not literally repetitive; and so on this day no new ideas are likely to emerge.

An undoubted sense arises in the observer, over many years and in watching many sensitives, that they are way below their teachers mentally, emotionally and spiritually; this too brings about a conviction that there are indeed independent beings at work. Jungian concepts require that these teachers are looked on either as a split-off part of the self, or as representing part of the collective unconscious, the old wise man in particular. But we still know so little of the constitution of man as a spiritual being. It is difficult for instance to regard the very circumstantially evidential Mrs. Willett in *Swan On A Black Sea* either as a split-off or an archetype.

Each of my four factors becomes harder to assess as we move closer into the discarnate world. Factor (3), you may remember, is the hampering process of communicating. Mrs. Willett in *Swan On A Black Sea* describes how in recalling an earth-memory, say of yourself as a young girl, you don't merely remember her, you become her again for the moment, you re-assume her. I don't think we altogether know what limitations of memory accompany these temporary repossessions. Can the re-assumed young girl at that moment recapture memories of a later part of her life, if asked to give them instantaneously to a doubting recipient? We can't be dogmatic here, but it is an interesting possible aspect of the failures of evidence we find. Then, memories apart, the actual process of communicating—its entanglement with the medium if I can put it like that—appears at times to require the speaker to leave part of himself outside the process, as a responsible communicator like Sir William Barrett complains after his death to his wife: he only has access again to the rest of himself, he says, his full self, after the sitting is over. All of us feel disillusioned at times by the incompleteness of communication. But then we see so little of the difficulties. I think this is why more refined communicators contrast communication with communion, and ask us to pass over to the latter, when discarnate soul can speak to earth soul in meditation, or in a extra-sensory and private way. Here it is pointless to ask for the minutiae of evidence—did my grandmother sleep on her left side?—conviction comes through the quality of the communion. What is the essential contrast between communication and communion? In communication the communicator is at something of a disadvantage in having to speak, as a rule, to the everyday self of the recipient. In communion, one tries to get above that a little, to raise one's level of consciousness, be in touch with the part of one's inner self which is more on comomn ground with the communicator's whole present self: soul to soul, more than personality to personality. So in communion the telepathic process is more at home as it were, its impressions can be shapely and direct, if the recipient can find the ability to capture them.

My fourth and last factor: the communicator, as he verily is unhampered by his local difficulties whilst communicating; but as we have seen, we cannot hope for a perfect picture of him. I made a simple rough distinction: between the recently dead, still largely encumbered within the net of their earth memories, desires and thoughts; intermediate ones, able to stand back and speak more obectively of what they have found; and seniors, free

or comparatively free from compulsions, able to speak with compassion and dispassion.

Well, if early communicators are living to a certain extent among their own illusions, then they will largely communicate illusion. Part of what they see is a kind of representation—objective to them—of aspects of their own self. In these representational scenes, I would suppose an element of assistance from knowledgable beings behind the scenes, acting both as stage-manager and teacher. An intelligent man tells of his astonishment at finding how literal some newcomers are. He sees a woman carrying round two large suitcases. She comes to a narrow, arched door with "Entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven" inscribed above it. As she is French, the words are written in French. She won't put the suitcases down because she says they contain records of all her good deeds. In considerable distress she finds that as long as she holds on to the suitcases she can't get through the narrow door. Well, can you think of a neater picture to show her the real motive for her good deeds? Quite obviously the scene is not objective; but it does serve an objective purpose.

If a man has not found his psychological centre, or made part of the inner journey whilst on earth, he will face it there. After reading T. E. Lawrence's *Post-Mortem Journey,* with his description of working at the craft of printing and binding books, a psychiatrist friend of mine commented that this was his occupational therapy. I think she was right, though I suspect he was also harking back to faint memories of an old monastic life, and trying to regain therefrom a serenity he had possessed then, but sadly lacked in his most recent life. Earlier we read of his facing what in effect was his own psychiatric analysis.

> "By an intimate revelation of what was within . . . I was reduced to a state . . . (where) . . . pride slunk out of sight. Eventually I have regained some balance but only by . . . painfully accepting myself as I am; a mess, a travesty of what I might have been. . . . All experiences here are tried out on the quick of the being and their keenness and piercing reality are beyond anything it is possible to feel on earth. . . . (When) . . . all the twisted, negative emotions are cleared out of one . . . then it will be possible to live fearlessly and freely."

So if one says bookbinding is done in the next world, one is probably both right and wrong; one can create a mental environment—one capable of being shared, too, with other people—which is illusory in one way, but in another represents an immediate need of the soul. I doubt if Lawrence's craftsman's volumes will outlast his need of them.

Any advice given from these early levels will be little wiser than could have been given on earth. It may or may not be good; it will certainly be limited in its insight.

So much for tenderfeet; I will go on to intermediate communicators. In post-mortem life, time is not the measure for the acquiring of wisdom. In ways we cannot understand, time over there is not. The post-mortem F. W. H. Myers says: Conceive of time as consciousness. Adjustment of consciousness to new understanding can be rapid or slow. One man, it seems, will learn over there in one year what will take another 100 years. The intermediates I will mention are Oliver Lodge, Conan Doyle and Frances Banks. From all three we have accounts showing distinct changes of consciousness comparatively soon after their death. Thus Oliver Lodge says, referring back to his life on earth, "I remember hearing far too much about the Guides . . . in fact I was rather bored. But now I understand . . . I have met them and I have recognised them as old-time friends, from a very long time ago, and I . . . deeply appreciate their faithfulness and their patience with me." You see there a clear change of attitude. This ready capacity to go on learning, he says, stood him in very good stead. Indeed, lack of such willingness seems a great obstacle, and leads to a sort of encapsulation. Conan Doyle found he had some unpleasant things to swallow about his former Spiritualistic conceptions. He found impersonators, and this gave him considerable disquiet; and looking at Spiritualists from his point of vantage he found them altogether too complacent. But much more important than this retrospective criticism was the experience he came to of the second death, that of his personal self, his transformation from an "I" consciousness to a "We" consciousness. Frances Banks's *Testimony of Light* speaks of a gradual return to her larger self, when she temporarily mounts to a higher level of perception, one possessed permanently by certain of her teachers. She finds it too intense for her to retain. It has to be only a brief preview. She is compelled, as she puts it, to "dwindle back" into her familiar self. The purpose of these records is to encourage us to acclimatise ourselves now to these later states, by starting to clothe ourselves with their attributes. This is what Oliver Lodge meant in advising people to learn to live in their spirit body now. He said many men on earth are only alive in about 10% of their true self. People often say: Well, I shall be quite content to learn about the spirit world when I get there. But these communicators want to help us to make use of the unlived 90% part of ourselves right away.

This process of help is continued by communicators of senior status. This, for me, is where the value and the fascination of these investigations really lie, though obviously the vital preliminary is first to feel assured of survival. Such an assurance, in turn, brings a conviction that life is worth living now and worth going on living hereafter, and that this worth is likely to be expressed in a growth of individual consciousness. Seniors, if we can contact them or they us, demonstrate something of what this growth brings. Of course, like any other easy promise, there is a catch: that whatever helping hand is given is of little avail unless the listener then performs his part of the work upon himself.

In order to get to the core of this problem of status, it is necessary to recognise that all external tests, which are really designed to show up, or to eliminate, mediumistic intervention, are irrelevant. If a mediumistic control says he was an ancient Egyptian and shows, for instance, that he knows when horses were first introduced into Egypt, it may establish one's confidence, or one may prefer to go to great lengths to show the medium could have come about the information in some other and normal way, but it is nothing to do with relationship. The only way to find value in a vertical relationship is to experience it. When you do, you find it is not confined to what is got through the medium's help. There is no need to be dependent only on the medium. That is or ought to be only the tip of the iceberg. This is where communion comes in again.

The critic reads the words of discarnate teachers, and usually mutters "platitudes," but in doing so he turns away from his own inner self which the words are intended to arouse, to which they are a wayshower. Due to the clumsiness of the mediumistic method, the phrases can be painful to those blessed with a sense of words, but they nevertheless point the way to an experience which the listener must find for himself. Ordinary everyday communicators, new arrivals, speak of times of solitary quiet, where a process of awakening comes to them. Vertical relationships are largely concerned with a similar awakening of an inner self on earth. This is all the senior discarnate is interested in. If you fall ill, or lose your fortune, he doesnt really mind. He is not concerned with the pleasure-pain syndrome. It becomes clear he sees his friend on earth as much more extensive than the little earth personality; he wants to free his friend to be the larger being he potentially is; he wants to make the genie emerge from the bottle, the chick peck its way out of the confining shell. Of course, it is the process spoken of in the parables of

the kingdom of heaven. The teacher is looking for the mustard seed, the leaven.

Perhaps it is best to illustrate by sample the sort of theme they talk about. I will choose a controversial subect. From the general information reaching us, the causality of the inner world —as far as we can understand it—does require a concept of reincarnation. I have already this morning assumed it is true; will you accept it, just for a moment? Then what has happened to all these other selves we must have lived? Do we, whilst on earth, have a degree of access to them in some inner part of ourselves? A communicator who, to me, is of senior status puts it like this:

> . . . you have already developed a number of other personalities in past incarnations. The sum total of all these . . . incarnations goes to the building of the permanent self . . . the temple which is being built in the heavens . . . the higher self. . . . After death . . . the lower elements of (the) personality, that part which . . . is no longer useful . . . fall(s) away and disintegrate(s): . . . the part which has been built into that personality of a more durable nature, continues to live, and is absorbed in due course into the higher self, or temple of the soul. . . . These personalities can be re-assumed at any time, they are not lost.

I suspect that in order to reach us on earth, a senior teacher often needs to borrow one of these old personalities from the wardobe of his being, but that he is not fully this person. He creates and animates it for the occasion, because only so can he approach our present levels of consciousness at all. In other words, on his pathway into the interior worlds, he has abandoned all close attachment to his earth personality or personalities, making himself free of them in order to climb the steps of the Jacob's ladder of consciousness. This is what the quotation is saying. After all, as Ronald Fraser has written, "What point would there be in surviving for ever as Mr. Pickwick or ME? He goes on to say: "The less there is of me the more there is of the Real."

If this scheme of personality is true, it would also mean that living persons, we ourselves, have a fount of wisdom to draw on from past lives, if only the way can be found to it. In short, only part of us is reincarnated here, as communicators indeed often tell us, but we are or can be still inwardly linked with the remainder.

The purpose of communicators of stature is twofold: first, to push one on to achieve the immediate task of the present

incarnation—almost invariably bound up with personality limitations to be overcome.

Their second task is to help one to express whilst on earth more of one's total self as it can be drawn up into daily consciousness; and thus to enrich life. In spiritual things, one is always confronting paradox: one has to throw logic away. Thus one is offered simultaneously a limitation and an expansion; on the one hand a painful and humdrum task, and on the other, right of access to a treasure. The limitation is the bread of life; the expansion is the wine. The aspects we are sent, or send ourselves, back to earth to cultivate in the horticultural nursery may need intensive care, a care which involves a limitation of being in order to cultivate the missing but necessary quality. If one was a bad-tempered musician last time, then this time one may have the temper but not the music. It is one's little packet of karma.

But it is best to sup on both bread and wine, not just bread and water: to combine this concept of a necessary limitation, a blessed limitation (however much we temporarily curse it) in order to cure one's bad temper, and perhaps also in order to grow new qualities principally required for the next incarnation, and this quite other concept which is the opposite of limitation, this urge to link up with part of one's spiritual being at present largely outside us. So we come up against a beautiful law of spiritual economy. It seems to imply we are permitted to reach, if we can, any part of our whole being we can utilise for the beauty and the profit of life on earth, except that part of it, which if re-exercised might beguile us away from the specific redemptive task for which a present limitation is needed. I love music, but have no ear: that's a limiting fence which, for my own good, I can't leap over!

BOOK REVIEWS

Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder. (Prentice-Hall Inc., New York.)

It is ironical that the only honestly atheistic Government should be the one to explore ESP with the full financial backing of the State. I say "honestly" because no Government could afford to listen to Archbishops for long and stay in office. They would be gobbled by foreign competitors.

The Communist countries recognise this and find it hypocritical that prelates should preach on public occasions

when everyone knows that their advice is of no political importance. The intellectual climate of the West . . . try selling ESP to the average intellectual . . . is equally atheistic.

The reason why the Russians are looking into parapsychology is, as one might expect, less religious than political. They hope that by exploring hypnosis and telepathy they will be able to improve their obsession with spying. ESP-ionage. They hope also eventually to make it easier to brainwash the population. Judging by the mob-level of brainwashability in most countries, East and West, they may not find it too difficult.

In the meantime, they have let loose a horde of extremely intelligent researchers who are having enormous fun.

Technically, and for the purposes of grants, the research is strictly non-mystical. It is run on the assumption that man is electromagnetic, and the more one learns about him the easier he will be to control. In this way, telepathy and hypnotism have been placed on an experimental basis so indisputable that it would take a Western intellectual to deny the existence of either.

So far, so good. The body of Soviet work on ESP is magnificently thorough and searching. . Anyone who denies the reality of telepathy after absorbing these results must be suffering from an *emotional* block. He is in an even more untenable position than the Renaissance Cardinals who threatened Galileo for disturbing a theological tenet. These experiments are much more scientifically grounded than was a sixteenth century telescope.

Yet theologians, religious and political, never quite understand that, if you encourage intelligent people to probe into a subject, dogma will sooner or later disintegrate. The dogma that the sun goes round the earth was no more silly than that man is an electromagnet and nothing more. The Soviet scientists will undoubtedly pretend to believe this nonsense while continuing their researches into human destiny.

Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain is a splendidly encouraging book. Its authors are enthusiastic and accurate. For the first time in history the basis of all religions is being tested in laboratories. Religion must have begun with ESP, and it was only later that the experience of the few dictated exploration of the mystical. That will come in time, perhaps especially in Soviet Russia. The Russians are naturally a religious people. Now that the priests have gone and the scientists have moved in, they have a chance to become so again.

Meanwhile, there is research into astrological bearing on birth. There is a fair amount of evidence that astrological dates

can make a better contraceptive than the pill. It was found, for instance, with one woman that there were only four dates in the year when she was able to conceive.

And Varna Dimitrova, the Bulgarian seeress-civil-servant I mentioned in my editorial. 80% of correct prophecy is worth following up in other countries.

This is a brilliant book. The Soviets are as far ahead of the Americans as the Americans are ahead of us in ground-floor experimentation. Certainly, an Aquarian phenomenon.

The Life Beyond Death by Arthur Ford, as told to Jerome Ellison. (Putnam, (New York.)

The Life Beyond Death is the famous American medium, Arthur Ford's last book. He hated writing, so he entrusted most of his work to Jerome Ellison, who wrote this one after his death. It is a summing-up of 40 years' experience, leaving out most of the detailed evidence because he felt he had already put it down.

It is a serene swang-song, more fitted to those who are already sure than to those who want chapter and verse before they believe. It is at the other end of the stick to the Russians, who are trying to document the psychic from the bottom; but both are valuable.

Mr. Ford has much to say about Swedenborg, William James and Frederic Myers. Also of Stainton Moses, whose bookcase stands in the hall in Queensberry Place.

This is a book worth reading as the last word of a man who knew his subject backwards.

The Truth About Mental Telepathy by Beth Brown. (Essandess.)
The Power Behind Your Dreams by Beth Brown. (Essandess.)
Your Words Are Your Magic Power by Beth Brown. (Essandess.)

I found these three paperbacks very useful. There was little that any student of parapsychology would not know. But they gather in simple words the wisdom of relying on something beyond one's own consciousness. They are working guides to enlarging oneself. There is nothing esoterical or mystical about them, except that tapping one's hidden energies and directing them in a positive way may perhaps be called esoteric and mystical. They are, in fact, a sign of how far mankind has travelled in the last two thousand years. They bring up to date, and out into the open for anyone to use, the major basis of the mysteries of Eleusis and Delphi. No one who is at all interested in making the best of himself can fail to find them useful.

JULIAN DUGUID.

Letters

Dear Mr. Duguid,

I fully appreciate your reluctance to apologise for the lengthy coverage of the latest developments concerning the controversial Raudive Voices. This exasperating phenomenon now has us all by the ears . . . we must pursue it still further, for to that extent we are already committed.

This being agreed, I think that as a regular but non-specialised reader of *Light,* it needs to be said that the journal is in danger of shedding its non-scientific readership. This is no bad thing, possibly inevitable, but I think you yourself in your current editorial have indicated *your* helplessness in face of the conflicting salvoes from the learned. Laymen are now hard put to get their views heard let alone seriously examined.

A typical example of what I mean concerns the Lovelock/Bearman/Gaythorpe debate. Nine-tenths of the terminology used is jargon to the average reader. If this is the new language of psychical research then I hesitate to affirm that we've "proved" anything . . . even the most vaunted faculty of telepathy.

We have always hoped that scientists would—once they were in—shed real light on our subject. As I see it, we need an ascending order of physicists and electronics specialists to confirm even the smallest of events.

Being a layman, one feels so helpless before the clash of rival fields of research. It is this feeling, plus the doubt as to the worth of any contributions we laymen might otherwise feel prompted to make that has occasioned this letter.

Naturally, one must try to sift *some* kind of meaning from a subject that is considered to be of paramount importance to everybody who believes in a Soul. What troubles me is the part the amateur can play in a field of research that is fast excluding anything relating to the senses and emotions.

Yours sincerely,
ERNEST W. SHEPHERD.

(Mr. Shepherd need have no fear that "Light" is going over to the warring scientists. Breakthrough was a uniquely important case, and was treated uniquely.—Ed.)

Dear Mr. Duguid,

"In presenting the number two copy of the loss of the R.101 to the College I want it clearly understood that this gift was a jointure in the name of the late Eileen Garrett and myself because

there has always existed an understanding that the original copy and the No. 2 copy (now in your possession) was held in trust between both of us so that neither could act without the consent of the other."

Thus it was that a few months before Eileen Garrett "passed over" her daughter wrote and told me that her mother, as founder and president of the Parapsychology Foundation, had agreed that the College of Psychic Studies was the best and the obvious place for the number two copy to be deposited.

Furthermore, this gift being associated with the name of Eileen Garrett will be of additional interest to all members since during her life-time she held such a close connection with the College, and always realised what an important part it played in revealing spiritual truths.

Yours sincerely,
OLIVER VILLIERS.

Dear Mr. Duguid,

The following incident may be of interest to readers of *Light*. For many years past I have corresponded with a lady in Brisbane, Australia, our common interest being books concerned with psychic matters. Having left unanswered a letter written by this lady last April, I felt rather worried about my seeming negligence and on July 24th I sent her a postcard to say that I would soon be writing.

By return air mail post I received the following letter from her:—

"First of all, I should explain that I have long kept a record —with the date—of any unusually vivid or pleasant dream I may have. And about a week ago, I dreamed that you had come to visit us. As this fell into both categories, I wrote it into my dream book, adding the date—the 24th July, not, of course, expecting any sequel.

"But today when your postcard came I remembered my dream, looked it up and discovered that it bore the same date as your card—the 24th July.

"Now, as our night is your day, I am wondering—did I dream of you because you were writing the card, or did you write the card because I was dreaming of you? My dream seemed to last quite a while and was full of incident, but when I awoke I could only remember the fact (?) of your presence."

Yours faithfully,
RUBY YEATMAN.

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