

The PIONEER

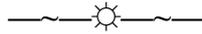
The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.



General
Interest



The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses. Please reference: "Pioneer, volume, issue and page numbers"



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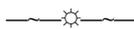
Concluded from the last issue

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All references to Psypioneer in these issues are archived at <http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/>
or via: www.pauljgaunt.com

**Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing these issues – also
acknowledged to Minister David Hopkins and Leslie Price for their past work in sub-
editing the issues**



ROBERT OWEN – SPIRITUALISM & ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS



Robert Owen

The story of Robert Owen's meeting with the American medium Maria Hayden in March 1853 is well documented. Owen's purpose was not to seek the mediumistic services of Mrs Hayden but to simply purchase a book.

William and Maria Hayden had arrived in the October of 1852 under the management of an English mesmerist, Mr G.W. Stone, who brought the Haydens to England to undertake the management of Mrs. Hayden's séances, which were initially held at Stone's house in Cavendish Square, London.³⁶

The book "An Exposition of Views Respecting the Principle Facts, Causes and Peculiarities Involved in Spirit Manifestations," published in 1852,³⁷ was remarked on by Owen as being written *by a valued and most truthful friend*

Adin Ballou. Ballou (1803-1890) was a Universalist minister, an early convert to the propagation of Christian Spiritualism through his Hopedale community, Massachusetts.³⁸ Hopedale Community had been founded in 1842 by Ballou, who believed he could create a utopian community blending the features of a factory town with those of a religion-based commune – which stood for temperance, abolitionism, woman's rights, Christian Spiritualism and education.

Mr G. W. Stone had edited, republished and added an introduction to Ballou's book, hence it being sold at Stone's residence and the purpose of Owen's visit. When Owen was paying William Hayden for the book Hayden said:

"Mrs. Hayden, having heard much of and about you in America, is very desirous of seeing you, if you can conveniently give her a few minutes of your time," to which I

³⁶._Hayden's séances held at Stone's residence during the hours of 12 - 3 and 4 - 6, would cost you One Guinea, or Five Guineas if you requested the medium at your own home. One hour was allowed each party consisting of less than five persons, and not exceeding two hours when a larger number is present.

³⁷._Owen commented:—"... *Adin Ballou, who has written a plain, practical, common-sense history of this new revelation to the human race.*" Taken from: *The Telegraph Papers* Vol. 1. 1853 edited by S. B. Brittan, page 115.

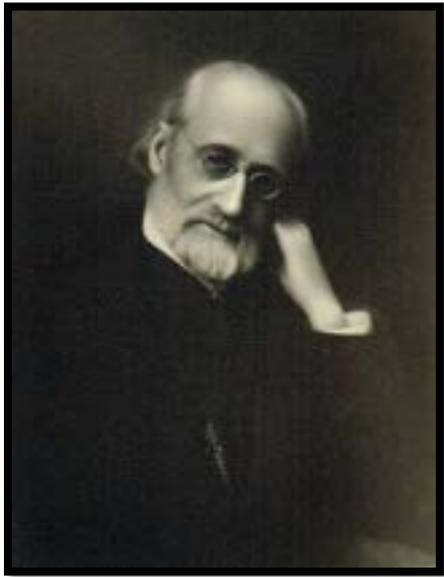
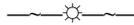
³⁸._Around 1850, Spiritualism became entwined with Ballou's reform goals; he wrote:—"I am a Spiritualist because I regard Spiritualism as a great help in the promulgation of free discussion. There are thousands of questions on the subject of religion, science and philosophy, which must be discussed, but could never be solved by any method mankind possessed prior to the birth of modern Spiritualism.... Man's eternal destiny was a mere fancy; the essential religious truths were mere baseless whims. The time has come when religion and reason must be married." Taken from:—"The Other Side of Salvation" by John Buescher 2004 page 162.

consented, and was shown into a large room in the midst of which was a plain large dining table, and it being a very cold morning in March, a good fire.”³⁹

Owen wrote regarding his conversion to Spiritualism in 1853:

“While conversing with Mrs. Hayden, and while we were both standing before the fire, and talking of our mutual friends suddenly raps were heard on a table at some distance from us, no one being near to it. I was surprised; and as the raps continued and appeared to indicate a strong desire to attract attention, I asked what was the meaning of the sounds. Mrs. Hayden said they were spirits anxious to communicate with some one, and she would inquire who they were. They replied to her, by the alphabet, that they were friends of mine who were desirous to communicate with me. Mrs. Hayden then gave me the alphabet and pencil, and I found, according to their own statements, that the spirits were those of my mother and father. I tested their truth by various questions, and their answers, all correct, surprised me exceedingly. I have since had twelve seances, some of long continuance, and during which, with one exception, I have had prompt and true answers so far as the past and, present, and very rational replies as to the future, but these last have to be tested by time. The exception was my own afterward-discovered error.

“In mixed societies, with conflicting minds, I have seen very confused answers given, but I believe, in all these cases, the errors have arisen from the state of mind of the inquirer.”⁴⁰



What is not so well known is that almost six years previously in 1847, Robert Owen had met Andrew Jackson Davis,⁴¹ a year prior to the events at Hydesville on March 31st 1848. At that 1847 meeting, Owen gave Davis six principles. Davis, known to his friends as Jackson, recorded the event in his notes/diary, which were published in “Memoranda of Persons, Places, and Events; Embracing Authentic Facts, Visions, Impressions, Discoveries, in Magnetism, Clairvoyance, Spiritualism also Quotations from the opposition,” to give it its full title, in 1868.

³⁹._Taken from Owen’s address on “Spiritual Manifestation” on Friday July 27th 1855, at the Literary Institute, Fitzroy Square, London see page 95 of this issue.

⁴⁰._Taken from: The Telegraph Papers Vol. 1. 1853 edited by S. B. Brittan, page 115. For more on Hayden’s visit and Robert Owen – see Psypioneer Volume 2. No 10. October 2006:—*Mrs. Hayden’s visit to England in 1852-3.*

⁴¹._In this same year Davis published “The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations and A Voice to Mankind.” Biographical accounts of Davis normally take this work to be the first account of Davis’s clairvoyant abilities. However, the first accounts of a series of lectures by Davis were published in New York by the Rev. Gibson Smith in 1845 titled “Lectures on Clairmativeness: or, Human Magnetism.” Davis is referred to as Jackson Davis; these are reprinted, over several issues, the lectures verbatim from the original pamphlet; see Psypioneer starting in Volume 2. No 1. January 2006.

Entry 31. ROBERT OWEN, THE REFORMER. New York November 9th 1847 page 79-81 records:

An impression came through the air this morning from a high-minded philanthropist, long a resident of the Second Sphere, to the effect that Robert Owen is destined to hold "open intercourse" with the benevolent of the higher world. I hope this prophecy will be fulfilled. Last spring I chanced to see Mr. Owen, and was strongly attracted to his spirit. He was in excellent health and spirits, rode all night on the way from Washington to Albany without minding it, and though over seventy years of age, was perfectly sanguine in his expectation of witnessing a complete social transformation before his lamp of life burns out.

Though I cannot see through his spectacles yet I deeply respect and honor him, and everyone who devotes his life to the unselfish promotion of what he deems the highest good of mankind. There was a pure radiance on his face, and a singular glory in the atmosphere over his head when he said:—

It is now my intention—an intention created for me by the great Creating Power of the Universe—to leave this new true religion as a legacy for the human race, through all succeeding generations.

Its principles are the unchanging laws of God; easy—when the mind shall be freed from local ignorances—for all to understand.

Its practices will be highly beneficial for all of the family of man.

The few and, simple, yet beautiful laws of God, on which this new religion is based, are: 1st. That the moving power of nature, the spirit of the universe, God—or by whatever other name this incomprehensible creative essence may be called, has created the general qualities of humanity, and made one man to differ from another by giving, to each his own peculiar compound of these human qualities.

2d. That this ever-acting spirit of the universe so forms all men that they are compelled to believe or disbelieve, not by their own will, but according to the strongest evidence at the time made upon their minds; and to feel, not as they may desire, but in accordance with the instincts also thus forced upon them by this universal creating power.

3d. That man is thus made to be what he is without his knowledge, or possibility of merit or demerit on his part, and that, as the created, he must have power only to think and act as it has been given to him.

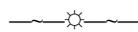
4th. Therefore, whatever may be man's individual qualities; whatever may be his thoughts or his actions; they all, directly or indirectly, emanate from, God; from the unknown creative power of the universe.

5th. That this power, and not that man, the created, is alone the author of whatever is done upon the earth and throughout the universe. It is, therefore, the essence of ignorant presumption for any man to pretend that he knows any thing of the will or intentions of this power, or to speak and write of it, as do the parrot-taught-

unthinking in all countries. The will or intentions of this unknown power may be conjectured by man, from feeling, seeing, and considering the effects of creation as they exist within himself, and the circumstances around him; but, until more facts shall be discovered, these imaginations will be vague and most uncertain.

6th. That these principles, fully comprehended, are abundantly sufficient to direct all men to wisdom, goodness, and happiness. The practices of this new religion will be the reverse of that which has so far prevailed over the world, and made it a chaotic pandemonium.

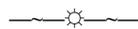
Last summer I saw in a vision, and wrote out a chart of “The History and Destiny of the Race.”⁴² The leading idea makes me think that Robert Owen will not realize his beautiful and desirable hopes in this world.



Owen in his later years had no residence of his own but a fund had been set aside by his sons. It appears that for some time he resided at Cox’s Hotel in Jermyn St, (Mayfair) London. On April 9th 1855, Daniel Home came to stay at Cox’s Hotel, where he began his British career, and more than likely it is here Robert Owen would chance to meet one of the finest mediums of the nineteenth century. The meeting of Owen and Home would have had mutual advantages: Owen would benefit from Home’s mediumship and Home, being new to England, would no doubt have benefited from Owen’s influential friends and presumably introductions, like Owen’s old friend, the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Henry Brougham.

In 1854, Owen published in London “The Future of the Human Race; or A Great, Glorious, and Peaceful Revolution, near at hand, to be effected Through the Agency of Departed Spirits of Good and Superior Men and Women,” containing 55 pages. Owen applies his principles to the “spiritual manifestations” as commonly referred to; the term Modern Spiritualism, would not surface until around 1850. He recounts his experiences with mediums after Hayden from October to early January 1854, including Eliza Finch, a rapping medium like Hayden, Thomas Slater, a writing medium, and a ten year old boy Daniel Offord, known as Dan. With some of these séances taking place at his lodgings at Cox’s Hotel, communicators included HRH the Duke of Kent, President Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Shelley and Grace Fletcher; apart from Franklin, Owen knew them in life.

Later, on Friday July 27th 1855, Owen gave an address on “Spiritual Manifestation” at the Literary Institute, Fitzroy Square, London. After he had read his address, he talked on his introduction into Spiritualism with Mrs Hayden in March 1853 and his early experiences with Daniel D. Home. A 15-page pamphlet was published and sold for 3d. The two aforementioned pamphlets are freely available in pdf, please contact the editor.



⁴².-See full description in the “Magic Staff” – AJD reference.

Robert Owen died on November 17th 1858 in a hotel room at Newtown with his son Robert by his side; shortly before his death he said:

“Relief has come”

Robert Owen would soon communicate to his old friends at Cox’s Hotel, as recorded in “Incidents in my Life,” by Daniel D. Home, first published in 1863.⁴³ In chapter X., Home refers to a séance held at William Cox’s Hampshire residence:



Here occurred some curious phenomena which are described in a letter of my friend, Mr. Cox, of Jermyn Street:—

“The late Robert Owen, a short time previous to his passing from earth, had given me a writing desk which had belonged to his wife, and which contained amongst other things a box of paints. As I had other things of his as remembrances, I felt it more just after his departure, that some member of his family should possess the desk, which had belonged to their mother; and I therefore gave it to his son, Mr. Robert Dale Owen, in order that he might take it with him to America. I felt, however, at the time an almost irresistible impulse to retain the desk, but the feeling of right overcame it.

The fact had almost escaped my memory, when at nearly the first séance I had with Mr. Home after his return from Russia, the spirit of my old and valued friend, Mr. Owen, came and said, ‘You must tell Robert to return you that writing desk; and why did you give it to him, for I did all I could to impress you not to part with it.’ I wrote this to Mr. Robert Dale Owen, and in due time the desk was returned to me. We were then at my house in the country, and Mr. and Mrs. Home came to spend a short time with us. My little boy was then, and had been for some time previously, indisposed, and medical advice had been called in, but to little purpose. The spirits had previously prescribed for him, and now they said they would magnetize some pure spring water, which would benefit him.

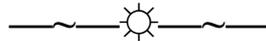
For this purpose a decanter was procured, and placed on the middle of the table at which we were sitting. I placed it there myself, and had taken every precaution that no one should touch it. The water in the decanter became agitated after a few moments without any visible cause, and a powerful aroma came from the bottle. We tasted the water, and found it was strongly impregnated with something which gave it a decided flavour, but what it was we knew not: it was not like anything we had tasted before. Mr. Home was then thrown into the trance state, and taking the

⁴³—*Incidents in My Life* – First Series 1863, *Incidents in My Life* – Second Series 1872, *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism* – 1877 are available in one volume. Volume II – *D. D. Home: His life and Mission* – 1888, and *The Gift of D. D. Home* – 1890. Available at the Arthur Findlay College book shop, or on line: SNUi—<http://www.snui.org/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=1>

decanter in his right hand, he walked a few feet from the table, holding it in full view all the time, when, to my astonishment, I saw another decanter, apparently precisely similar to the other, in his left hand. Thus, in each of his hands I saw a decanter; and so real was the second, that I could not have told which of them was the material one. Even if a trick had been intended, here was no opportunity for it, and as the decanter was a large one, another one could not have been concealed up Mr. Home's coat-sleeve, or about his person.

A little later, Mr. Owen's spirit came and desired his wife's writing desk to be placed on the table; and now the room was darkened to see if we could distinguish spirit lights, which were then seen by three of us. Presently we heard the writing desk opened, and a hand was placed in mine, another in my wife's, and a third in Mr. Home's, each hand differing in size from the others. The alphabet was called for, and 'I fear I may have spoilt your Claude,' was spelt out. We could not understand this; but when the lamp was relighted, we found that some paint had been taken from the box from inside the desk, and had been freely used on one of my paintings which hung several feet from where we were sitting.

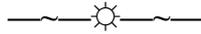
“WM. Cox.”



Emma Hardinge Britten mostly claimed her Principles were “given by the Spirits,” and it is believed Robert Owen was one of Emma's inspirers.

Her Principles would later be modified, becoming an integral part of the Constitution of the SNU, and be known as the Seven Principles.

EARLY INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALISM



The first International Congress I can reference was the Barcelona Congress; this is reported in *Light*, issue November 10th 1888, page 552. It appears there was an earlier Congress in Madrid in the early 1880s. Numerous other Congresses would follow, for example the ‘Spiritist and Spiritualist International Congress’ in Paris, which took place on September 9th 1889, again reported in *Light*. The well-known Spiritualist, Thomas Everitt, was the delegate for the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), then still under the presidency of William Stainton Moses. Everitt was one of the Congress Vice-Presidents, and in his address he spoke on the various phases of phenomena with which he was acquainted through the famed physical mediumship of his wife. Numerous World Congresses continued, with some positive attempt to form an International Union or Federation, but were interrupted by WWI.

Post-WWI, the Spiritualists’ National Union significantly helped in the formation of the International Spiritualist Federation in 1922-23. From this time the Federation would continue in its strength, only again to be halted by WWII. During this period the Federation’s headquarters were at ‘*Maison des Spirites*’, *la rue Copernic*, Paris, through the generosity of Jean Meyer (died 1931). The war would halt all activity; it appears its headquarters was completely destroyed in the siege of Paris in 1940, including all the Federation records up until this period; the ISF never secured another headquarters of its own. It would not be until 1947 that a new start and a complete re-organisation began in the re-establishing of the Federation. At the SNU AGM in Bournemouth delegates “were to be invited by the S.N.U. in the hope of forming a new International Federation.” Former SNU President Ernest Keeling was the Acting President of the ISF.

It is interesting to note a year later, in the relaunch of the International Spiritualist Federation, that Arthur Findlay and Stansted Hall would be involved. The full text below is taken from the forty-sixth SNU AGM, held in Harrogate in 1948 (the Centenary Year of Modern Spiritualism), Annual Report, page 15:

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

At the International Week held at Bournemouth in July 1947 the initial steps were taken for the revival of an International Spiritualist Federation. It was agreed to hold an International Congress from the 4th to the 10th September 1948 as part of the Centenary Year Celebrations. The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C., has been booked for the week and invitations have been sent out to 25 countries. The Psychic Press in these countries has been notified. Specialist sections will be meeting, both in the mornings and afternoons, for “Psychic Science” and “Spiritual Philosophy.” The evenings will be given over to a united session in the large hall. Suggestions for guiding the business of the Congress will be submitted by the Organising Committee, together with a tentative Constitution and proposals for the resumption of International activities.

Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, M.B.E., will preside at the opening reception on Saturday, 4th September, to welcome the delegates. A season ticket for all meetings at 10/- will be available. During the Congress a visit will be paid to Stansted Hall, Essex, by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Findlay. It has been agreed to assist delegates who are not able to meet their own expenses in this Country, owing to currency restrictions. Donations have already been received for this purpose but more will be very welcome, as well as

practical offers of hospitality. Churches are invited to undertake responsibility for giving hospitality to at least one delegate.

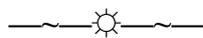
Early Presidents of International Spiritualism were SNU Presidents George Berry (first President), Ernest Oaten and John McIndoe.

Soon after, the International Spiritualist Federation was again active under the presidency of Ernest Keeling, shortly after its quarterly journal, 'Yours Fraternally', first came into being, initially as a duplicated newsletter, with the first printed copy (No. 7, Autumn) in 1950.

Photographs of the International Spiritualist Federation Congresses in the 1970s can be viewed in the Museum at the Arthur Findlay College; some familiar faces can be noted in some of the photographs, for example the veteran medium Bertha Harris, healer Harry Edwards and Gordon Higginson, and former ISF Presidents Robin Stevens¹⁰ and Connie Ransom.¹¹

In the early 1970s the ISF started to hold its 'Fraternal Week' at the Arthur Findlay College, organised for many years by Connie, and this continued until around 2003. Robin Stevens was the ISF President at the time of his death in June 1993 at only 51 years of age. Robin worked on the various courses at the Arthur Findlay College for over two decades; he was President of the West London District Council.

It should be noted that the Spiritualists' National Union is no longer connected with the ISF.



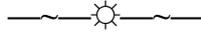
Photograph of Connie and Robin taken in Sweden 1984

¹⁰ Robin Stevens, ISF President 1987-1993.

¹¹ Connie Ransom, ISF President 1984-1987.

During the International Spiritualist Congress (sixth) held in Glasgow on 3rd-10th September 1937 under the presidency of John McIndoe (Lady Conan Doyle, Hon. President), papers were given by some well-known mediums on 'The Mediumistic Trance'; this included Helen Hughes, who was featured in the last issue of 'Pioneer'.

THE MEDIUMISTIC TRANCE



SEVERAL well-known Mediums presented papers at the International Congress at Glasgow in which they describe their sensations and reactions before, during, and after trance.¹²

Mrs. Osborne Leonard writes: "I was sometimes aware of unseen forces around me, and occasionally I would hear a name, which afterwards would prove to be that of the Spirit communicator who sent messages in the sitting, though the sitter might be (in such case always was) an anonymous one. During the trance state I have never been conscious of any reaction, but immediately afterwards I have sometimes felt an intense desire to fall into a normal sleep at once, and whenever I have been able to do this quickly it has proved to be very helpful and refreshing. At other times I have felt that nothing could make me sleep, and have wanted to be active in the open air—walk, or do some gardening. This is exceptional, though, and is more like an overtired restlessness than normal strength or vitality.

"Always, under any and every condition of sitting, I know that I shall only get back to the normal, both physically and mentally, by being alone. If circumstances permit, I always arrange to undertake some other work or recreation by myself. This has been at the request of my Guides, and seems to help them to 'put the power back' (whatever that may mean or entail) from day to day, and I know it will not fail me if I obey their instructions and co-operate with them whole-heartedly."

Mrs. Helen Hughes writes: "My own mediumship includes clairvoyance, clairaudience, and trance. In clairvoyance I see a spirit-form as naturally as if I were using the physical eye. I am not aware of any abnormal sensation until I begin to respond to the feelings or characteristics of the spirit that appears to me. These sensations may be of happiness or sorrow, anxiety or peace, and sometimes I find myself responding to the last sensations the spirit experienced before leaving the physical body.

"It appears that by coming into contact with the earth-atmosphere there is an association of the old ideas and impressions, causing the last earth experiences of the spirit to recur temporarily. But all these feelings seem to be under the control of my will. That is, I can 'close up' or 'open out' at will. If a sensation is too unpleasant I can 'switch it off.' I can often get a clear understanding of the mission and message of the spirit by interpreting these sensations. But it is on my gift of clairaudience that I most depend in my demonstration of survival. In clairaudience I hear quite naturally, as though I were using the normal ear. The voices sound quite normal. I can tell if it is the voice of a man, woman, or child, or if it is a loud voice or a quiet one. Even the characteristics of intonation and modulation are quite noticeable.

¹² Taken from *Light*, September 9th 1937, page 566.

“Passing under control I would liken to falling asleep. When seeking control, I relax physically and mentally, and am aware of a gradual drugging of my consciousness, which reminds me of the sensations accompanying chloroform inhalation. During control I am completely unconscious, and am dependent on the testimony of my friends for knowledge of the phenomena that occur. When controlled, my voice, gestures, and pose of body alter, and take on the characteristics of the controlling entity.

“When demonstrating in public I do not go into trance. I depend upon my normal faculties of clairaudience and clairvoyance. I appear to be doing everything of my own volition, yet I am aware of the stimulating action of psychic forces on my nerve-centres, which I might be justified in describing as a modified form of control.”

Mrs. Edith M. Thompson said: “My entry into trance is invariably both easy and swift. My normal consciousness seems enlarged. I feel free and light, as though functioning in space, unaware of my body. Usually I hear remarks by my controls—instructions from the chief control, replies from the others. This transition period is very brief. Gradually all consciousness disappears and I recollect nothing more until again I hear the words of the controls as I leave trance.

“Thereafter my mind is confused for a few seconds. My memory does not appear to function during a period lasting for anything up to an hour after trance. While able to understand and discuss any matter during that time, I am unable to recall it later. After trance I experience a feeling of exhilaration which, at the end of perhaps an hour, suddenly disappears, leaving me exhausted. Any pain from which I am myself suffering vanishes during trance, but returns when exhilaration ceases.

“I have no sense of the passage of time during trance, except after a particularly long circle, when exhaustion tells me it has been longer than usual. I have tried, by willing it beforehand, to limit the time of a circle, but always without success.

“I find that trance in too strong a light causes an ache in the centre of the forehead. I am invariably thirsty after trance, although in the early stages of my development it was hunger I experienced.

“Trance for platform work seems to fall into a slightly different category. Frequently I am aware of what is being said, yet speech is quite automatic. I can listen critically yet can in no way interfere with what is said. This consciousness sometimes alternates with periods of complete unconsciousness, the changes being not sudden but gradual, resembling the ebb and flow of a tide. This experience of hearing what is said is commonest while demonstrating, but occasionally occurs during trance addresses.

“Conditions vary with the different controls who are working. For example, during the day on which I am going to give a trance address one control will give me no idea of what he intends to speak on, while another allows ideas to penetrate, although in chaotic form.”

Mrs. Annie Brittain in the course of her paper, said: “During my professional career I have been entranced innumerable times by two controls—Wild Rose, a Hindu girl, and Belle, a Cingalese. The sensations felt whilst being entranced by these spirit guides are totally different from when strangers take control. With the former (the guides) the sensation begins



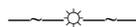
with a blending of my personality and theirs. For instance—I nearly always begin to give a psychic reading to a sitter in the normal state.

Should Belle decide to control, the first condition I notice is a clearer perception of the psychic surroundings of the sitter, followed by a tightening of the muscles of the forehead. There is a deeper state of concentration and the physical surroundings begin to disappear. I am still conscious of the presence of the sitter, but see and feel only the psychic conditions. Then comes a slight twitching or jerk, and I have lost consciousness and the spirit control has taken charge of the reading.

“When entranced by the latter (the stranger), I begin to feel that I am not myself; my own personal feelings are submerged or overshadowed. My mannerisms change, I perhaps change my position, crossing my legs in a way not natural to myself. It seems as if the muscular system is affected first, then I have a desire to talk about things unknown to

myself and I feel as if I am gradually being overwhelmed and crowded into a small space and my mind-activity imprisoned. A feeling of impotence steals over me, the command of my body has gone, a wave of trembling passes through my nervous system over which I have no control, and the little spark of consciousness which remains to me flickers out, and all knowledge of the physical body and the sitter is lost until I return.

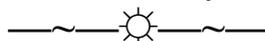
“The sensations are not always the same, they seem to vary with different controlling entities.”



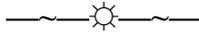
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote of Annie Brittain in his 1926 two-volume ‘The History of Spiritualism’, Vol. II, pages 198-199 (Psychic Press Ltd 1989 reprint):

The author was in the habit of sending mourners to this medium during the wartime, and filed the letters in which they narrated their experience. The result is a very remarkable one. Out of the first hundred cases eighty were quite successful in establishing touch with the object of their inquiry. In some cases the result was overpoweringly evidential, and the amount of comfort given to the inquirers can hardly be exaggerated. The revulsion of feeling when the mourner suddenly finds that death is not silent, but that a still small voice, speaking in very happy accents, can still come back is an overpowering one. One lady wrote that she had fully determined to take her own life, so bleak and empty was existence, but that she left Mrs. Brittain’s parlour with renewed hope in her heart.

When one hears that such a medium has been dragged up to a police-court, sworn down by ignorant policemen, and condemned by a still more ignorant magistrate, one feels that one is indeed living in the dark ages of the world’s history.



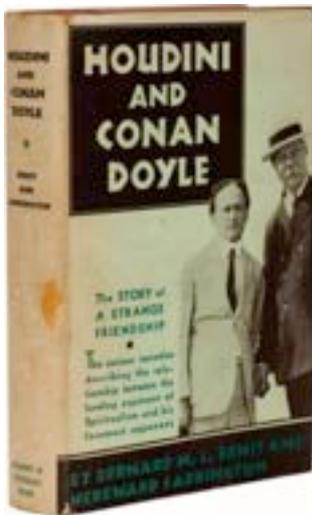
Houdini & Conan Doyle



In the November 2015 issue of “Pioneer” it published “Lady Doyle Was The Family Medium”. It would be Sir Arthur’s wife’s mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle.

Sir Arthur himself never gave up hope for a renewal of their friendship even if he had to wait until the next world:

*“I write this in bed, as I have broken down badly
and have developed angina pectoris.
So there is just a chance that I may talk it all over
with Houdini himself before very long . . .”*



Recently their relationship has been the subject of a ten-part British-Canadian television drama series based on the friendship of “Houdini & Doyle”.

A review published in “Light”, February 3rd 1933, written by George Henderson Lethem,⁷ editor of “Light” from 1931 to 1941, gives an account of the breakdown of their friendship from the 1932 book, *Houdini and Conan Doyle*, co-written by the well-known psychical researcher, Hereward Carrington, and Bernard Ernst, an amateur magician and a lawyer. After Houdini’s death on October 31st 1926, Ernst succeeded him as President of the Society of American Magicians:

HOUDINI & CONAN DOYLE

STORY OF STRANGE FRIENDSHIP AND AN HISTORIC QUARREL

“THIS is the story of one of the strangest friendships in history. It is that between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: physician, author, creator of the world-famous Sherlock Holmes—and Harry Houdini, master magician, escape artist, gaol-breaker, mystifier-extraordinary.”

With these words, Messrs. Bernard M. L. Ernst and Hereward Carrington begin the first chapter of the book *Houdini and Conan Doyle* (Hutchinson 12/6), of which they are the joint authors; and when the reader has finished the book—which he is likely to do as nearly as possible at one sitting—he will agree with them.

⁷ It is noteworthy to mention that George Lethem for a considerable period was the proofreader for the Union’s *first* journal, “The National Spiritualist”, 1924-1932; this was under the editorship of George Berry. See the first issue of “Pioneer” for more information.

Curiously enough, the point of attraction for both men was a subject on which they could not agree—namely, Spiritualism. Sir Arthur was convinced beyond doubt that Spiritualism is true; Houdini said he wanted to believe but could not find proof. For years this position was maintained; many visits were exchanged, and Houdini saw Medium after Medium on Sir Arthur's recommendation, seeking always for a message from his mother—his "sainted mother" he usually called her—a message which, as was afterwards divulged, he hoped would contain the word "Forgive." The message never came in the form he expected, and all other forms he rejected; until, in his closing years, he entered upon an anti-spiritualistic campaign that outraged Sir Arthur's feelings and brought the strange intimacy to an abrupt end.



It was a message through the mediumship of Lady Conan Doyle, purporting to be from Houdini's mother, that precipitated the quarrel. Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle were in the midst of a lecturing tour in America and invited Houdini to visit them at Atlantic City. He did so, and on June 17th, 1922, Lady Doyle gave Houdini a sitting [for automatic writing] in which messages were obtained claiming to come from his deceased, or as he would say, his "sainted mother," which at first Houdini appeared to accept as genuine. Describing the sitting in *Our American Adventure*, Sir Arthur wrote: —

"The reason why I refer to my wife's remarkable power, which only came by slow development, is that my friend, Mr. Houdini, the greatest of magicians, sat with us one afternoon, and received a fifteen-page letter from his mother which made him very grave and thoughtful, though he is a most difficult man to convince . . . We asked him to think a question in silence, and a correct name came instantly through my wife's hand. But then occurred the most marvellous thing of all. Houdini sat playing with the pencil, when his hand was suddenly moved and he wrote the name 'Powell.' Now, Dr. Ellis Powell, my dear fighting partner in Spiritualism, had just died in England . . . I was the man he was most likely to signal to, and here was his name coming through the hand of Houdini . . . He muttered something about knowing a man named Powell down in Texas, though he failed to invent any reason why that particular man should come back at that particular moment. Then, gathering up the paper, he hurried from the room."

Houdini's account of the sitting was very different. The message purporting to be from his mother, he said, began as follows: "Oh, my darling, thank God, thank God, at last I'm through—I've tried oh so often—now I am happy." Houdini's comment on this, in a marginal note, was: "Message written by Lady Doyle claiming the spirit of my dear mother had control of her hand—my sainted mother could not write English and spoke broken English."

Regarding the writing of the name “Powell,” Houdini asserted that it was that of Powell, the magician, of whom he was thinking, and that he wrote it of his own volition and in full consciousness.

“Nothing further,” says our joint authors, “seems to have passed between the two men regarding the incident until the following November, when Houdini published an article in one of the New York papers, violently attacking the subject, in which he mentioned the Doyle sitting in rather uncomplimentary terms.” To this, Sir Arthur replied in the following letter (dated November 19th, 1922):

“My dear Houdini: They sent me the *New York Sun* with your article and no doubt wanted me to answer it, but I have no fancy for sparring with a friend in public, so I took no notice. But, none the less, I felt rather sore about it. You have all the right in the world to hold your own opinion, but when you say that you have had no evidence of survival, you say what I cannot reconcile with what I saw with my own eyes. I know by many examples the purity of my wife’s mediumship, and I saw what you got and what the effect was upon you at the time. You know also that you yourself at once wrote down with your own hand the name of Powell, the one man who might be expected to communicate with me . . . I don’t propose to discuss this subject any more with you, for I consider that you have had your proofs and that the responsibility of accepting or rejecting is with you. And it is a very lasting responsibility. However, I leave it at that, for I have done my best to give you truth.”

THE BREACH WIDENS

To this letter, Houdini wrote re-stating his version of what he believed happened at the sitting and concluded by saying:

“I trust my clearing up the seance from my point of view is satisfactory, and that you do not harbour any ill-feeling, because I hold both Lady Doyle and yourself in the highest esteem. I know you treat this as a religion, but personally I cannot do so, for, up to the present time, and with all my experiences, I have never seen or heard anything that could really convert me. Trusting you will accept my letter in the same honest good faith and feeling as that in which it was written.”

The correspondence between Sir Arthur and Houdini continued at intervals, but their relations became more and more strained, owing to Houdini’s public attacks on Spiritualism and criticisms of Sir Arthur. Eventually (May 24, 1923), from Los Angeles, Sir Arthur wrote:

“Dear Houdini: I must really ask you to deny over your signature three injurious statements which you have made, none of which have the slightest truth in them—so that this denial may be published in the Oakland or any other paper which has contained such statements . . . I am very sorry this breach has come, as we have felt very friendly towards Mrs. Houdini and yourself. But, ‘friendly is as friendly does,’ and this is not friendly, but, on the contrary, it is outrageous to make such statements with no atom of truth in them. I do not wish to argue the point, but simply that you accept unreservedly my assurance that all three statements are false and that you contradict them.”

To this appeal, Houdini apparently did not respond, but, on the contrary, intensified his anti-spiritualist campaign. “Evidently,” says our authors, “Houdini’s violent

campaign had decided Sir Arthur that further controversy was useless,” and in replying to some request by Houdini for information of one kind or another, Sir Arthur (on February 26th, 1924) replied:

“Dear Houdini: I am answering you by the first post. I could not make myself clear in a cable. You probably want those extracts in order to twist them in some way against me or my cause, but what I say I say, and I do not alter. All the world can quote. I read an interview you gave some American paper the other day, in which you said my wife gave you nothing striking when she wrote for you. When you met us, three days after the writing, in New York, you said: ‘I have been walking on air ever since,’ or words to that effect. I wonder how you reconcile your various utterances? I observe that in your letter you put down my starting my world-mission ‘in a crisis of emotion.’ I started in 1916. My son died in 1918. My only emotion was impersonal and the reflection of a world in agony.”

“And so ended this historic correspondence,” we read, “and with it ended one of the most remarkable friendships in history. Henceforth Doyle and Houdini were destined to travel their respective paths alone, and develop their rival propaganda in their own way. Sir Arthur threw himself more vigorously than ever into the Spiritualistic cause, while Houdini similarly attacked it more fiercely than ever. For nearly two years longer Houdini was destined to carry on his activities, when that great avenger, Death, claimed him in the heyday of his energetic campaign. Not long afterwards he was followed into the Great Beyond by Sir Arthur himself, who fully anticipated a renewal of their friendship in the next world, and spoke of it in one of his subsequent letters.”

“ MANLY WORDS FROM A FINE BRAVE SOUL”

The letter referred to was written to Mr. Ernst and reads as follows:

“I write this in bed, as I have broken down badly and have developed angina pectoris. So there is just a chance that I may talk it all over with Houdini himself before very long. I view the prospect with perfect equanimity. That is one thing that psychic knowledge does. It removes all fear of the future.”

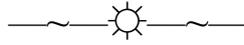
“Manly words from a fine brave soul,” is the comment of our authors.

It is well known that Sir Arthur believed that Houdini was himself a Medium and that he accomplished some of his more difficult tricks by drawing on psychic power. This Houdini denied; but Messrs. Ernst and Carrington—themselves magicians—suggest that there is at least a possibility that Sir Arthur was right. Of one slate-writing trick performed in private with Sir Arthur as one of the mystified participators, the authors say:

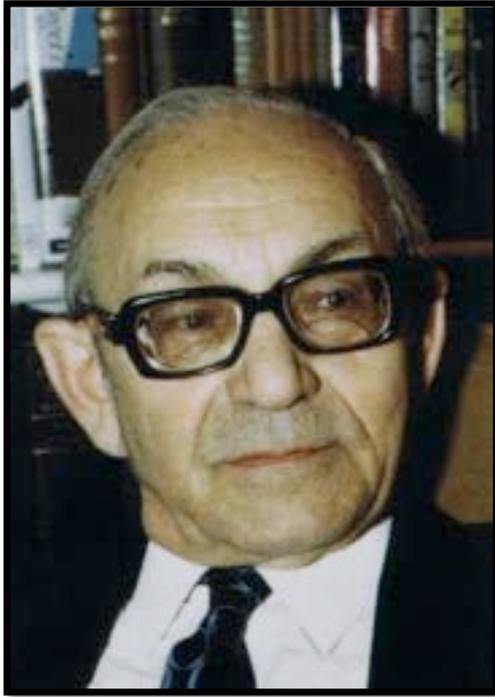
“Bearing in mind all the details of the illusion, it seems indeed incredible that it could have been accomplished by means of simple trickery . . . There are many, doubtless, who will feel as Sir Arthur felt.”

The book is a large one, covering much ground and many topics, and from beginning to end it is intensely interesting. Strangely enough, in giving an indication of Houdini’s showmanship, and the exciting scenes that he occasionally went through, the authors quote, in the first chapter, a long description of a tumultuous “escape” scene in the

Palace Theatre, Blackburn (October, 1902), written by myself for the *Daily Star*, Blackburn, with which I was at that time connected.



Harry Houdini greeting Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mrs Doyle



Maurice Barbanell has already featured in “Pioneer”, “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”, published in Volume 2, No. 6, November 2015. Below is taken from the “Two Worlds”, June 28th 1958, under the editorship of Barbanell. The ‘witness box’ public meetings held at the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB), would bring out frank replies to probing questions. Barbanell was no exception in some of his controversial replies to his questioners; some of the subject matter leads us to the following article on the independent direct voice.

Psychic editor goes into the “witness box”

“TWO WORLDS” REPORTER

IF YOU SEE MY EDITOR, MAURICE BARBANELL, TRYING TO FLY AN AEROPLANE, BAKE A CAKE, SCORE A GOAL, BUILD A HOUSE, CAN SARDINES, KNIT A CARDIGAN, CHANGE A BABY’S NAPKIN, OR SELL INSURANCE, DON’T SAY YOU HAVEN’T ASKED FOR IT.

“It is so very strange,” he said last week, at Marylebone Spiritualist Association, “that everyone knows better than the Editor how to produce a newspaper. Yet no one tells a plumber how to plumb.”

Barbanell was the third well-known Spiritualist to be put “In the Witness Box” at the MSA, a new idea for public meetings. Prosecuting counsel” Eric Stuart and members of the audience hurled questions at the “witness,” who is presumed to be under oath to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Do we exaggerate?

Like Harry Edwards, the first witness. Barbanell was asked, “Don’t you think the psychic Press over – emphasises and sometimes exaggerates accounts of spirit healing?”

“If you saw the stuff *we throw out*,” replied Barbanell, “ you would realise that we take the greatest possible care to check the accuracy of reports which we publish.”

Only this week a healer wrote about two patients he had cured. We didn’t print his account, said Barbanell. We wrote to the patients instead. By the time they answered the story might have lost its topicality. But we could not be too sure.

“Running a newspaper,” he said, “is a highly skilled professional job that calls for a number of qualities, including the ability to make quick decisions.”

Day of decision

It is the day before you go to press. An interesting and seemingly factual account of spirit healing comes in. Do you print it? Who is the medium? Is he capable of performing such healing? Who is the correspondent? Can you trust him‘?

All these questions, and sometimes many more, had to be answered before you decided whether to print the story.

Some people said there was too much philosophy in the paper; others said there was not enough. Some said there was not enough about psychic phenomena, others that there was too much. And so it went on. “They usually cancel one another out with their suggestions,” smiled Barbanell.

“I will let you into a secret,” he said. “We print what interests us in the office. If we’re lucky it will interest readers.”

Spirit master

Asked what he considered to be this most outstanding proof of Survival, he answered: “I would say that Estelle Roberts’ direct-voice seances produced almost at every session what I regard as impeccable evidence.

“Red Cloud, her guide, was a master at presenting proof. He would not allow a communicator to return until he had rehearsed him and he knew he would provide evidence of his identity.”

Barbanell told a remarkable story when asked, “How would you prove guides are not a part of your subconscious self?” He referred to the early days of his trance mediumship when the fiancée who is now his wife doubted whether Silver Birch, the guide who has since become world-famous, was really a separate entity.

To settle the matter, Silver Birch, through the entranced Barbanell, said: “I will prove my separate existence by coming to you at Red Cloud’s next voice seance and by speaking these words to you . . .” The guide used a phrase, one of a very intimate nature.

Promise fulfilled

Though not a word was said about this to Estelle Roberts, Silver Birch manifested at the next voice seance and uttered the promised phrase. There were no more doubts after that.

Barbanell’s answer to a question on reincarnation aroused controversy. He declared, unequivocally: “I do not believe in a universal reincarnation. In a few cases some people voluntarily come back to perform certain important tasks.

“I believe, for instance, that Winston Churchill was reborn to save the world in its great crisis.”

The theory that everyone kept returning to earth was, he thought retrogressive.

Reincarnation propounded as many problems as it attempted to solve.

Foolish optimists

He was asked how he would explain life's inequalities and injustices if not by reincarnation. "Anyone," said Barbanell, "who expects fairness or justice in this world is a foolish optimist.

"I don't see," he added, "that physical difficulties can be equated with spiritual growth."

Should we believe everything spirit communicators, especially guides, tell us?

"I have been a Spiritualist and a trance medium for 37 years," said Barbanell. "I still would not accept anything from the Other Side that did not pass the bar of my reason. *I cannot accept blind credulity in Spiritualism anymore than I can outside it.*"

Another questioner wanted to know why physical mediumship was so rare today. Barbanell replied that he believed there was an overall plan conceived by wise beings in the Beyond who direct the welfare of Spiritualism as well as that of the whole of humanity.

"I believe physical phenomena were introduced as part of that plan," he added, "to combat the gross materialism prevalent in the Victorian era when, with the advance of science, religion was retreating and losing every battle.

Proof for sick world

"It is not necessary to repeat that demonstration year after year," he declared. "The human race is gradually evolving to a slightly higher mental field. Hence, the rise of spirit healing.

"It has come to the fore in a sick world as a supreme demonstration of the evidence of a spiritual power which can heal when all physical help has failed."

Here are further Barbanellisms that aroused argument:

"I don't believe any person is cured until he is spiritually ready to be cured."

"The body is a self-healing organism. It is our stupid way of living that blocks the channel of healing."

"There is no proof of Survival for any individual until his soul is awakened."

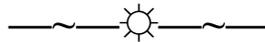
"All our problems would be solved," he ended, "if Spiritualists brought into their daily lives the *implications* of Spiritualism. Our great failure is that we have the knowledge but do not apply it.

Blame and praise

"My criticism of the Spiritualist movement is that despite our tremendous truths there are still bigotry, vanity, self-importance and prejudice in our ranks.

"On the other hand, there are, up and down the country, many Spiritualists who give service, without seeking the limelight. You seldom hear of them, but their little labours may be deemed of greater value when they pass on than many of the bigger things of which we are so proud.

“I would sum up by quoting the immortal words of Emma Hardinge Britten, ‘*Spiritualism is divine, Spiritualists are human.*’ ”



Looking at the Independent Direct Voice

In direct voice, spirits can objectively talk with a suitably developed medium independently of the medium, rather than through a medium in a trance state. An ectoplasmic larynx is created and mostly used in conjunction with a trumpet. However, in most cases the spirit voice is not readily recognised by friends and family. As the voice box is manufactured, synthetic, the ectoplasm will retain some of the characteristics of the medium. However, the communicators will generally hold their old mannerisms, style of language, etc. as when they were living in the physical world to prove their identity. This form of phenomenon can be traced back to the very early days of Spiritualism in America.

Without doubt this phenomenon is as compelling as it is rare today. It started Arthur Findlay on his journey into psychical research in around 1918 with the direct-voice medium, John Sloan.⁶ In more recent years Leslie Flint was the most well-known independent direct-voice medium, with many of his communications recorded.

Flint was able to demonstrate the direct voice while he was fully conscious, seldom going into a trance state. Flint did not speak in trance; he worked in total darkness and, unlike most mediums, he did not use a trumpet or any other physical devices to help produce the spirit voices. His ectoplasmic larynx was formed on his left side and located some two feet away from the medium, where the spirit voices would speak into the manufactured replica voice box. The communicating spirit would concentrate its thoughts into the ectoplasmic voice box by lowering its frequency/vibration to produce objective speech.

Estelle Roberts is generally remembered as an outstanding mental medium, filling large halls, including the Albert Hall, on numerous occasions. Her main control/guide was Red Cloud, who would entrance Estelle and also produce the independent direct voice. In the article below, which was published in “*Psychic News*”, July 22nd 1944, the paper’s founding editor, Maurice Barbanell, questioned Red Cloud as to how the direct voice was produced. We can note from the brief description I have given of Leslie Flint’s mediumship that Estelle Roberts/Red Cloud’s production of the independent direct voice takes a different avenue of production.

Barbanell started the article with these words:

Psychic News has published several stories of the remarkable evidence for Survival obtained at Estelle Roberts’s voice seances. Red Cloud, assisted by four war victims [see footnote 7], has succeeded in giving proofs that are far more remarkable than anything previously recorded at direct-voice sittings. I thought, therefore, a statement by this guide on what happens behind the scenes at voice seances would prove of great interest. When I approached Red Cloud he said it would be difficult to convey to us happenings in a spirit world of different dimensions, but he would do his best.

⁶ See *Psypioneer*, Volume 8, No. 12, December 2012: John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951), “A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium”.

Emma Hardinge Britten generally advocated her views on Spiritualism precisely and clearly. She referred to her creeds/principles over the years as generally accepted statements that had evolved from Spiritualism – proven on the basis of previously established truths of spirit communication through Spiritualism. Below is published from an undated propaganda “Seed-Corn Leaflet No. 5”:



What Spiritualism is and what it is not.

Emma Hardinge Britten

SPIRITUALISM applies in general to the communion of spiritual beings with mortals, but when used in connection with the term “modern,” Spiritualism signifies:

The discovery of a mode whereby discarnate spirits can and do communicate *systematically* with earth.

The consensus of the earliest manifestations affirms and proves, not only by corroborative intelligence, but also by tests of personal identity, that the communicants are the spirits of the men, women and children who once lived on earth, and are now enjoying continuity of life, personal identity, and all that made them individuals, in various

spheres of spiritual existence.

These communicants, by a great variety of signals, such as sounds, lights, motions, and psychic influence, inform us of their conditions of life in the spirit spheres (the sum of all being), that they are in varied states of happiness or of misery, in exact proportion to the amount of good or evil they did on earth; that the young, from infants upwards, are taught and trained by good spirits, who, as their fathers and mothers, adopt them, while the vicious and ignorant are unceasingly ministered to, until all are stimulated onward to progress, the good to attain still higher heights, the evil to become good, and ultimately to attain to the highest conditions of angelhood.

Another branch of spiritual revelation has been to point out that the ancient seer, prophet, or magian, and the modern medium, are one and the same in organic nature; and though some ancients, by study, isolation, and special devotion to spiritual powers, may have acquired a wider and more practical knowledge of spiritual potencies than we have; they, like the modern medium, possessed their special gifts as the result only of certain psychological and natural organic qualities, and not by virtue of any special morality, goodness, or the favour of the Creator.

Spiritualism teaches that as all human beings are spirits, and the body is only an external mould, in which spirit grows, forms, and becomes individualised, so all powers exercised by spirits, appertain as much to the human spirit now as they ever will do in the hereafter; and if all mortals cannot and do not exercise these powers, it is only on account of their ignorance, the darkness concerning spiritual things in which the world has been kept, and the present incipient and experimental state of the communion between spirits and mortals.

It is claimed by reasonable mortals, as well as taught by spirits, that it is just as natural, in divine order, for fathers, mothers, children, and friends to communicate with each other, when the one party is on earth and the other in the spirit-world, as it was when both parties were on earth; and, that the spirits of mortals who had lived a good life, or even simply done their best, are impelled by affection towards those they have left behind to commune with them. Furthermore, as they are in a higher and better life, and in most cases have wider vistas of knowledge and wisdom than when on earth, such communion is not only good, instructive, and natural, but it tends to prove immortality—the existence and nature of spirit,

and therefore, inferentially, of GOD THE SPIRIT, besides offering the strongest possible motor power for living a righteous life, and avoiding evil, by proving that heaven and hell are both states resulting inevitably from the good or evil within the soul itself.

The evidence that human spirit-control is true is to be found in its spontaneity, having originated without expectation of, or participation in, its demonstrations by man; next, in its worldwide appeal to all grades, classes, and countries of earth during the last seventy years; in the conviction of a personal, human, spiritual agency, which its manifestations have forced upon millions of minds, including multitudes of the learned, wise, scientific—persons accustomed to take judicial evidence—commonsense people, and even simple children.

The phenomena by which this immense and unprecedented sum of conviction has been wrought have in quite two-thirds of their action been accompanied by such intelligence as could only have originated with the individual spirits claiming to be communicants. Thus names, ages, dates, events, and many secret things known only to the communicating spirits and their friends, have been spelled out by raps or signed motions, written or spoken sometimes automatically by mediums, sometimes by the spirits themselves. Thousands of portraits of deceased persons have been drawn, or painted, sometimes under magnetic impressions by mediums, sometimes by spirits. On thousands of occasions photographs of deceased persons have been obtained.

Millions of spirits have been seen and described by stranger mediums and recognised by their friends. The unlearned have been inspired to speak with new tongues, or abnormal powers of eloquence. Healers have been inspired and directed. Spirits have guided, instructed, and not infrequently saved their beloved ones on earth from danger and mischief by their counsels and advice. They have presented wise and wonderful visions, and in thousands of ways blessed, benefited, and assisted the friends they have left behind.

From the above statement it may readily be determined what Spiritualism is NOT. Being a direct revelation from the spiritual spheres of existence, it does NOT originate in any human theories or opinions; nor do its facts bend to any such; unless these theories and opinions correspond to its facts. As its communications and descriptions of the life hereafter proceed wholly from those who are actually experiencing what they teach, those teachings derive NO authority from books written by men, whether ancient or modern, whether labelled “Sacred” or “profane.” As a movement founded on facts, corroborated by such testimony as is admitted the world over to represent truth, Spiritualism does NOT need endorsement from, or affiliation with, any sect, society, body of believers, or any dogmatic class of thinkers. Spiritualism is not a religion—it is religion *per se*. Spiritualism is not a sect. It has no fixed creed, as is NOT binding upon any human soul that is not convinced of its truth by sufficient evidence. It may be in harmony with one or many religions, sects, or writings, but it derives no authority from them, being an existing independent fact of itself. It may be in harmony with the known laws of science, but it derives no authority from them, claiming to proceed by virtue of spiritual laws, absolute and true, whether man understands them or not.

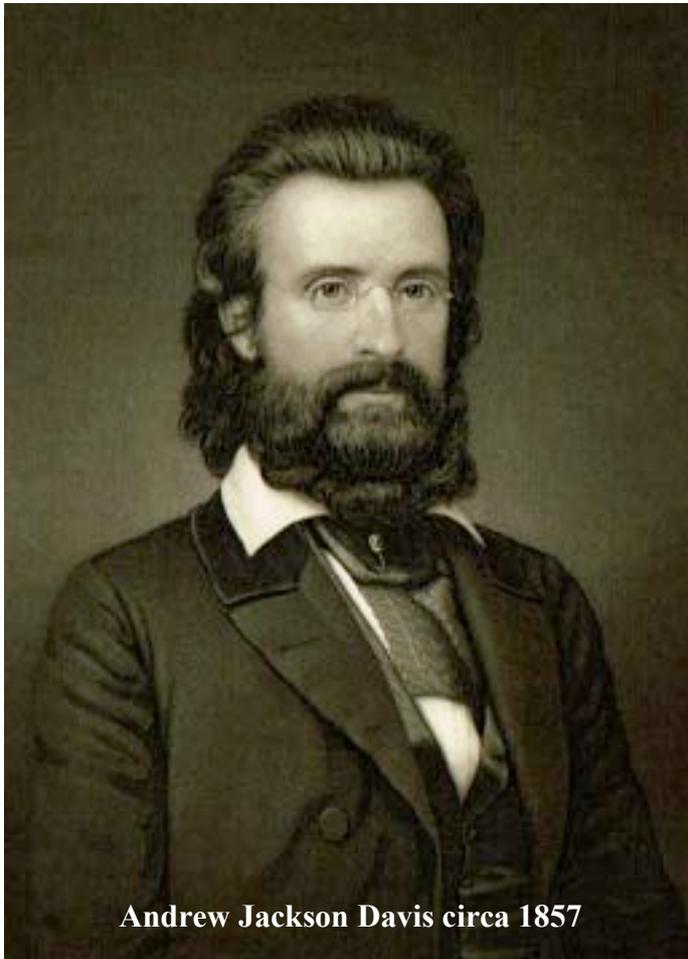
The following theorems grow out of the facts of Spiritualism and its proven consensus of revelations, and are generally accepted as truth by Spiritualists:—

The Fatherhood of God, The Brotherhood of Man, The Immortality of the Soul, The proven facts of Communion between departed Human Spirits and Mortals, Personal Responsibility, Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here, and a path of Eternal Progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good.

Andrew Jackson Davis

(1826-1910)

“WHERE IS THE SPIRIT WORLD” - *We are in it!*



Andrew Jackson Davis circa 1857

Andrew Jackson Davis is sometimes not easy to read with some of his terminology, such as the word ‘Univercœlum’,¹⁶ but his philosophy and writings underpin much of the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. Davis’ books, around thirty, are an encyclopedia, which many early Spiritualists regarded as expressing the essential principles of science, philosophy and religion and of immense value. Prior to Hydesville he wrote in his two-volume work, “Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind”, published in 1847, page 675:

“It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres – and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of

that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established ...”

Davis’s work was largely inspired from the spirit world by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). In 1741, aged 53, Swedenborg entered into a spiritual phase, which consisted of dreams and visions, and three years later he claimed he could freely visit heaven and hell and communicate with angels, demons and spirits. He termed himself a “Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ”. In 1758 he published “Heaven and Hell”. Later, in 1787, a group of his followers formally established the ‘Church of the New Jerusalem’ or Swedenborgianism.

¹⁶ Part II, Davis’ “Principles of Nature ...”, page 121; the work is available on-line as a PDF download: “IN THE BEGINNING, the Univercœlum was one boundless, undefinable, and unimaginable ocean of LIQUID FIRE! The most vigorous and ambitious imagination is not capable of forming an adequate conception of the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. There was one vast expanse of liquid substance. It was without bounds—inconceivable—and with qualities and essences incomprehensible. This was the original condition of MATTER. It was without forms; for it was but *one* Form. It had not motions; but it was an eternity of Motion. It was without parts; for it was a Whole. Particles did not exist; but the Whole was as *one* Particle. There were not Suns, but it was one Eternal Sun. It had a beginning, and it was without end. It had not length; for it was a Vortex of one Eternity. It had not circles; for it was one infinite Circle. It had not disconnected power; but it was the very essence of all Power. Its inconceivable magnitude and constitution were such as not to develop forces, but Omnipotent Power!”

However, some aspects of Swedenborg's teachings appealed to other groups and were in some respects continued by Andrew Jackson Davis. Swedenborg revealed that the afterlife consisted of three Heavens, three Hells and an interim place – the world of the spirits – where everyone went directly upon dying and eventually graduated to other like-minded spirits in the different spheres. Swedenborg's descriptions were vivid:

*Life was much the same in the Spirit World as on earth Cities,
handsome buildings, parks, trees, flowers etc*

James Morse asked some leading Spiritualists, "Where is the Spirit World", a question he asked Andrew Jackson Davis. Morse published his reply in the "Spiritual Review", which Morse founded and edited, in April 1900. The monthly publication continued until circa May 1902. Below is taken from December 1901, Vol. III, No. 14:

“ WHERE IS THE SPIRIT WORLD ”

We are in it!

ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

You will kindly believe me when I affirm that, during the past fifteen years my time and perceptions have been almost completely mortgaged to constant labours in the medical profession, and this, too, to the partial suspension of long-range clairvoyance, attended with less and less association with the "real reality" of the spirit world, and with its myriad inhabitants. Nevertheless, I am at no time without unmistakable vision and aural evidences of what is most essential and imperishable.

At your request I will write explicitly and briefly; affirming of my own knowledge and belief; not undertaking the least approach to argument, and with only a few illustrative remarks.

I enter the superior condition; sometimes with a total loss of sensuous consciousness; which is a perfect equivalent to what is termed "death"—all is suspended, except the continuation of the automatic vital forces, which constitutes an external (bodily), life preserver.

And, lo! here I am in the Spirit World. Yet I have not moved an inch into space. In the Spirit World I behold the interior of the Natural World. Here are the houses and the occupants; here are all the animals, both great and small; all known insects, microbes, the dwellers of air and tenants of the seas; here are—everything which is visible or known to the outer senses in the outer sphere. In a world like this, and with the spiritual senses opened to it, and with one's understanding also opened to comprehend the sight, one naturally feels like a spirit, and surrounded with what is really and truly spiritual. Being in the Spirit World (without the least alteration of one's relative position), one realizes the whole description of the illuminated Swedenborg, and understands what is meant by the "passing away" of the old (outer) heavens and earth, and the coming in splendour of what is "New."

But, behold! As I am rapt in profound contemplation of all this "new heavens and new earth," I suddenly see a beautiful assemblage which seems far away, and yet I inwardly know that the association is within the gravitation of this earth, or rather, Spirit World. Presently I observe one (often three or more), ascending obliquely and entering the waiting group. A few seconds more the entire brilliant company turn from the terrestrial sphere, and facing the other way, protecting and guiding in their very midst, the one or more passing from (earth) to the

Spirit World—thus all soar or sail onward, far, far off toward the central Sun of the Univercœlum!

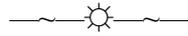
Whither? I am told they are *en route* to the vast second sphere of existence, by many celestial personages of refinement and wisdom, called “The Summer Land.” One would say, not following the sublime flight of the angel visitants, “Oh! now you wrap our judgments in impenetrable mystery.” I reply—nay, not so illogical, good friend. The infinite universe is revolving around countless centres (or great central suns), each of which is a Univercœlum, wherein dwelleth for each system a “Great Positive Mind,” or rather, to employ a common illustration, each universe is from a fountain of unchangeable spiritual forces (Love and Wisdom), like a king enthroned as ruler of each perfectly organized kingdom.

“Where is the Summer Land?” Wait for the answer until we are all a “little larger grown.” Give yourself time enough to unfold and expand. Wait till your little quart measure will become developed enough to hold at least a bushel! We have found the location of the Spirit World. Unknowingly, we live in it every day and night; but the good Swedenborg *knowingly* lived in it many years.



MAURICE BARBANELL

My greatest journalistic “Scoop”



In 1937 a Committee was appointed by Dr. Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, to investigate Spiritualism. It carefully studied the subject for two years – but the report was suppressed.

Published below is taken from the “Two Worlds”, June 7th 1952, front page and page 267:

MY GREATEST SCOOP

by Maurice Barbanell

THE passing of Dr. William Brown, the celebrated psychologist, enables me to disclose part of the story which gave me my greatest; journalistic “Scoop.” This was the disclosure of the actual findings in the suppressed report of the committee appointed by Dr. Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, to inquire into Spiritualism.

The story began when Hannan Swaffer met a distinguished public figure who was angry because he knew that the report was being withheld from the public. He had helped in the Investigation and was present at some of the sittings held by members of the committee.



Some time previously, he had made his own inquiry into Spiritualism and, with the aid of a mediumistic friend, had succeeded in receiving communications which satisfied him that Survival was a fact. When Swaff mentioned this meeting, I went to see his informant, who told me that he had seen a copy of the report and gave me some of the names of its signatories. Dr. William Brown was one of them.

I telephoned the psychologist and saw him in his Harley Street consulting rooms. I soon discovered that he objected to the report being suppressed. He stated that if he had known the efforts of his labours were not to be made public, he never would have joined the inquiry. The Primate had invited him to co-operate because of his scientific prestige.

This gave me my cue. I pointed out to Dr. Brown that, as a scientist, he could not be a party to the suppression of truth, a statement with which he promptly agreed. He himself was very sympathetic to Spiritualism, largely because of his own researches, coupled with the fact that he had discovered he possessed the psychic faculty of automatic writing.

Dr. Brown, however, would not allow me to take away a copy of the report because it was a confidential document which had been sent to him as a member of the committee. He opened a drawer in his desk, pulled out the report and handed it to me.

“You can read it,” he said, “provided you do not take any notes. What you do afterwards is entirely your own affair.”

I held the historic document in my hands and began to read the pages. Fortunately, nature has blessed me with a retentive memory. When I had finished reading, I expressed my thanks and jumped in to a taxi. No sooner had I reached the office than I dictated from memory all I could remember of the majority report. While I could not quote the actual words, I was able to give a fair summary.

The publication of my story created a sensation. National newspapers avidly seized on it, and soon the Primate was in a dilemma, Doubtless the fact that he was unsympathetic to Spiritualism—he had made no secret of his hostility—had influenced him in a decision to suppress the report. *The Daily Telegraph* was among the many national newspapers which followed up my story. It got into touch with Lambeth Palace and printed a reply by the Archbishop of Canterbury that my statements were “both unauthorised and inaccurate.”

I was not concerned with the charge of being unauthorised and willingly pleaded guilty to it. The only inaccuracy I would admit was the fact that the committee numbered 10 instead of 12 as I had stated.

Having obtained from my perusal of the report, the actual names of the signatories, I then arranged for each of them to be interviewed. Some were co-operative and some were not. When some of them made unhelpful comments, I went back to Dr. Brown to tell him what they had said.

“Oh,” he would answer, “is that so? Let us see what it says in the report.” Back again he went to the drawer and fished out the historic document. Then he would quote, word for word, statements that completely answered any criticism of the accounts I had printed. Finally, so much of the report was published by me, that other members of the committee came out into the open and disclosed the part they had played, which made nonsense of the Primate’s suppression.

I have placed these facts on record so that Spiritualists should know the debt of gratitude they owe to Dr. William Brown for the vital part he played in defeating a clerical attempt to suppress psychic truth.



Maurice Barbanell was the founding editor of “Psychic News”, which began on May 28th 1932. He continued in this role until 1946, when, following a disagreement with Arthur Findlay, he left. Stuart Martin took over from Barbanell but died on January 10th 1947. A.W. (Billy) Austin took over from Stuart Martin and continued until 1953; the next editor was Fred Archer. Sixteen years later, on June 20th 1962, Barbanell returned as editor. He was also the editor of the “Two Worlds” and continued with both publications until his death in 1981.

The full report was published in “Psychic News” by Billy Austin during his editorship; Austin stated: “For nine years the reports were kept secret; then one morning there mysteriously appeared on my office desk what purported to be a typed copy of the Majority Report.” One may wonder if this was from Maurice Barbanell! For details and the full report please see the Church of England and Spiritualism.⁶

⁶ Church of England and Spiritualism: <http://www.aspects.org.au/intro.htm>

See also *Psypioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 9, January 2005: “The Secret Report on Spiritualism”. Leslie Price adds: *Psychic News* in 1947 published the conclusions of the majority report. For the full text of the majority and minority reports, contact the Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies. *Psychic News* adds: The issue of *Psychic News* the Church of England Report was first reported in was 8th November 1947.

THE ETHERIC BODY

A question which is often asked in the Britten Museum and Library and on the Study/Research weeks concerns the intermediate body of man – between matter and spirit. This is complicated by the various names given, for example the “astral body”; below is a compilation of views on what is often called the “etheric body”.

In the last issue of “Pioneer” I quoted from Arthur Findlay’s only novel, “The Torch of Knowledge” (1936);¹¹ the characters themselves are fictional. Findlay emphasises

the fact that all the psychic phenomena, which run through this story, have actually happened. What I have done has been to change their setting and the details



I noted: A good, detailed knowledge of Spiritualism and mediumship can be gained by reading this book, with an interesting, instructive and, in some places, thrilling story of spirit communication. The book was used as the focus of the ‘Murder Mystery’ at the Arthur Findlay College’s Christmas week. The central fictional 1930s character is Psychical Researcher George Trueman, who was brilliantly played (praise also goes to the other performers) by our President David Bruton (photograph taken by Janette (Jan) Marshall).

Below I have quoted from Chapter III, 'At Sureway Court', pages 92-94 (SNU Publications edition), from a question put to George Trueman by Ralph Leader (played by Rachel Casson) on “Vibrations”; Trueman stated:¹²

“We Spiritualists know that others exist, and this is the pivotal point on which the whole subject turns.

Other vibrations, which we term etheric, constitute another vehicle for each individual mind in which it

¹¹ Available from the online Arthur Findlay Shop: <http://arthurfindlayshop.org/>

¹² Mr. J. Arthur Findlay lectured at the Caxton Hall on “Survival After Death scientifically Explained,” on February 1st, Dr. Nandor Fodor presiding. He said that every one of us has an etheric body which is the exact duplicate, cell for cell, of the material body. Death represented the withdrawal of this etheric body from the material, and when this took place the material body disintegrated. He said he had spoken to many who were considered dead. They had told him many things that he did not know at the time, but afterwards found to be correct. He had spoken with these face to face, not through a medium in trance, but by the direct voice. In the past we had had to rely on faith and hope, but now knowledge had come to take the place of faith, and would give us a better comprehension of the Universe and of our place in it.

(Other communications have told us that the etheric body is the mould on which our material body is fashioned. This is not in contradiction to anything that Mr. Findlay said, but merely shows us that when looked at from the Other Side of life, the material body is rather the counterpart of the etheric, than the other way round.) Taken from “Psychic Science” April 1934 page 69.

functions after death, and the physical body is only the earth covering of this etheric body. This etheric body vibrates at a higher frequency than does our earth body, but to the Mind in the Etheric World it is just as solid as our physical body is to us on earth. Keep that in mind and all else is easy to follow, and when you hear Etherians at a séance talking about being on another vibration, to what we are on, you will understand that this is the common-place way of expressing what I have put in more scientific language.

Death is only the shedding of the ‘physical’ covering and nothing more. As the physical body is not the mind’s real home but just its temporary abode on earth, the etheric body must be its true abode.

Now, this etheric body is just a duplicate of the earth body. Each etheric body is composed of cells which have attracted to them earth matter for its time on earth, but this being only temporary, separation takes place at death. When the etheric structure leaves the physical body then the physical particles fall away. This we call decomposition.

The etheric body, still guided by mind, operates and functions, guided by the same mind, just as it did on earth, but in an environment suited to its faster vibrations. The mind is still in control. So, following death, we are still ourselves, with the same memories, affections and characteristics which we had on earth.

All that is changed is the environment in which the finer body functions. Nature has provided this environment to which I have given the name Etheria. It is all about us though we sense it not.

When death takes place, we just enter this new environment and live in it as we used to do on earth. The ‘dead’ can still sense the earth when they wish to, but they can do something more—they can read our minds and realise all we are thinking, because the mind makes images which constitute its thoughts. These images are pictures, so our minds can be read like a book. When I think of a chair I image a chair, and those we call dead can stand behind me and see the picture of the chair in my mind.

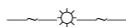


Trueman continues with the direct voice and ectoplasm; much of the information is from Findlay’s “On the Edge of the Etheric”, November 1931, and his preceding books. Helen Alexandria Dallas (1856-1944) wrote an interesting discussion on the “Etheric Body” in the “Quarterly Transactions of Psychic Science”, October 1933. *Light* published a short profile of Miss Dallas on March 30th 1929, page 153:

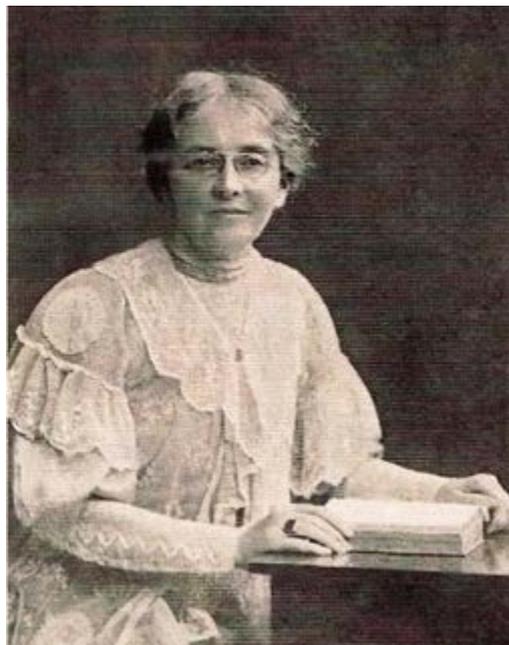
Miss H. A. Dallas bears a name amongst the most familiar and honoured in the long annals of LIGHT, for we can trace it for many years through our files as that of a frequent contributor. She began her work in the days of Mr. Edmund Dawson Rogers and Mr. F. W. H. Myers, to both of whom she feels indebted for much counsel and encouragement in her psychic investigation and writings. Her recent published work, *Leaves from a Psychic Note Book* (with a Preface by Sir Oliver Lodge) gives some interesting reminiscences as well as much sound and helpful guidance for inquirers, the more valuable that they are the fruit of long study and first hand experience.

It was not until Miss Dallas had for some years been a member of the Society for Psychical Research that she joined the London Spiritualist Alliance, having by that time assured herself of the reality of human survival. Amongst the best known of her books we should class *Objections to Spiritualism Answered*, and *Across the Barrier*, the latter book written in collaboration with the late Mr. H. B. Marriott-Watson, the well-known novelist. But *Leaves from a Psychic Note Book* represents a general summary of her

conclusions and a culminating point in her work. Miss Dallas belongs to the ancient Scottish family of that name, a family associated with Lord Byron by marriage and friendship. Her father, a staff officer in India, died there on active service during the mutiny. Careful, thorough and discriminating, Miss Dallas has won the right to be regarded as an authority on psychic matters, and but for her singular modesty—a rare quality in these days—her name might be even more widely known, although it could hardly be more esteemed.



Miss Dallas brings the subject of the etheric body into discussion:



ETHERIC BODY

By MISS H. A. DALLAS

The statement that every material cell has its etheric counterpart is not difficult to accept if it is limited to the *present*; but if it is claimed that the spirit-organism after death is a replica of the material organism cell for cell, then we are confronted with great problems, and some of us feel considerable doubt.

Most of us hope that many functions of our material organism will cease at our liberation in death: but if the above statement is true, can we discriminate between the functions we would like to retain and those we desire to be rid of?

What can determine this discrimination? We are not justified in claiming the etheric continuance of those we like and rejecting those we do not like—i. e., if the etheric body corresponds cell for cell after death with the material body.

Moreover, the analogies which we have been in the habit of regarding as illustrations of the change at death no longer correspond. The butterfly's body is entirely different from that of the caterpillar; the dragon-fly is quite different from the grub. The lily differs from the root, the hyacinth from the bulb, the frog from the tadpole.

There is danger in over-definition in attempting to make statements about conditions which will be as different from the present as the butterfly is from the caterpillar.

In the July issue of PSYCHIC SCIENCE QUARTERLY, I note that it is recorded that the editor's friend gave a warning that the medium was a weak channel through which to seek and obtain knowledge on such a subject, and that she would not herself attempt to give it. It may well be that the knowledge which it was attempted to impart became so highly coloured by the ideas in the mind of the medium as to be misleading.

I prefer myself to wait to know what the future body will be like. It may be like, *in some measure* to our present forms—so is the dragon-fly grub or even the caterpillar to its glorified condition, for the same forces are at work in both—it is the same yet not the same—for the forces work in a different way with different results. The perfected creature still has some of the same needs and instincts. So with our new bodies, they will, I think, be created by similar forces which will relate to the new environment, but because the environment will be new the faculties and instincts will be transformed.

It will be a natural evolution and that which we shall retain will be *determined* by our environment and by the stage of development of the ego: those faculties and functions which relate us to that environment will persist—no others. We go each to “our own place,” to the environment fit for us, and that will be determined by our characters and the stage in development which we shall have attained.

In order to manifest again in relation to a material environment, the freed spirit has to limit itself and materialise a form in which it can experience bodily sensations again. This is not a natural evolution, but is non-natural, undertaken for those still in the flesh—undesirable except for the sake of benefitting mankind. When Sister Amy¹³ materialised, she remarked that the boards of the floor made her feet cold! And when surprise was expressed, she said that when she materialised she took on earthly conditions. It was apparently as if a butterfly were to try to crawl on a cabbage leaf again!

Sir Oliver Lodge has stated his conviction that we possess etheric bodies *now*, and that it is through these bodies that we contact and control matter.

Our individual experience of the ether is through its manifestation as light. It appears to be the great store-house of all energy, even of life itself, but immediate habitual *cognizance* of the Ether of Space is by the light which our sense of vision receives. If we have ether bodies we should, therefore, expect that any evidence we might obtain of them would be through the same manifestation, i.e., light phenomena.

Now there is a great deal of testimony to the appearance of lights, not only at seances, but in connexion with appearance after death, and occasionally light has been seen on the faces of the dying, as if shining through the frail material form; the account of the transfiguration of Jesus is a supreme instance of this, but other instances of a similar though less intense quality are on record.

The question arises why is not this manifestation habitual? If we have ether bodies, and if occasionally they manifest luminously, why is this not a constant occurrence?

The clue to the answer seem to have been supplied by the experiments of Dr. Ochorowicz (of Warsaw) with his medium. He observed that two kinds of rays emanated from her, visible rays and invisible rays; the latter, though invisible, affected a photographic plate; but he also observed that when a materialisation took place there was no luminous manifestation.

The atomic bodies which we have acquired to fit us for our earth life are materialisations; unlike the materialisations which occur in a seance room they are of a durable nature and can sometimes last even for a hundred years: they absorb much force, and we may conclude that the force which would otherwise manifest as light is required to build up and consolidate our material organisms. If this is so, when these organisms are dissipated we may expect our etheric bodies to be luminous; unless the mind, which is the determining and controlling factor, has become grossly materialistic; in that case it may wrap itself in a covering akin to ectoplasm.

The seeress of Prevorst and other psychics have testified that some such substance forms a *nexus* between atomic matter and the real etheric body. She said: “It pervades the body in all parts” and “when the soul parts from the body this fine substance accompanies it”: it is destined at last “as to what is more gross and corporeal to be entirely removed,

¹³ This manifestation has repeatedly appeared with the medium Craddock. I have seen her several times and I am personally convinced of her independent existence.

and the soul to assume the nature of the eternal light of the spirit.” She added that “souls quite earthly wrap themselves gladly in it.”

Andrew Jackson Davis spoke of the same substance as “the vital electrical element.” Other seers have referred to it under other terms.

Is it possible that it is this substance which affords a, cell for cell, replica of the atomic body after death?

These suggestions are tentative and speculative, but there is a considerable amount of evidence which supports my main contention, namely, that our etheric bodies would be luminous if the force required to build up our material forms was liberated. I have quoted some cases which bear on this in my book, *Leaves from a Psychic Note Book*, pp. 61-93,¹⁴ in which I have discussed the subject more fully.

That the true body is not the atomic form in which we operate on earth has been maintained by deep thinkers in past times whose insight forestalled the conclusions of Sir Oliver Lodge. The Rev. F. D. Maurice, in his work on *Metaphysical Philosophy*, quotes Johannes Scotus, a Celtic metaphysician of the ninth century A.D., who taught that “the form of the body, its primary spiritual constitution is . . . to remain amidst all the changes that it has undergone from its connexion with matter. Its outward material vesture will fall off and be mixed with the elements out of which it is formed. But the true native form, the proper body, will be preserved and recover its relation to the soul that inhabits it.”

The Rev. F. D. Maurice, D.D., expressed a similar belief in his volume of *Theological Essays*, published about the year A.D. 1850; in this he indicated his belief that resurrection occurs at death through the liberation of the essential body.

Origen, again, wrote: “Another body, a spiritual and ethereal one, is promised us; a body which is not subject to physical touch, not seen by physical eyes, not burdened with weight and which shall be metamorphosed according to the variety of regions in which it shall be.” He called those who believed in a material resuscitation “flesh-lovers.”

How greatly these men would have rejoiced to read Sir Oliver’s assurance that his scientific studies have led him to the conclusion: “Not only is there a matter body, there is also an ether body and the two are co-existent . . . we may be sure the ether body does not wear out.” Thus does a great scientist corroborate the intuitive perception of earnest thinkers in past ages.

It is interesting to remember that as Mr. Mead has told us, the early Gnostic schools used the term “light emanation” to denote the germ of the spiritual man.

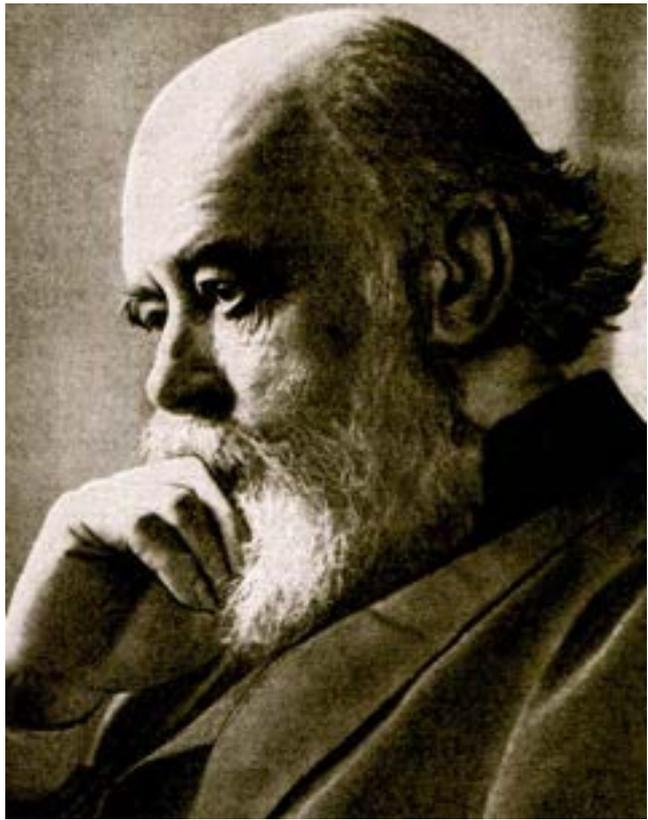
H.A.D.



¹⁴ Rider & Co. This book has had very limited circulation.

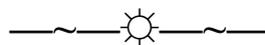
To conclude is a quote¹⁵ from Sir Oliver Lodge published in his “My Philosophy”; Lodge is probably one of the best qualified to speak on the etheric body:

“By ‘spiritual body’ St. Paul did not mean one made of spirit, but one that serves the needs of the spirit; just as by ‘psychical body’ he did not mean one made of ‘psyche,’ but meant the material body which serves the psychical or mental need. The psychical body is made of matter and used by soul. So also the pneumatical body is one used by spirit and made of X. My hypothesis is, that partially and approximately, X is Ether.



“This view is not materialistic in the ordinary sense. It does not even claim any direct association of mind with matter; it claims association with an intermediate substance. The Etheric body is intermediate between matter and spirit, for it seems probable that spirit requires some kind of physical medium for its manifestation. My hypothesis is that spirit primarily inhabits the ether, uses it, and acts upon it; and that occasionally this operated-on-ether is able to act upon matter. Thus through the intervention of ether, spirit can be brought into relation with matter, indirectly; and the intervening mechanism (if it can be called mechanism) is the etheric or spiritual body. . . . The view is, that the intermediary is a substantial reality. . . . Physics is already learning much, and may hope to learn more, of the interaction between ether and matter: and it would be left to psychologists to learn more (if they can) about the connection between mind and ether. They must begin by grasping the fact that ether can be animated; the connection between mind and ether must have laws which can gradually be explore” though at present we have hardly a clue.

“The probability is that every sensible object has both material and an ethereal counterpart . . . and I foresee a time when the term ‘soul’ will be intelligible, and I think it will be found that soul is related to the ether, as body is related to matter. I suggest that it will turn out to be a sort of ethereal body, as opposed or supplemental to our obvious material body. That is what I foresee as lying in the path of the progress of discovery. We shall find, I think, that we possess all the time, a body co-existent with this one that we know—a body essentially substantial and related to space and time, not really transcendental, but yet in no way appealing to our present senses. Recently an etheric version of such a body has been approved—at any rate regarded as a step in the right direction—by some of the more thoughtful and philosophically minded communicators on ‘the other side.’” (*My Philosophy, ch. xx and xxi.*)

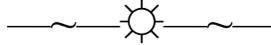


¹⁵ The quote is published in the “Quarterly Transactions of Psychic Science”, October 1934: The “Etheric” Body, pages 195-203, by the editor, Stanley De Brath.

Psypioneer – Change of editorship

It was announced in the December issue of Psypioneer that I was stepping down as editor of “Psypioneer”; **I will be continuing as editor of this journal.**

Below is the announcement published in Psypioneer:



After eleven years as editor of the online journal, *Psypioneer*, I have decided to pass it back to the journal’s founder editor, Leslie Price. The change will take effect from January 1st 2017.

Psypioneer has been a great joy for me over the last decade, presenting our readers with original reliable information on psychic pioneers and spiritualistic history. Our readership has grown internationally over the years, however, none of this would have been possible without the help and the continuous support of the editorial team.

Leslie has been sub-editor since I took over from him in July 2005; Garth Willey has also acted as proof reader during this period. Garth has hosted Psypioneer since May 2004 when Leslie started the publication, and he will continue to archive the journal on his Woodlands Sanctuary Foundation website in Melbourne, Australia, where Peter Hui provides technical help. Over the last five years Lis Warwood has given Psypioneer substantial support as proof reader, and her invaluable research has gone far beyond the important births and death dates.

My wife Cindy has often had to type out material which was too poor to scan, and she has checked every issue before the draft is passed to the editorial team. Over the years Psypioneer has been financially supported by donations, namely from the JV Trust, Spiritual Truth Foundation, and the Survival Joint Research Committee Trust.

Our material has often been sourced from the College for Psychic Studies library and archives, with their full support. Support has also been given by the Society for Psychical Research, and from the Spiritualists’ National Union Presidents Duncan Gascoyne and David Bruton who arranged free accommodation and full use of the Arthur Findlay library during periods when the college was closed for a number of years. Support has been given from Sue Farrow and Roy Stemman, editors of *Psychic News*.

Finally thanks are due to all who have contributed articles, book reviews etc. and all the feedback and continuing support from our readers.

I will continue my support to Leslie for the future growth of Psypioneer.

Please note: I will continue to edit the Spiritualists’ National Union *Pioneer*, which is available on their website.¹⁷

Thank you all.

Paul J. Gaunt.

¹⁷ *The Pioneer Journal*: <http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer> To subscribe free, please contact me at: pioneer@snu.org.uk



Sir Oliver Lodge has been quite clear on his relationship with Spiritualism. In an interview he gave to *The Strand Magazine*, Vol. LVI, July-Dec 1918, we read:

“WELL, Sir Oliver,” began the interviewer, “I have been instructed to ask you how Spiritualism stands to-day?”

“I can’t answer for Spiritualism,” Sir Oliver replied. “I don’t much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don’t belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people.”⁸

Sixteen years later Lodge was asked a similar question, published in the “Quarterly Transactions, British College of Psychic Science”, April 1935:

A SYMPOSIUM

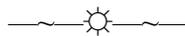
WHY I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST

SIR OLIVER LODGE

You ask why I became a Spiritualist. It is not a title that I use for myself, because I don’t belong to any Spiritualist body, nor attend any Spiritualist Church. But if the name is intended to signify a belief in the spiritual world and in our access to it and communion with it, I may say that I was introduced to the subject in the ‘70’s’ of last century by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney and Professor Barrett. In ‘83 or ‘84 I became convinced of the reality of experimental telepathy, by verifying the direct transmission of ideas and pictures at Liverpool. And in ‘89 I became practically convinced of survival and communication through experiments conducted with Mrs. Piper in my house. Since then the evidence has gone on increasing in cogency, so that the fact of possible communication became a scientific certainty early in the present century. I have expressed this in several books, and am glad to think that they have been a help to people in distress. The knowledge was a great help to me and my family in the war-time, when Raymond was killed.

OLIVER LODGE

9 February, 1935.

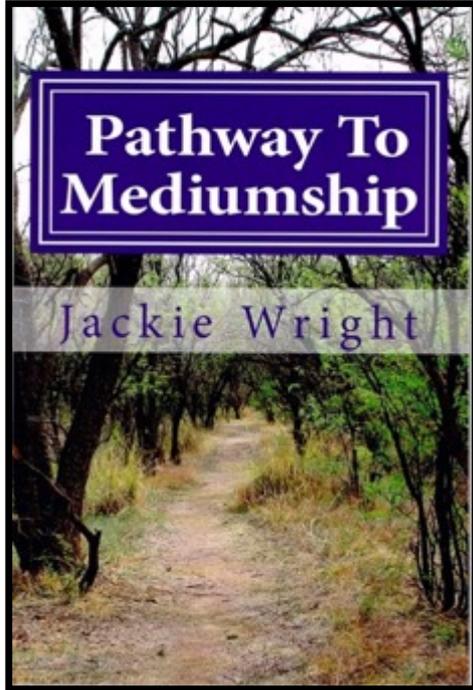
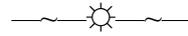


⁸ The full interview can be found in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 2008.

Book Review:

PATHWAY TO MEDIUMSHIP

by Jackie Wright DSNU



Jackie Wright DSNU is an Arthur Findlay College course organiser and tutor from the North-East of England. Jackie is the former chair of the Spiritualists' National Union Education Committee. She also works across Europe, Australia, Canada and America.

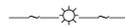
Jackie states in the foreword of her book:

Since I began to teach mediumship it has amazed me how easily influenced students are. In their rush to become 'professionals' they hang on to every word their 'teacher' tells them. I am constantly asking my students to become their own scientists, to use their logical minds in their quest to advance their discipline, and not to just believe what I am saying to them. After all I am only human, a mere mortal, I am not always right. Then one day I was telling students how my development days were and I realised that I too was that gullible once over, and I hung on to my teacher's every word

So this book is for two reasons. First it is to highlight just how naive we become when we seek out this power we call mediumship and secondly to offer some guidance for the student on their development. I hope that by taking the reader on a journey through my own development, and showing the heartache and humorous times I personally had you will realise the importance of keeping a reasoning mind, but also to give some practical advice for your own journey.

I often say that the Spirit world do not want sheep, but they do want critical thinkers who will question what is happening to them on their road of growth and discovery.

I hope you will enjoy the reading of this little book, but more importantly I hope it shows you how far we have progressed in the teaching and understanding of mediumship, that this will help you to go forward in your own development with an open and clear mind.



Jackie Wright's early life was not straightforward, easy or, in fact, very pleasant. Brought up in a large, dysfunctional, religious family and pregnant at an early age, marriage did not bring the happiness and freedom she had hoped for.

"Pathway to Mediumship" charts Jackie's journey through her mediumistic development. Unlike some mediums she was not psychic as a child; it would not be until her younger sister prompted the now married Jackie to go to Middlesbrough Borough Rd. Spiritualist Church (an SNU-affiliated church) that her *Pathway to Mediumship* began.

The reader is steered through Jackie's first development circle at a Greater World (Christian) Spiritualist church; she gives an honest account of her naivety in her early development and her reliance on others for her pathway of old-fashioned beliefs like 'grooming the aura',

removing bad spirits, etc. This resulted in her return to Middlesbrough Church and seeing an advert for mediumistic training at the Arthur Findlay College, eventually leading to her first mentor and inspiration under the guidance of Glyn Edwards.

The second part of the book is dedicated to Jackie's "guide to assist the student on their journey". It is refreshing that Jackie emphasises the differences of *psychic* and *spirit communication* and the importance of the former. Although some points Jackie raises may be considered controversial, this is counterbalanced by her down-to-earth, no-nonsense approach to her development and not necessarily the older, established views of Spiritualists.

The book covers development exercises, both psychic and mediumistic, and tips for the student. This little book is easy reading and a recommended read. Each story of development is different; this is Jackie Wright's story,

“recounting the tears and laughter she encountered on the way.”

The book is available in the Arthur Findlay College shop at £9.99 and is also available from the online shop.¹⁰

Paul J. Gaunt.



Jackie Wright DSNU

Website:

<http://www.jackiewrightdsnu.co.uk/>

Jackie comments:

I deliberately didn't get my book proof-read because I didn't want it to be perfect.

I wanted people to see it's okay to be flawed; it won't hinder your work for spirit.

Photograph taken by AFC tutor Janette (Jan) Marshall at this year's AFC Open Week, April 29th-May 2nd 2017.



¹⁰ Arthur Findlay College online shop: <http://arthurfindlayshop.org/>

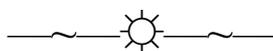


Leslie Price has decided he will not continue to publish Psypioneer, following the retirement of Paul Gaunt as editor. In addition, Garth and Audrey Willey and their colleagues at Woodland Way in Australia have discontinued their website, which was the home for archived copies of Psypioneer.

However, Marc Demarest and the International Association for the Preservation of Occult and Spiritualist Periodicals (IAPSOP) have kindly offered to host all back issues of Psypioneer in a dedicated section of the IAPSOP web site.

The issues can be accessed via <http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/>

Google searches beginning “Psypioneer...” are now beginning to turn up links to Psypioneer articles on the IAPSOP site.



An extraordinary secret was held in the Spiritualist moment for over three decades:

Who was the medium for Silver Birch, known as the “Guide of the Hannen Swaffer Home Circle”?

It is well-known today that the medium was Maurice Barbanell, the founding editor of “Psychic News”, which had begun on May 28th, 1932. Barbanell continued in this role until 1946, when (following a disagreement with Arthur Findlay) he left, later becoming the editor of the “Two Worlds”. On August 24th 1957 the editor revealed that he himself was the trance medium through whom Silver Birch communicated. Sixteen years later, on June 20th, 1962, Barbanell returned to his previous role and continued as editor of “Psychic News” and the “Two Worlds” jointly until his death in 1981.



Below is Barbanell’s announcement in 1957:

WHO IS SILVER BIRCH’S MEDIUM?

BY THE EDITOR

THE time has come to make public what has for long been a “secret.” Who is Silver Birch’s medium? The answer is—I am.

This fact has been known to a growing number of people who have visited Hannen Swaffer’s home circle, where Silver Birch has spoken for over 20 years. Visitors, however, were asked not to disclose the medium’s identity.

Swaff, always a critical journalist, recognised from the start that here we had spirit teachings, profound yet simple, expressing our philosophy in words of beauty and dignity, that ought to be printed. They were not given to the home circle for private use, he insisted, but so that they could be broadcast all over the world.

I agreed, with one proviso. “I am the Editor of a Spiritualist newspaper,” I said. “If I print that I am the medium there could be the criticism that publication is done to flatter my vanity. I will leave my name out and let the spirit teachings stand or fall on their own merit.”

What was the result of publication? Swaff has written: “As a consequence, Silver Birch has more followers than any earthly preacher. They belong to every clime and almost every race, and are people of all shades of colour.”

Apart from regular publication of the teachings after every sitting, they have been recorded in seven books, translated into several languages. Who can measure their influence?

The teachings have won through on their own merits. There is therefore, no longer any need for anonymity. Besides, being very frank by nature, I dislike secrecy.

Silver Birch was responsible for bringing me into Spiritualism 37 years ago. I was secretary of a literary society at which, to ensure there were good discussions, it was my job to oppose the speaker, no matter what he said. One night we had a talk on Spiritualism from a man who recounted experiences that had convinced him.

Instead of opposing the speaker, I said that this was a subject on which opinions could not be expressed without prior investigation. Later, the speaker asked if I was serious in my views. If so, would I like to investigate?

I had no intention of conducting a personal inquiry, but it seemed churlish to refuse after what I had said in discussion. I still have the diary in which I noted, "Six months to investigate Spiritualism." I thought it would be fair to express no opinion until after six months' inquiry. Here I am, 37 years later, still inquiring . . .

I was taken by the speaker to my first seance. It was held in a tenement in one of London's poorest parts. But I was not impressed. I was an agnostic, with practically an atheistic outlook.

When at this seance sitters announced that they had suddenly become Red Indians, Africans and Chinese, I laughed outright. One of these reproved me, saying, "You will be doing this before long." Sceptical and incredulous I left, but returned the next week, as promised.

Half-way through the proceedings I woke up and apologised for having fallen asleep. "You have been a Red Indian, and in trance! I was told. "Your guide gave his name and said that he has been training you for this for years, having chosen you before your birth, and that before long you will be speaking on Spiritualist platforms."

Again I laughed at the prophecy, though bewildered by my experience. At subsequent seances this same guide continued to speak, though his English was faulty and the accent rather crude.

With the passing of the years the guide's language so improved that, to quote Swaff who has heard all the Keir Hardies and Philip Snowdens, all the Lloyd Georges and Lord Samuels, all the Churchills and Joseph Chamberlains, all the Dr. Gores and Dr. Temples:

"His simple eloquence now often transcends that of any speaker to whom I have ever listened."

Through the years, the degree of trance gradually grew. At first I could hear every word spoken. Then I seemed to be listening at a distance. Finally came the stage where, though unconscious, every word that had been uttered appeared as if on an unfolding screen before I went to sleep at night.

Having an independent mind, I always wanted to know what was going on so far as I was involved. This repetition at night of what had been said involved, I was told, the

utilisation of psychic power. When the decision to print the teachings was made, it was suggested to me that, as I would see the transcript, I should forego its being repeated to me at night. I agreed.

A curious happening followed. If the stenographer has made an error — it is no mean feat to record verbatim seance proceedings sometimes for as long as two hours — I always “know,” when reading the transcript, what the right word should be.

There was an extraordinary incident after the decision to publish was made. The circle had always called the guide by an affectionate nickname, which they did not want printed. They asked him to choose the name to be used. He selected Silver Birch. The next morning, when I arrived at the office there was a postcard, addressed to me anonymously from a reader in Scotland, of a picture of silver birches.

Who is Silver Birch? That is another story. The Red Indian who manifests is only a small expression of a much larger and evolved being. Hints of identity have, however, been given.

“Silver Birch has an aura of majesty,” says Lilian Bailey, whose clairvoyance has enabled her to see him frequently. “He is a very great soul who comes in the guise of an Indian.”

Silver Birch has given ample evidence that he is not a secondary personality, as researchers so often assert, but an independent being. Once he told my wife that at the next Estelle Roberts voice seance he would speak through the trumpet and repeat certain words that she should remember. The promise was fulfilled — and it was a thrill for me to hear Silver Birch speak in the direct voice.

Then, in the early days, the guide to prove his separate existence, would insist on a pin being stuck deeply into my hand. Nothing was felt and no marks were visible.

Largely, Silver Birch has confined himself to teaching, though occasionally he has given healing and evidence of Survival. He has, however, provided remarkable guidance and help. I have often found myself envying Silver Birch his eloquence.

My speeches, which, alas, never touch oratorical heights, have to be prepared from notes. His wise utterances flow without pause, even when giving spontaneous answers to questions or replying to comments.

He has the remarkable facility for saying the same thing in a different way. His teaching could be compressed in an address no longer than the Sermon on the Mount. Yet he goes on and on with infinite but consistent variations.

“Does a guide choose his medium because “like attracts like”? With one exception, I have always agreed with the outlook Silver Birch reveals. That exception is reincarnation. In debates, when I have opposed it, I have always been told that I won.

Yet gradually my viewpoint has changed. Now I am prepared to believe that, in exceptional circumstances, individuals voluntarily reincarnate for a special task.

Silver Birch has a breadth of humanity and a transcendental wisdom which reveal an access to a pool of wisdom, alas not available to me. He never criticises individuals, never finds fault or blames them. I, on the other hand, am frankly critical.

He has always risen to the occasion, no matter who the visitor may be. He has met the arguments of the scientist and preacher, comforted the mourner, helped the tough and the simple, thrown light on the problems of the despairing, encouraged mediums and workers, and always maintained a level that is the hallmark of an evolved being. No caller has left feeling that his visit has been in vain.

Directly the war ended, Silver Birch, in prophetic mood,¹¹ began his weekly utterance with these words:

“One war ends. Another war begins—the war against human greed, selfishness and materialism, the war to liberate man and to build systems in an ever-better world in which freedom, equity, justice and decency are the lot of all peoples.”

Lord Beaverbrook, after reading the first book of Silver Birch’s teachings,¹² wrote: “It contains passages of great beauty. I was struck by the simplicity of the work.”

The guide’s oratory has been compared with the language of Churchill. “Almost Churchillian prose in their flights,” said a journalist. “Rarely has the English language been so gently, so simply and so beautifully used,” wrote another, who said of one passage, “That beats the drama of a Churchill.”

It is not surprising that, having been a medium for 37 years, I have always sympathised with other instruments of the spirit world and fought for them, because I understand many of their problems at first hand. And the finest way to learn about Spiritualism, and the after-life, is from the wise teachers who are living in what will be our future existence.

It is in such an atmosphere that the Silver Birch teachings have been produced through a human instrument too often aware of his failings and weaknesses. Through the years, however, I have learned to love and respect this saintly guide whom I have never seen.



Barbanell further adds:

SPIRIT ALCHEMY

MY own tribute to Silver Birch is contained in these words:

“His teaching is an example of spirit alchemy, the ability to take the 26 letters of the alphabet and transmute them into words of shimmering beauty.

“As one who spends the whole of his working life in writing, I can appreciate that the faculty of being able to deliver, week after week, words of wisdom, full of eloquent simplicity, in this spontaneous fashion, is in itself evidence of supernormality.

“Like other journalists who live by their pen, I know that simple English is the most difficult to write. I know how you have to polish and repolish, alter words, delete others, change sentences, consult the dictionary and the thesaurus, before you are satisfied.

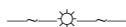
¹¹ See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016, “No World War” predictions.

¹² Lord Beaverbrook features in “My Greatest Story” by Hannen Swaffer; this has been republished by the SNU (the name 'Hannen' is incorrectly spelt 'Hannan' on the front cover).

“Yet here is a ‘dead’ man who, without hesitation, can produce perfect prose. Everything he says is full of common sense, inspiring, uplifting and ennobling.

“Silver Birch’s words glisten like diamonds. I salute a master of English, a great literary craftsman whom I have grown to love and admire.”

M.B.

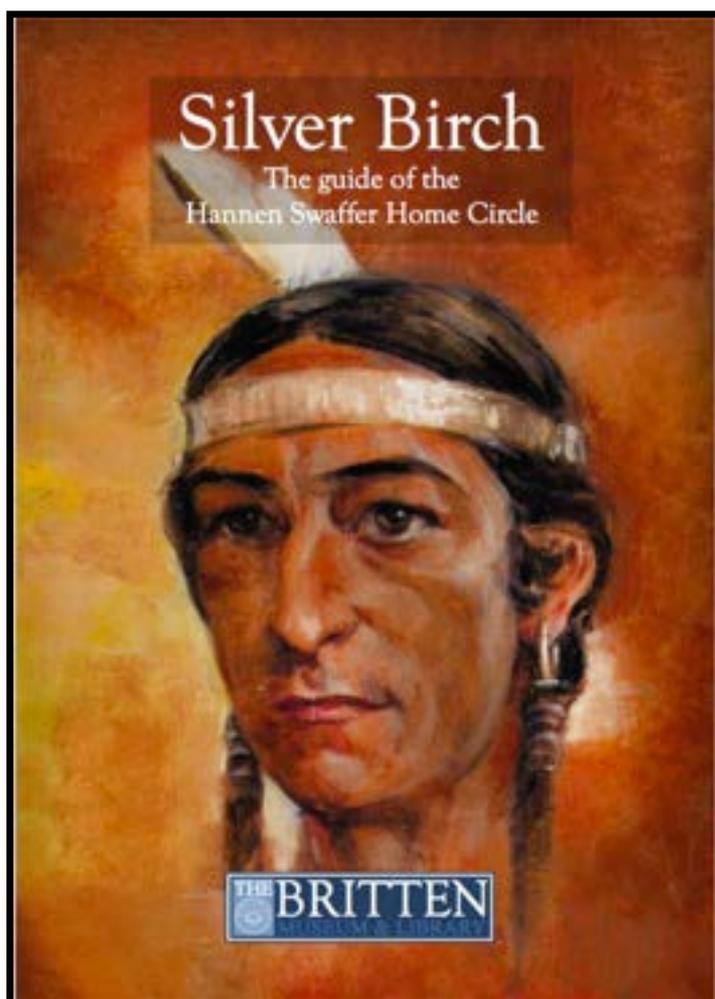


It is further revealed in the SNU publication that “Silver Birch”, the guide, was not originally called Silver Birch but was known as

“*Big Jump*”.

The name continued within the circle until Maurice Barbanell’s death.¹³

This psychic painting of Silver Birch was done by Marcel Poncin, a famous French artist and actor. It is completely unlike his normal art. Though he never saw the guide, he was inspired to produce this portrait, working feverishly in the half-light. In addition, without realising it, he included in the picture a feature that is highly evidential. No mention has ever been made in print of this feature. The accuracy of the painting has been confirmed by several clairvoyants.



¹³ Booklet is available at: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/silver-birch>

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is today one of our Hon. Presidents-in-Spirit —I believe Sir Arthur was the Union's first appointed Hon. President in the body, who was elected just prior to his death on Monday July 7th 1930 and, again I believe, the first to continue as Hon. President in the spirit.

Below is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", June 15th 1934:

WHEN SPIRITUALISTS REFUSED THE B.B.C.

How Conan Doyle Declined to Broadcast

By ERNEST W. OATEN

DID you ever hear the story of how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle refused to broadcast?

He was due at Manchester some years ago to address one of our Manchester propaganda meetings, and a week or two previously I called at the Manchester office of the British Broadcasting Corporation and suggested that here was an opportunity of placing Manchester on the broadcasting map. Conan Doyle had promised me that if I could make arrangements for a broadcast he would be prepared to come to Manchester a day or two earlier, and that the B.B.C. should be at no expense.

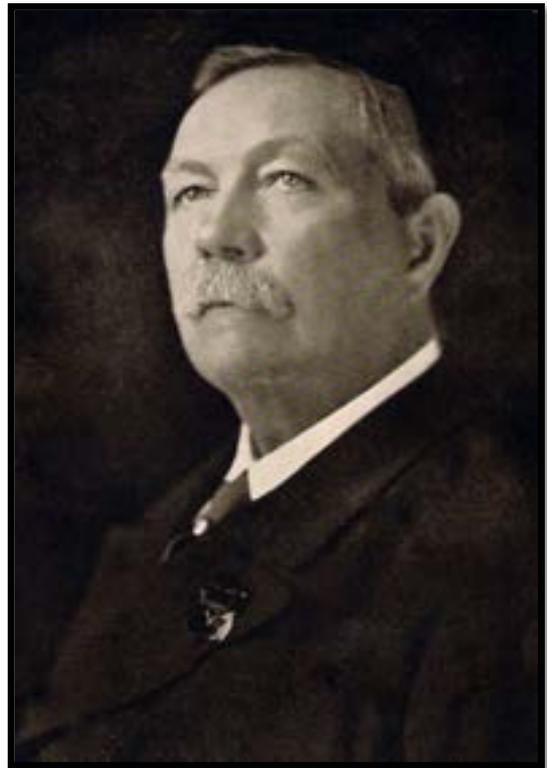
Suggestion Turned Down

The Station Director told me that he would put the matter before his committee. Three days later I received a reply that they were very sorry, but it could not be arranged. Subsequently, however, the Manchester house appeared to regret its decision.

Sir Arthur travelled from London on a Sunday, but some days before he arrived the committee clearly saw that the Ardwick Picture Theatre, with at capacity for 2,600 people, could not possibly hold the crowd. The committee, therefore, decided to make the meeting admissible by ticket only, the tickets to be given free to all who applied.

In Manchester the authorities are very proper, and it is not permissible to sell a ticket for a reserved seat on a Sunday! Such would be a breach of Sabbatarian decorum. The Manchester authorities have a fear that people might enjoy themselves on the Sabbath.

However, the committee decided to take another hall with a capacity of another 2,500 and run two meetings. Sir Arthur travelled all day, and spoke for an hour at the Ardwick Picture Theatre. He then crossed the street and spoke for 45 minutes at the Coliseum. I had chaired his first meeting, and at its close went to the Coliseum to rescue



Sir Arthur from the crowd which always thronged around him at the conclusion of his meetings.

A gentleman (whom I subsequently discovered to be the Programme Director of the Manchester Broadcasting House) told me that Sir Arthur was going straightway to Broadcasting House to speak on the microphone.

“He is doing nothing of the kind,” said I.

I was, of course, asked what I had to do with it, and in return I asked who had made the arrangements.

“Oh. I Was just going to invite Sir Arthur to broadcast.”

I said: “Very well, we will see him.”

Sir Arthur Refuses

We went into another room. I pointed out to Sir Arthur that he had had a five hours railway journey, he had been speaking for nearly two hours, he was nearly 70 years of age, he had no time for preparation, and it was not fair either to himself, to Spiritualism or to the public, to place a tired man before the microphone with a serious message to deliver. His nimble mind grasped the situation at once. “You’re right” he said. And so Sir Arthur refused to broadcast.

I don’t think the Manchester officials have ever forgiven me for my interference, but I am satisfied that I did the right thing. And yet I sometimes feel sorry that such a fine propagandist as Doyle was not the first to broadcast our message in England. However, I am satisfied that he assisted me to do so.



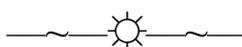
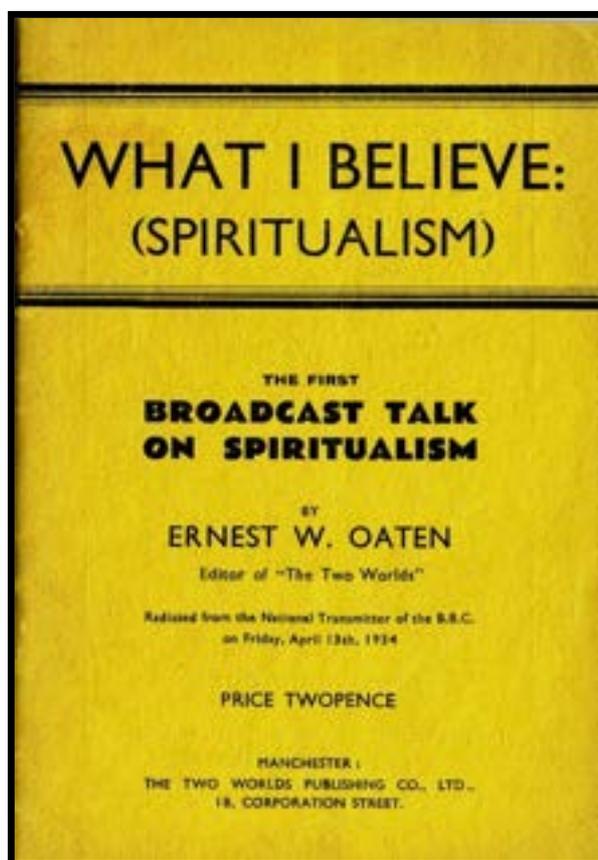
Sir Arthur’s refusal was circa 1929; the honour fell upon Ernest Oaten, who made the first historic broadcast on Spiritualism on Friday April 13th 1934. “What I Believe” is published in *Psypioneer*, Vol.2, No.3, March 2006; below is the Foreword from the booklet as shown:

For a considerable period, the Spiritualists of this country have been agitating to secure recognition by the British Broadcasting Corporation. As one of the important religious denominations of this country, they have asked to be included in the list of denominations broadcasting Sunday services, but the privilege has been denied them. As an alternative, they pressed their claim to recognition in respect of the secular programmes; and the result was that on Friday, April 13th, 1934, the first broadcast talk on Spiritualism was transmitted from London. Mr. E.W. Oaten was unanimously chosen as the representative of the Spiritualist Movement.

The broadcasting of the message of Spiritualism represents an historic achievement, for it meant that the Movement was recognised by the Broadcasting authorities in this country - themselves responsible to Parliament - and incidentally the introduction of our case to hundreds of thousands of people who had never heard a Spiritualist address or read a book on the subject.

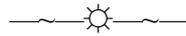
As a result, Mr. Oaten’s post-bag was filled with hundreds of letters from persons whose interest had been provoked by his able exposition of the Spiritualist outlook, and who asked for further information. Undoubtedly the talk aroused widespread enthusiasm. It should be pointed out that Mr. Oaten’s remarks were entirely uncensored and he was allowed every facility in making clear his opinions.

The production of this booklet is the result of numerous requests which have reached us, and we hereby express our appreciation of the favours of the Broadcasting Corporation and Mr. E. W. Oaten, in granting permission for the publication of the verbatim report of the talk and discussion.



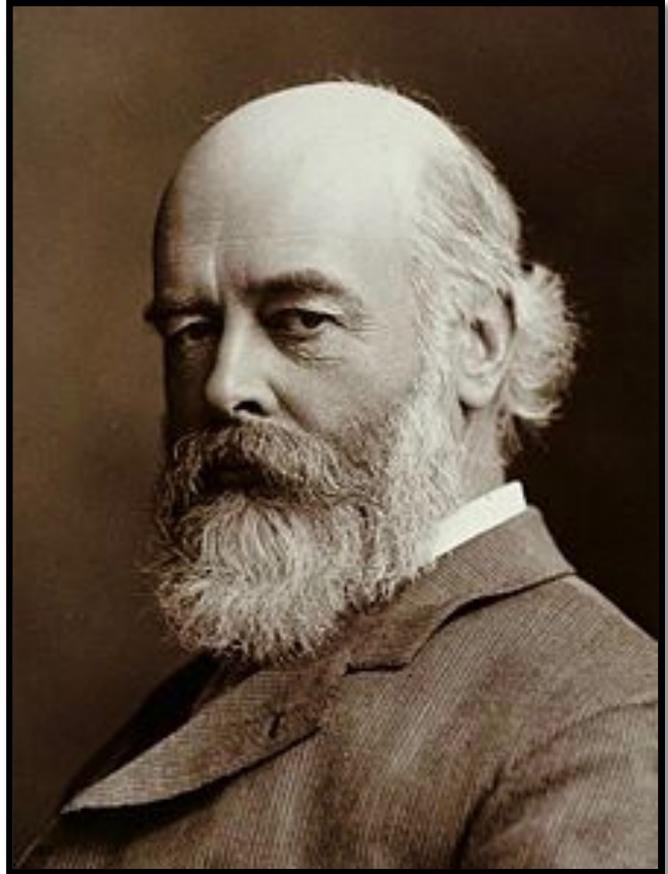
SIR OLIVER LODGE

B.B.C. BROADCAST



Oaten's broadcast is well-known in Spiritualist history; what is not so well-known is that just over a month earlier, on Friday March 9th 1934, Oliver Lodge was part of a B.B.C. broadcast, "Inquiry into the Unknown". He spoke from a B.B.C. studio at Bournemouth. His talk was transmitted by all the national stations and was relayed throughout America. Lodge was quite clear about life in the spirit world:

For it is our character that we take with us. We are not different the moment we pass over. Those on the other side tell us there is scope for talent and enterprise over there. Our friends come to welcome us when we cross the border. Friendship is as important there as here.



It is noted in Pioneer³ that Sir Oliver Lodge through his investigations in psychical research was President of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), 1901-3, and again (with Mrs Sidgwick) as President of Honour in 1932. Lodge was not a member of any Spiritualist society, etc. and was quite clear he was not a Spiritualist, as often assumed. In an interview he gave to *The Strand Magazine*, Vol. LVI, July-Dec 1918, we read:

"WELL, Sir Oliver," began the interviewer, "I have been instructed to ask you how Spiritualism stands to-day?"

"I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."⁴



³ Vol.4, No.1, February 2017: A Symposium – Why I Became a Spiritualist: Sir Oliver Lodge

⁴ The full interview can be found in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 2008.

Below is the report of the broadcast transmitted on Friday March 9th 1934, published in the "Two Worlds", March 16th 1934, pages 171-2:



SIR OLIVER LODGE'S MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

His Plea for Amplified Investigation
of Mediumship

"The veil between the two worlds is wearing thin. It is possible, given the right conditions, to communicate with the dead. This evidence, so full and unmistakable, has brought me to a conception that the Spiritual World is a great reality, and has led me back to the truth of the saying recorded of the founder of Christianity."

Through the miracle of wireless, countless people in all parts of the world heard these words spoken into the microphone on Friday evening last when Sir Oliver Lodge broadcast his contribution to the B.B.C.'s "Inquiry into the Unknown."

So, after a comprehensive survey of the methods conducting modern psychical inquiry, the question "Do we survive?" was at last carefully considered. Sir Oliver's answer to this profound problem formed a message of hope and reassurance to humanity.

Sir Oliver, who has not yet fully recovered from his recent operation, spoke from a B.B.C. studio at Bournemouth, but his talk was transmitted by all the National stations, and was relayed throughout America. He said:—

"The main object of this series of talks has been to emphasise the importance of psychical research, and to maintain the actual occurrence of facts for which we have no scientific theory, and which are therefore liable to be deplored or denied by present-day scientists, whereas the testimony is that they undoubtedly occur under scientific conditions.

"No scientific man has a right to deny them, or to penalise those who want to make a study of them. The science which attempts to prescribe the exclusion of a whole system of facts cannot be put into the position of any idealistic philosophy. A comprehensive science would take in everything.

"The aim of the talks so far has been to emphasise the importance of psychical investigation. Lord Charles Hope put forward in detail one comparatively small

phenomenon. Mr. Gerald Heard cited a whole set of phenomena which are said to have occurred, but are denied by orthodox science.⁵

“Sir Ernest Bennett told you of certain facts which he thinks are facts, and which are difficult to get away from.

“No scientific man who ignores these facts has the right to philosophise on existence, or to argue against the fundamental tenets of religion. What in my view these phenomena prove is that we are denizens of a spiritual world, and that our activities are not limited to the physical organisms. That is my personal conviction, based on half a century of investigation.

“It seems to me quite certain that man is not limited to the physical body or to a brief life here, but that he has a larger—a more permanent—existence, which we do not wholly understand. That is what the ultimate deduction will be.

“This conclusion is of such great importance that many people look upon it as the main object of psychical research. It is not that. But it is of such vital importance to humanity that it is regarded in some quarters as the solo topic to which the efforts of psychical researchers should be directed.

“Let it be clearly understood that it is possible to admit some or most of the facts and to remain sceptical about survival. In France, for instance, most of the phenomena are accepted, and yet this conclusion is denied.

“I myself was convinced initially from Mrs. Piper’s trance utterances in the year 1889. I then had communications from deceased members of my own family which unmistakably showed that they were just as living and active as ever. But the best and most crucial evidence has been given since the death of F. W. H. Myers in 1901, for he knew all the alternative hypotheses which are still brought forward by those who pride themselves in not departing from orthodox science.

“After his death Myers took pains to show that these conceptions were not sufficient to account for all the phenomena. He showed this by an elaborate system of cross-correspondences, which have been studied by Mr. Piddington. He also showed the insufficiency of any hypothesis, short of survival, by scholarly communications far above the capacity of the medium.”

Sir Oliver added that all the evidence could not be summarised, but he cited two short instances—one case of cross-correspondence in which Myers was the communicator, and one “scholarly communication” characteristic of the late Professor Verrall. He referred his readers to the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, and the remarkable work, *The Ear of Dionysius*. These were only two out of a multitude of testimonies which had been ignored by those who drew negative conclusions, but which had their effect upon scientists who had studied them, “especially upon the group of the S.P.R. leaders who live at Fishers Hill.”

⁵ The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982: A History, by Renee Haynes, pages 48-49. Various members, among them Gerald Heard, Lord Charles Hope, Dame Edith Lyttelton and Sir Oliver Lodge, took part in a series of broadcasts on psychical research in January 1934. It was called *Inquiry into the Unknown*, and the cautious but open-minded Professor Broad, the Cambridge philosopher, [SPR President 1958-60] contributed a final summary. What was said demonstrated the findings, the ideas and the different currents of thought at work in the Society and brought in some fascinating cases from listeners.

This brought him to the case of Mrs. Sidgwick,⁶ who was generally regarded as ultra-sceptical, and Sir Oliver recalled that in spite of her scepticism Lord Balfour, at a recent meeting of the S.P.R., ended the reading of a paper written by her, in the following words:—

“Some of you may have felt that a note of caution and reserve has possibly been over-emphasised in Mrs. Sidgwick’s paper. If so, they may be glad to hear what I am about to say. Conclusive proof of survival is notoriously difficult to obtain, but the evidence may be such as to promote belief even though it falls short of conclusive proof. I have Mrs. Sidgwick’s assurance that upon the evidence before her, she herself is a firm believer both in survival and in the reality of communication between the living and the dead.”

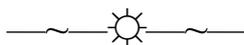
Continuing, Sir Oliver said: “And now let me take advantage of this unique opportunity provided by the B.B.C. and speak to those who find life hard, who get depressed sometimes, and who wonder whether all the struggle and effort is worthwhile. Let me convey to them some assurance, and state the certainty which has gradually grown up in my mind as a result of the evidence obtained over a period of nearly fifty years. All this evidence, so full and unmistakable, has brought me to a conception that the spiritual world is a great reality, and has led me back to the truth of the sayings recorded of the founder of Christianity: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.’ So were His assertions of a quiet confidence about a future life.

“Indeed, I don’t see how a professing Christian can have any doubt about it. If we look upon this life as only the beginning of our pilgrimage, and think of it as a preparation for a larger and fuller existence, then we might learn to welcome the rebuffs as opportunities for service and development of character. For it is our character that we take with us. We are not different the moment we pass over. Those on the other side tell us there is scope for talent and enterprise over there. Our friends come to welcome us when we cross the border. Friendship is as important there as here.

“Some there are who are spared most of the discipline of this life—who have been removed, so we think, prematurely. Many parents mourn the loss of children. I can only tell them that all is well with their loved ones, and the children are taken care of by good people.”

Those who had passed over lived in a spiritual world, and inhabited “the etheric body which they possessed all the time. They assure us that all is well with them, and that love bridges the chasm.”

Sir Oliver concluded by again appealing to official science to investigate the happenings of the seance room. He did not think it right that science should limit itself to investigating material phenomena only—a pursuit fashionable among most scientific men since the days of Sir Isaac Newton.



⁶ Eleanor (nee Balfour) Sidgwick: in 1882 the S.P.R. was founded, with her husband Henry Sidgwick as its first President. For more information on the work of Mrs Sidgwick please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 11, November 2008: “The Work of Mrs Henry Sidgwick: A Pioneer of the S.P.R.”

LEONORA E. PIPER



Medium Leonora E. Piper's (1857-1950) importance to psychical research may be assessed by the fact that she is still cited today by those writing about evidential phenomena supporting the concept of survival of bodily death. Please see *Psypioneer*, Vol.5, No. 3, March 2009: "Leonora E. Piper online – Carlos S. Alvarado".

Below is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", March 23rd 1934:

MEDIUM WHO CONVINCED SIR OLIVER LODGE

Mrs. Piper's Martyrdom for Psychic Science

By Dr. NANDOR FODOR

"I myself was convinced by the evidence derived from Mrs. Piper's trance utterances in the year 1889."

Behind this statement, made by Sir Oliver Lodge during his recent broadcast talk, is a remarkable story. Through Mrs. Piper, Sir Oliver had communication from deceased members of his own family, but he did not find conviction until after much investigation.

Writing in the "Bristol Evening World," Dr Nandor Fodor unfolds some of the story. We print excerpts below.

SOME day a monument will be erected to Leonore E. Piper.⁷ She is still with us. A woman of sterling character and courage on whom Professor William James⁸ one of the greatest of modern philosophers was willing to leave his reputation for wisdom or folly to stand or fall."

She converted Dr. Richard Hodgson, the greatest fraud-hunter in the history of psychical research to a belief in human survival.

She convinced Professor J. H. Hyslop, of Columbia University that "there is a future life and persistence of personal identity"—a declaration which cost him his professorial chair.

She bewildered the world's most eminent psychologists, and for a period of more than forty years, she endured all the vivisection which scientific ingenuity could devise, in its attempt to disprove the reality of an invisible world.

And this remarkable woman, Mrs. Leonore E. Piper, brought Sir Oliver Lodge to the conviction of survival.

⁷ Also spelt Leonore.

⁸ SPR President, 1894-5.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that this great scientist testified to the stupendous reality of survival long before he suffered an acute personal bereavement. His views on demonstrated survival were announced as early as 1909.

But those who attempt to explain away the great scientist's conviction of the truth of Spiritualism conveniently forget that.

Mrs. Piper was a trance medium. So-called spirit controls succeeded in spite of inconceivable difficulties, in efficiently handling an alien organism for earthly manifestations.

This is how "Pelham," one of Mrs. Piper's otherworld supervisors explained the position.

"In order to reveal themselves to you the spirits put themselves in an environment that discommodates them a good deal.

"They are like persons who have received a blow on the head and are in a state of semi-delirium. They must be calmed, encouraged, assured that their idea will immediately be of great importance. . . .

"In order to speak with you it is necessary for me to re-enter the body and there dream. Hence you must pardon my errors and the lacunae in my speech and memory."

The marvel of Mrs. Piper's case was that her body responded to the invaders exceedingly well. She could obtain three simultaneous communications: writing with both hands and speaking at the same time.

The dramatic activity of the hand was a remarkable phenomenon. It was full of intelligence and could be described more as a person than a hand.

Dr. Hodgson reported that a sitting where a woman was engaged in a profoundly personal conversation with the control concerning her relations "the hand was seized very quietly and as it were surreptitiously, and wrote a very personal communication to myself purporting to come from a deceased friend of mine and having no relation whatsoever to the sitters; precisely as if a caller should enter a room where two strangers to him were conversing but a friend of his is also present, and whispers a special message into the ear of the friend without disturbing the conversation."

The first point on which the average inquirer wishes to be satisfied is the integrity of the medium. We have the testimony of Mrs. Piper's discoverer, Professor William James.

For the first eighteen months he kept her under personal supervision. He hypnotised her and found the condition of her trance and hypnotic sleep radically different.

He found no signs of thought-transference either in the hypnotic condition or immediately after it.

It was the result of Professor James's representations to the Society for Psychical Research in London that Dr. Richard Hodgson was sent over to America, and initiated there the most famous period of mediumistic investigations.

He started by engaging detectives to watch Mrs. Piper, and see if she made any attempt to obtain information normally.

On days of sittings he forbade her to read the morning papers. He introduced all sitters under the pseudonym "Smith."

He improvised sitting for the benefit of chance callers of whose very existence Mrs. Piper could not have been aware.

For fifteen years he was ready to pounce upon the least suspicious circumstance. But in his second report to the Society of Psychical Research. Dr. Hodgson stated:

"At the present time I cannot profess to have any doubt that the chief communicators to whom I have referred in the foregoing pages are veritably the personages that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism."

The terror of fraudulent mediums, the hardest sceptic who ever entered the arena of psychical research, the man who exposed Mme. Blavatsky in India, became a Spiritualist.

His outlook upon life underwent a complete change. He refused remunerative offers from Universities and colleges, and lived happily on an inadequate salary in one room in Boston for the rest of his life.

Mrs. Piper paid her first visit to England in 1889. She was isolated more completely from the world than if she had been taken to a fever hospital.

Sir Oliver Lodge was her host at his house in Liverpool. His wife engaged an entirely new staff of servants. All her correspondence passed through the hands of her host, and she could not even go to a shopping expedition alone.

Yet this woman revealed the most extraordinary familiarity with the lives of all the strange people who were brought to her. Her control, the rascally "Phinuit," showed an astonishing familiarity with the boyhood days of two of Sir Oliver Lodge's uncles.

Sir Oliver Lodge thereupon sent a professional inquiry agent to Barking, where they lived, to see how much he could find out on the scene. The agent wrote:

"Mrs. Piper has certainly beaten me. My inquiries in modern Barking yield less information than she gave. Yet the most skilful agent could have done no more than secure the assistance of the local record keepers and the oldest inhabitants living."

Sir Oliver Lodge's first report, issued in 1890, was cautiously restricted to the conclusions:—

1. That Mrs. Piper's attitude is not one of deception.
2. No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts.

But nineteen years later in his *Survival of Man*, Sir Oliver admitted:

"The hypothesis of surviving intelligence and personality—not only surviving but anxious and able with difficulty to communicate—is the simplest and most straightforward and the only one that fits all the facts."

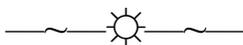


So runs in brief the story of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, and we congratulate the *Bristol Evening World* on publishing the long article, from which the above extracts are taken. Who can tell how much the testimony of such men as Lodge and Hodgson has contributed to the changed attitude of the press?

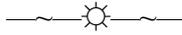
A full record of Mrs. Piper's work is given in *The Life and Work of Mrs. Piper* by Alta L. Piper (Kegan Paul. 7s. 6d.). Few mediums have withstood more meticulous and untiring investigation, and few have provided such crucial evidence in the face of the most stringent tests. Mrs. Piper is still alive, but the last important investigations took place in America in 1926-7.



Supplement to "Light," September 2nd 1899
From a photo by Cunningham, Boston, U.S.A.



DID HARRY HOUDINI EVER BELIEVE IN SPIRITUALISM?



This article is inspired by a casual comment made by my historian colleague, Leslie Price, the founder editor of *Psypioneer*, who presently sub-edits this journal with former SNU Secretary Charles Coulston.

Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5, October 2017, published "Letter from Harry Houdini to Dr W. J. Crawford – Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle".

Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016, published "Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel". It was Sir Arthur's wife's mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle.

This sent Harry Houdini on a mission for the rest of his life to prove Spiritualism a fraud; he died on October 31st, 1926.

This public hostility, however, was not always privately the case, as shown in a letter dated June 24th, 1920 to Dr W. J. Crawford, which appears on one of the glass slides.



Below is the glass slide, followed by the text:



Days Agency
1 Arundle Street
Strand
London
June 24th 1920

Dr. W. J. Crawford
1 Brookvale Terrace
Sydenham
Belfast

Dear Dr Crawford,

As promised am writing to let you know that I have witnessed Mlle Eva in a successful sitting. She manifested the other night, after a few blank sittings, but your medium must be a great deal more powerful, according to your report.

Sir Arthur tell [sic] me he thinks that the power comes from the womb, it certainly is a wonderful affair and there is no telling how far all this may lead to.

I am returning to America shortly and wish you would please let me have one or two snap shots to take back with me.

I suppose you heard Prof Hyslop has passed away. My permanent address in America is

278 West 113th Street
New York City U.S.A.

and if there is anything that I can do for you over there and if it is in my power will attend to same for you. Kindest regards best wishes

sincerely yours.

Signed Houdini ²

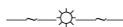


My comment: "It was Sir Arthur's wife's mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle. This sent Harry Houdini on a mission for the rest of his life to prove Spiritualism a fraud." Also Houdini's letter "that I have witnessed Mlle Eva in a successful sitting..."

However, Leslie commented to me that he doubted that Harry Houdini had never believed in Spiritualism.

In 1924, a couple of years before Houdini's death, he wrote "A Magician Among the Spirits", published by Harper & Brothers, New York:

"So I have gone to investigate the knocks, but as a result of my efforts I must confess that I am farther than ever from belief in the genuineness of Spirit manifestations and after twenty-five years of ardent research and endeavor I declare that nothing has been revealed to convince me that intercommunication has been established between the Spirits of the departed and those still in the flesh."



² Houdini's letter would be referring to Crawford's work with the Goligher Circle. Around 1914 he began to investigate the physical phenomena of Kathleen Goligher and the group around her, known as the Goligher Circle. His investigation continued until his death in 1920. Within a month of receiving this letter from Houdini Dr W. J. Crawford was dead.

INTRODUCTION

FROM my early career as a mystical entertainer I have been interested in Spiritualism as belonging to the category of mysticism, and as a side line to my own phase of mystery shows I have associated myself with mediums, joining the rank and file and held seances as an independent medium to fathom the truth of it all. At the time I appreciated the fact that I surprised my clients, but while aware of the fact that I was *deceiving* them I did not see or understand the seriousness of trifling with such sacred sentimentality and the baneful result which inevitably followed. To me it was a lark. I was a mystifier and as such my ambition was being gratified and my love for a mild sensation satisfied. After delving deep I realized the seriousness of it all. As I advanced to riper years of experience I was brought to a realization of the seriousness of trifling with the hallowed reverence which the average human being bestows on the departed, and when I personally became afflicted with similar grief I was chagrined that I should ever have been guilty of such frivolity and for the first time realized that it bordered on crime.

As a consequence my own mental attitude became considerably more plastic. I too would have parted gladly with a large share of my earthly possessions for the solace of one word from my loved departed—just one word that I was sure had been genuinely bestowed by them—and so I was brought to a full consciousness of the sacredness of the thought, and became deeply interested to discover if there was a possible reality to the return, by Spirit, of one who had passed over the border and ever since have devoted to this effort my heart and soul and what brain power I possess. In this frame of mind I began a new line of psychical research in all seriousness and from that time to the present I have never entered a seance room except with an open mind devoutly anxious to learn if intercommunication is within the range of possibilities and with a willingness to accept any demonstration which proves a revelation of truth.

It is this question as to the truth or falsity of intercommunication between the dead and the living, more than anything else, that has claimed my attention and to which I have devoted years of research and conscientious study. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says in one of his lectures:

When one has a knock at the door, one does not pause, but goes further to see what causes it and investigates, and sooner or later one discovers that a message is being delivered.

So I have gone to investigate the knocks, but as a result of my efforts I must confess that I am farther than ever from belief in the genuineness of Spirit manifestations and after twenty-five years of ardent research and endeavor I declare that nothing has been revealed to convince me that intercommunication has been established between the Spirits of the departed and those still in the flesh.

I have made compacts with fourteen different persons that whichever of us died first would communicate with the other if it were possible, but I have never received a word. The first of these compacts was made more than twenty-five years ago and I am certain that if any one of the persons could have reached me he would have done so. One compact was made with my private secretary, the late John W. Sargent, a man of mature years. We were very much attached to each other. The day before he underwent an operation he said to me:

“Houdini, this may be the end. If it is, I am coming back to you no matter what happens on the other side provided there is any way I can reach you. And if I can come, you will know it is I because I am going to will it so strong that you cannot be mistaken.”

He died the next day. That was more than three years ago and there has been no sign. I have waited and watched believing that if any man ever could have sent back word he would have been the man. And I know that our minds were so close to each other that I would have received the signal that my friend wanted to call me. No one could accuse me of being unwilling to receive such a sign because it would have been the greatest enlightenment I could possibly have had in this world.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a sincere and confirmed believer in Spirit phenomena whose acquaintance I esteem, advises me that I do not secure convincing results because I am a skeptic and I therefore want to make it clear that I am not a scoffer. I firmly believe in a Supreme Being and that there is a Hereafter. Therefore since their departure from this earth it has been my practice, as a final duty, to visit the sacred resting places of my dearly beloved parents, and ask their protection and silent blessings through the Omnipotent Almighty.

The very first place I visit when I return from a trip is this same hallowed spot. Both promised me faithfully innumerable times in this life that if they could aid and protect me from their graves or from the Great Beyond, they would do so. My mind has always been open and receptive and ready to believe. In attending seances I have always made a pledge of honor with myself to banish all profane thoughts from my mind to the utmost of my ability. I further pledge myself to concentrate. I have persuaded my whole soul, brain and thought to a point where the medium has my attention to such an extent that at the finish I feel as much exhausted as the medium who shows to those present the effects of great strain irrespective of its cause.

Thus it must be seen that I am not a skeptic. However, it has been my life work to invent and publicly present problems, the secrets of which not even the members of the magical profession have been able to discover, and the effects of which have proved as inexplicable to the scientists as any marvel of the mediums, and I claim that in so far as the revelation of trickery is concerned my years of investigation have been more productive than the same period of similar work by any scientist; that my record as a "mystifier of mystifiers" qualifies me to look below the surface of any mystery problem presented to me and that with my eyes trained by thirty years' experience in the realms of mystery and occultism it is not strange that I view these so-called phenomena from a different angle than the ordinary layman or even the expert investigator.

A memorable incident in my life and one that shows how little the world at large understands the methods by which my mysteries are produced and also shows how easy it is for even a great intellect faced with a mystery it cannot fathom, to conclude that there is something supernatural involved, has to do with Madame Sarah Bernhardt.³

During one of my various engagements in Paris she had witnessed my performances and was anxious to see one of my outdoor exploits, so, when we were both playing at the same time in Boston, out of good camaraderie I gave a special performance at my hotel adding a few extra experiments for her benefit. As we seated in the motor car on the way to my demonstration she placed her arm gently around my shoulder, and in that wonderful speaking voice with and which she was gifted and which has thrilled thousands of auditors, but now stilled forever, she said to me:

³ Pioneer notes: Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) was a French stage actress, who starred in some of the most popular French plays of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including 'La Dame Aux Camelias' by Alexandre Dumas, fils, Ruy ... On 22 February 1915 a surgeon amputated her leg almost to the hip.

“Houdini, you do such marvellous things. Couldn’t you—could you bring back my leg for me?”

I looked at her, startled, and failing to see any mischievous sparkle in her eye replied:

“Good heavens, Madame, certainly not, you cannot be serious. You know my powers are limited and you are actually asking me to do the impossible.”

“Yes,” she said as she leaned closer to me, “but you do the impossible.”

We looked at each other; she, the travel-worn, experienced woman of the world; I, the humble mystifier, nonplussed and thunderstruck at the extraordinary, unintentional compliment she was paying me. Then I asked:

“Are you jesting?”

“*Mais non, Houdini, j’ ai jamais été plus sérieux dans ma vie,*”⁴ she answered she slowly shook her head.

“Madame, you exaggerate my ability,” I told her.

Each of the marvels of modern scientific achievement such as the telephone, radio, flying machine, radium, etc., were at one time classed impossible and would have been looked upon as supernatural, if not Spiritual manifestations. Similar mysteries, but more frail in principle and constructive detail, were the instruments used by the priestcraft of ancient religious cults for the purpose of holding the mass of unintelligent beings in servitude.

It is not unusual for the eye or ear to play tricks with one but when such illusions and delusions are taken for the Spirit forms of the departed and voices of the dead instead of being recognized as some subjective phenomena brought about by a physical cause the situation takes on a grave aspect. It is this transfer of an inner reaction to an external object which constitutes practically all that is necessary to be placed in the category of “psychics,” who represent the priests and ministers of Spiritualism.

Distressed relatives catch at the least word which may remotely indicate that the Spirit which they seek is in communication with them. One little sign even, which appeals to their waiting imagination, shatters all ordinary caution and they are converted. Then they begin to accept all kinds of natural events as results of Spirit intervention. This state of mind is productive of many misfortunes, including suicides by those who think they are going to happiness with loved ones beyond the pale.

When in Europe in 1919 finishing an engagement interrupted by the World War I was impressed by the eagerness of grief-stricken parents for the solace of a word from the boy who had passed on and my desire for the truth was renewed with fresh vigor. I am informed that so great has the “medium” craze become in Berlin that the grief-stricken residents have spent great sums of money in the hope of discovering mediums who will “guarantee them a glimpse behind the veil.” It is with the deepest interest and concern that I have watched this great wave of Spiritualism sweep the world in recent months and realized that it has taken such a hold on persons of a neurotic temperament, especially those suffering from bereavement, that it has become a menace to health and sanity.

Professor George M. Robertson, eminent psychopathologist, and Physician-Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Mental Hospital, made the danger of insanity

⁴ “Oh, no, Houdini, I never was more serious in my life.”

resulting from strong belief in Spiritualism by neurotics the subject of a part of his annual report in 1920. He says:

“Those who had sustained bereavements during the war and bore them with equanimity in the days of crowded incidents and amidst the pressure of war activities, such as Red Cross and other work, find it much harder to bear up now, although time has elapsed. Some have broken down since the war came to an end. Many, as a solace to their feelings, have taken an interest in Spiritualism. Since Dr. Charles Mercier quoted in the preface of his book ‘Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge’ my warning on the danger of neurotic persons engaging in practical inquiries of a Spiritualistic nature, I have received many requests to say more on the subject. I have little to add save to reaffirm the statement then made.

“I do not consider either Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Sir Oliver Lodge to be safe judges, whose opinion should be accepted on this difficult and important subject, in view of their bereavement and unconscious desires. If the wish be father to the thought, it is mother to the hallucination of the senses.

“The tricks the brain can play without calling in Spiritualistic aids are simply astounding, and only those who have made a study of morbid as well as normal psychology, realize the full truth of this.”

I have read with keen curiosity the articles by leading scientists on the subject of psychic phenomena, particularly those by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, in which they have discussed their respective conversions to a belief in communication with the dead. There is no doubt in my mind that some of these scientists are sincere in their belief but unfortunately it is through this very *sincerity* that thousands become converts. The fact that they are scientists does not endow them with an especial gift for detecting the particular sort of fraud used by mediums, nor does it bar them from being deceived, especially when they are fortified in their belief by grief, for the various books and records of the subject are replete with deceptions practised on noted scientists who have essayed to investigate prominent mediums. It is perfectly rational to suppose that I may be deceived once or twice by a new illusion, but if my mind, which has been so keenly trained for years to invent mysterious effects, can be deceived, how much more susceptible must the ordinary observer be.

During my last trip abroad, in 1919, I attended over one hundred seances with the sole purpose of honest investigation; these seances were presided over by well-known mediums in France and England. In addition to attending these seances I spent a great deal of time conferring with persons prominently identified with Spiritualism. In the course of my intense investigations I have met most of the famous mediums of our time. I have submitted to conditions imposed by them and religiously awaited results, but I still question any so-called proof of the existence of Spirits who are interested in any way, physically or mentally, in the welfare of mortal men. It is not within the province of this book, which is the result of my years of investigation, to give all the historical detail concerning every medium mentioned, though enough are furnished in each instance to establish my claims, each of which is based on a thorough study of the records as are also my statements many of which are supported by documentary evidence in my possession.

I have spent a goodly part of my life in study and research. During the last thirty years I have read every single piece of literature on the subject of Spiritualism that I could. I have accumulated one of the largest libraries in the world on psychic phenomena, Spiritualism, magic, witchcraft, demonology, evil spirits, etc., some of the material going back as far as 1489, and I doubt if any one in the world has so complete a library on modern Spiritualism, but nothing I ever read concerning the so-called Spiritualistic

phenomena has impressed me as being genuine. It is true that some of the things I read seemed mystifying but I question if they would be were they to be reproduced under different circumstances, under test *conditions*, and before expert mystifiers and open minded committees. Mine has not been an investigation of a few days or weeks or months but one that has extended over thirty years and in that thirty years I have not found one incident that savoured of the genuine. If there had been any real unalloyed demonstration to work on, one that did not reek of fraud, one that could not be reproduced by earthly powers, then there would be something for a foundation, but up to the present time everything that I have investigated has been the result of deluded brains or those which were too actively and intensely willing to believe.

HOUDINI.



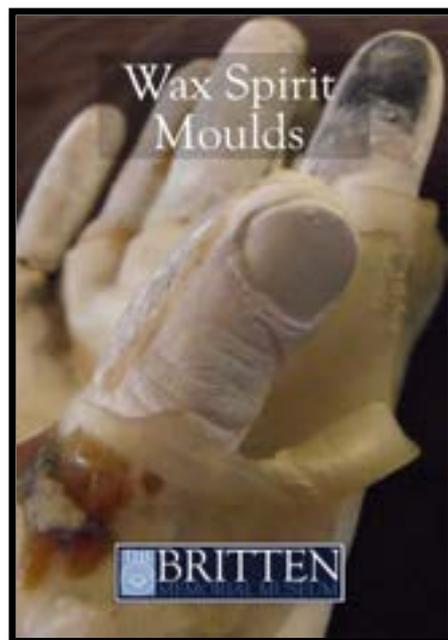
Houdini in his lifetime made bold claims that he could reproduce all Spiritualist phenomena; one of the most convincing phenomena in our history is the production of wax moulds. This subject is well represented in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 11, No. 06/7, June-July 2015: “Paraffin Wax Moulds” and “Wax Gloves Procured from Materialized Hands”.

The Britten Museum & Library has produced an informative booklet on this rare phenomenon titled “Wax Spirit Moulds”. The booklet was reviewed by the Society for Psychical Research’s Tom Ruffles and published in the above issue and reproduced below.⁵

Reviewed for the SPR by Tom Ruffles

The Britten Memorial Museum, named after Emma Hardinge Britten, is housed in the Arthur Findlay College at Stansted Hall, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.⁶ The College is administered by the Spiritualists’ National Union, and the museum contains a wide range of exhibits relating to Spiritualism. Among these are a number of casts made from wax moulds, artefacts said to demonstrate the reality of spirits. The museum’s curator, Paul Gaunt (also editor of both the *Psypioneer*⁷ and *The Pioneer* electronic journals) has compiled this informative booklet which discusses the museum’s collection of casts, other instances of them in the literature, and the debate that took place within the Society for Psychical Research over the evidential value they provide.

The theory behind the moulds is that a spirit would be able to produce one by materialising a portion of itself, usually a hand but also part of a foot or even its face, and pushing it into a bowl of warm paraffin wax. The resulting wax sleeve could be set in cold water, leaving a mould that would be undamaged upon the limb’s dematerialisation. Repeated immersions, building up layers, would serve to increase the thickness and strength of the mould. As wax is so fragile, it can be filled with plaster of



⁵ The booklet is available at the Arthur Findlay College and also at the SNU online shop at: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/spirit-wax-moulds>

⁶ Now called The Britten Museum & Library.

⁷ *Psypioneer* officially ended in August 2017: however, Marc Demarest and the International Association for the Preservation of Occult and Spiritualist Periodicals (IAPSOP) have kindly offered to host all back issues of *Psypioneer* in a dedicated section of the IAPSOP website. <http://www.iapsop.com/psypioneer/>

Paris which upon setting retains (leaving aside distortions and damage from handling) the shape and detail of the materialised body part in a more permanent form.

Wax moulds date from as early as the 1870s, but those at Stansted Hall were donated by Sutton-in-Ashfield Spiritualist church in Nottinghamshire, where they had been on display since 1938. These, Gaunt suggests, may well have been the last done by mediums (as opposed to researchers). An article in the 16 December issue of *Two Worlds*, which is reprinted, describes their production through the mediumship of William and George Finney, uncle and nephew, at Sutton-in-Ashfield.

According to the *Two Worlds* article, the moulds were created by the pair in informal conditions, not during a séance but sitting in the dark in a cupboard under the stairs with buckets of melted wax and cold water. The booklet contains three colour photographs of the museum's casts, wax still adhering, showing them in all their strange beauty. One is of a pair of hands with interlinked fingers presented in a way that, it has been argued, would be more difficult to fake than it would a single hand.



FIG. 79.—CAST FROM A WAX MOULD WHICH HAD SUBSIDED AND FLATTENED WHILE STILL WARM. Walls thin and defective. Accidentally marked across the middle.

The article is followed by an outline history of wax moulds, placing them in the context of the development of Spiritualist phenomena. Wax moulds were preceded by impressions left in putty and flour, but paraffin offered a more suitable material, and the technique was used by a number of mediums. Gaunt gives a short overview of some of them, but notes that each generally only tried the procedure for a brief period, and after becoming fashionable in the 1870s it went into abeyance until revived by the remarkable Franek Kluski, subject of a recent book by Zofia Weaver. Weaver and Gaunt both mention that at least in Kluski's case it was a messy business, with splashes of wax everywhere, which perhaps made it unappealing for sitters even though the results were startling.

Gaunt includes sections on experiments with Kluski at the Institut Métapsychique International in Paris and in Warsaw conducted by Gustave Geley (three photographs, two of hands and one of a foot, from Geley's 1927 *Clairvoyance and Materialisation* are shown, the hands revealing remarkable skin features), and on the rather fractious debate that took place in the pages of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* in the early 1990s over whether it was possible to reproduce moulds like Kluski's by normal means.

Gaunt's conclusion from the debate is that a living hand can be removed from a wax mould IF the wax is of a reasonable thickness caused by repeated immersion; but the thinness that Kluski is reported to have achieved through a single immersion, and without setting in cold water, should make the operation impossible as the mould would be too fragile for withdrawal without its destruction. His verdict is that, pending further research which adheres to Geley's precise method (which recreations so far have failed to do), Kluski's moulds can be considered good evidence for the return of spirits.



Earlier, in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 2014, Garth Willey turned attention to Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini on the subject of wax gloves; Doyle exhibited wax gloves in his psychic museum. Below is the account regarding Harry Houdini taken from “Searchlight on Psychological Research”, by Joseph F Rinn, London, Rider & Co, 1954:

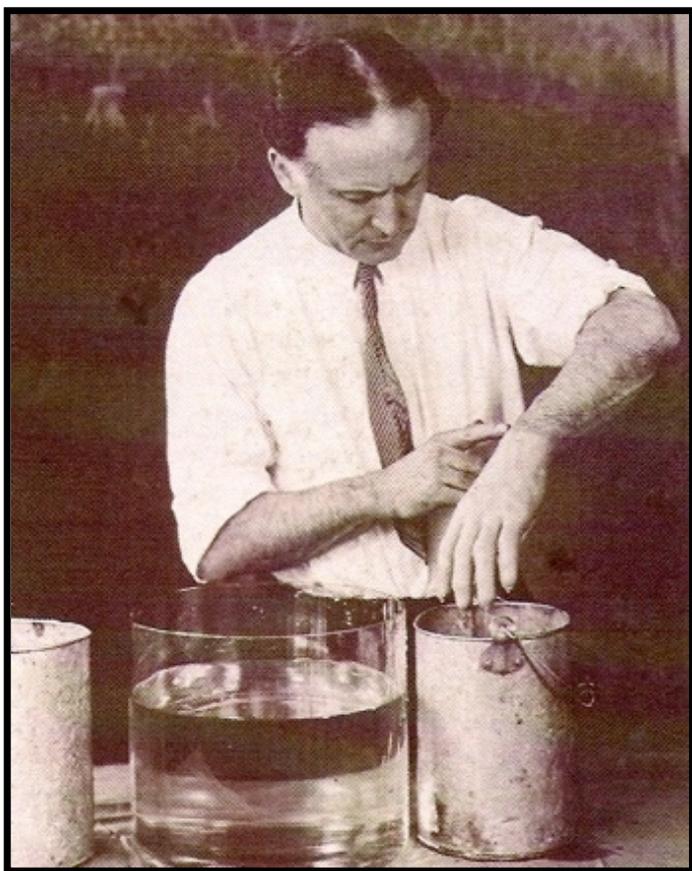
Harry Houdini, in ACD’s presence in America in 1923, had proclaimed that he could do anything which a medium had ever done. I don’t know of any public attempt Houdini may have made to replicate the phenomenon of ‘wax gloves,’ but he certainly made a valiant attempt to find a way to do so... at least to be able to replicate the exhibition of wax gloves, let alone replicate the physical phenomenon of producing them before reliable witnesses. Houdini’s long-time pal and fellow (amateur) conjurer/magician, Joseph F Rinn, wrote of it many years later.

The following is the 2 page chapter he wrote regarding the production of wax gloves:⁸

WHILE Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was lecturing here in 1922, Houdini paid me a visit and, in the course of our conversation, said: “In talking with Doyle about the wax gloves mentioned by Richet and others as having been produced at séances through psychic power, I asserted that they had been produced through fraud. Doyle challenged my statement and dared me or any other magician to produce similar hands by trickery.”

“Doyle is quite gullible,” I replied.

“I’m not so sure of that when it comes to the wax hands,” said Houdini in a serious tone. “I’ve tried and failed to make them. What do you know about that stunt?”



“About everything necessary to produce them, Harry,” I replied, as I led him into a laboratory I had in my office.

“Well, I tried at first to make one by putting my hand in heated wax—and look at my hand,” said Houdini ruefully.

“I’ll bet you put your hand in the wax without soaping it,” I said laughing.

“Yes,” said Houdini, “I did, but I know better now. I tried tying a cord to my finger and pulling it through the wax on the back of my hand, but I could never get my hand out of the cast without breaking it.”

“Well, Harry, forget those old methods; they’re not used now. They produce wax casts now with rubber gloves.”

⁸ *Searchlight*, Chapter 36, pp. 278, 279.

“With rubber gloves, eh?” said Houdini, as he looked at his burnt skin. “I wish I had known that.”

“I was going to make a wax hand for you, as, fearing I might some day be challenged to do the trick, I have all the paraphernalia here, but I had better explain the method to you and let you practise making them. The rubber glove must be filled with air to duplicate a hand. Fill in the part of the glove at the wrist with a solid piece of wood with a hole in it, so that with a bicycle pump you can fill it with air. Put a peg in the hole to keep the air in. Dip the glove in the hot wax several times to give it a body, so that it will not collapse when you dip it in cold water, and let the air out of the glove.”

“But such a cast would be a straight hand,” said Houdini, after a moment’s thought, “and Doyle’s pictures show a clenched fist.”

“Oh, that’s easy also,” I said. “Instead of filling the glove with air, use a syringe and fill it with hot water. Then, after dipping the glove in the hot wax several times, let the hot water out, and while the wax cast is still soft, you can press the wax fingers into any position you wish. After that, dip it in cold water, and you are all set with a perfect cast of a clenched fist.”

“I can fool Doyle easily with that stunt,” Houdini replied. “Oh, no I can’t,” he added despondently, “for Doyle had photographs of many unclenched hands that showed perfect finger-prints of the spirit or medium.”

“Well, what of that? I know that Albert Welde, a Chicago engraver, had perfected a method of engraving whereby he can duplicate the fingerprints of anybody perfectly.”

“But nobody could fake finger-prints on a wax cast,” protested Houdini.

“For a mystery man, Harry, you’re quite dumb,” I replied, with a laugh. “If you make a mould of a hand in dental wax or in plaster of paris, it can easily be transferred to a wax cast.”

“But you couldn’t get your hand out of such a mould without breaking it,” protested Houdini.

“You could if you made a mould of half your hand at a time, first the palm side and then the back-of-the-hand side. Join the two halves together and seal the cracks. With that mould any rubber manufacturer could make you a rubber glove having on it all the finger-prints.”

“I get you. What a medium you’d make!” said Houdini admiringly. “Just wait until Doyle gets back, and I’ll have the laugh on him. He certainly is an easy mark for any trickster. Sir Arthur still believes what Dr. Crawford wrote about Kathleen Goligher’s psychic powers, in spite of the fact that Dr. Fournier d’Albe exposed her as a fraud. I met him in England in 1920 and had a letter from him to-day. I brought you a copy, as it may be of use to you some day when that business of yours permits you to find time to write about your experiences with psychic fakers.”

Dr. Fournier d'Albe's letter read as follows:

“Kingston-on-Thames,
Oct. 10, 1922.

Dear Houdini,

Yours of the 26th ult. just received. Yes, the Goligher legend has lost its glamour. I must say I was greatly surprised at Crawford's blindness.

Sincerely yours,

D'ALBE.”

“When was the nearest time in your career, Harry,” I inquired, “that you were close to being defeated?”

A grim look appeared on Houdini's face and he replied: “I'll never forget the agony I went through in one test in Europe. A group of locksmiths got together in an endeavour to trip me up. They constructed a lock without a keyhole, and it could not be opened with any jemmy I possessed. They had me sweating for hours trying to get out of my bonds, and I thought I was licked. Sometimes a performer gets a lucky break, and that time I got mine. In my struggle to release myself, the lock, without any help from me, sprung open. Of course I got credit for opening it.”⁹



Editor's Note:

To my knowledge, Houdini was never to produce wax moulds fraudulently; Rinn gives no explanation as to how such a long-winded process could take place in a séance room under test conditions! Franek Kluski sat under strict test conditions. On occasion cholesterol was introduced into the bath of wax without the medium's knowledge; this would show the researchers that the moulds produced at the experimental séance were in fact from the melted wax produced at the time of the séance.

However, one would consider that Houdini was one of the most knowledgeable researchers into Spiritualism, given his statement in the introduction of his book published above:

“I have spent a goodly part of my life in study and research. During the last thirty years I have read every single piece of literature on the subject of Spiritualism that I could. I have accumulated one of the largest libraries in the world on psychic phenomena, Spiritualism, ...”

Houdini believed in the hereafter without doubt but he stated in his Preface: “GLADLY would I embrace Spiritualism if it could prove its claims, but I am not willing to be deluded by the fraudulent impositions of so-called psychics or accept as sacred reality any of the evidence that has been placed before me thus far” (dated Spring 1924).

To my mind, a good, knowledgeable researcher would give a balanced overview of the phenomena or its history, taking in all aspects, most importantly the original sources of its origin.

The foundation of Spiritualism is generally accepted as the events of Hydesville in 1848, albeit the phenomena at the Hydesville house started around five years previously according

⁹ Garth Willey notes: Rinn's vernacular account (above) of how he helped Houdini with his attempts to reproduce the wax gloves phenomenon demonstrates his personality and clearly shows he continued as a friend and confidant for Houdini through 37 years until Houdini's death.

to the signed statements of those who actually witnessed the unfolding events, which became the foundation of Modern Spiritualism.

A MAGICIAN AMONG THE SPIRITS

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

“THE story of modern spirit manifestations, so called, dates from 1848 and the “solitary farmhouse” of John D. Fox and his wife in the village of Hydesville, in New York State, and centres around their two little girls, Margaret, eight, and Kate, younger by a year and a half. Successfully exploited while still children; credited with occult power; becoming world-famous as “The Fox Sisters,”—their record is, without exception, one of the most interesting in the history of spiritualism.

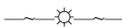
“John Fox and his wife appear to have been of the “good, honest,” but not mentally keen type of farmer folk. Of the two, the wife was the more “simple minded,” and when the “nervous, superstitious woman” began to hear unusual noises which she could not account for, and which seemed in some peculiar manner connected with her children, she concluded at once that the sounds were “unnatural” and began to brood over the matter. Her fears increased with the persistent recurrence of the mysterious sounds, and before long she took some of the neighbors into her confidence. They were as puzzled as the mother, the Fox home became an object of suspicion and the neighborhood set itself the task of solving the mystery.

“With the increase of interest came a proportionate increase in the noises, which commenced to be known as “rappings,” and which, in spite of the positive denials by the children of any knowledge of how they were produced, regularly answered by an uncanny code questions asked the two girls. The possibility of duplicity in such children never occurred to any one in Hydesville, with the result that the timid hint of a “disembodied spirit” soon became a theory. Some one asked the girls if a murder had ever been committed in the house. The ominous sounds of the code answered in the affirmative and at once to the eager investigators, the theory became a proven fact and there flashed up in their minds the vision of a personality in the Spirit World endeavouring by crude means which somewhat resembled telegraphy, to give to human beings the benefit of its vaster knowledge, the whole affair in some obscure manner being connected with two little girls.

“At this critical moment a married daughter of John D. Fox and his wife came home to Hydesville for a visit. Twenty-three years older than little Margaret, of a very different type than either father or mother, she seems to have grasped instantly the possibilities in the “occult” powers of her little sisters and to have taken complete command of the Fox family’s affairs at once. Her first move was to organize a “Society of Spiritualists” and encourage crowds to come to the house to see the children, Hydesville became famous almost overnight.

“News of the peculiar “rappings” spread with lightning-like rapidity and soon became an absorbing topic of conversation, not only in the United States, but in England, France, Italy, and Germany as well. Women like Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Barrett Browning were said to have given their whole thought to it, and men of the strongest intellect and will to be “caught in the meshes it had woven in contemporaneous thought.”

“Hydesville became too small a field for the operations of Mrs. Fish, the older sister, very quickly, and soon she appears in Rochester with the girls, publicly exhibiting their feats to great crowds for money, realizing from one hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a night in profits, which she pocketed. From Rochester she took them to ...”



What Houdini has written at the start of his book hardly warrants comment, as it does not represent what is recorded as to the events which unfolded. It appears that much of this information is taken from the time when the Fox sisters denounced Spiritualism as a fraud forty years later in 1888.

For example, Mrs Margarete Fox, of whom Houdini records as “the wife was the more “simple minded,” and when the “nervous, superstitious woman” began to hear unusual noises which she could not account for, and which seemed in some peculiar manner connected with her children...” It was Mrs Fox, along with a former tenant, William Duesler, who formulated the story and communicated with the spirit.

The two young girls at this time played no significant part in the story and were not named in the original report. The general code was utilised by Mrs Fox in the questioning of the communicator. The alphabet code was devised by William Duesler and would later at Rochester be used by the now developing Fox sisters.

The “married daughter” Houdini refers to is Ann Leah, who *did not come* to Hydesville until after the family had left. So this is a remarkable *un-factual* comment by Houdini:

“Her first move was to organize a “Society of Spiritualists” and encourage crowds to come to the house to see the children, Hydesville became famous almost overnight.”

So this remarkable claim never took place!



Leslie Price in sub-editing this issue pointed out to me a book review of *A Magician Among the Spirits*, published below by the Society for Psychical Research, possibly written by Dr Dingwall, highlighting other errors made by the book's author.¹⁰

I THINK it was Johnson who pointed out the fact that knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. Though Houdini's knowledge of psychical research may be most profound, he has successfully hidden this fact from the reader of *A Magician Among the Spirits*. And the historian of the future who has to refer to the “impartial results of many years of careful study”, will deserve all the pity he gets.

When I opened the volume and found two pages of “errata and addendum” I feared the worst. Another two pages could easily be compiled. What are we to think of the claim (*vide* jacket) that the book “forms a valuable chapter in the crusade for truth,” when we are told that Crawford's book was “published by David Gow” (P. 177), and that the “Crewe Photographers” consist of “Mr. Hope. Mrs, Buxton, Mrs. Deane, and Mr. Vearnacombe” [sic] (p. 123)?

¹⁰ Taken from the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, November 1924; pages 339/40 reviewed Houdini's book, *A Magician Among the Spirits*, by HOUDINI [*pseud.* i.e. Weiss, Harry]. (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1924, pp. xix. 294. \$4 net.)

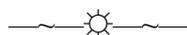
Houdini tells us on page 63 that Mr. Dingwall had caught Eusapia Palladino cheating and “stated positively” that he knew her to be a fraud. For the sake of posterity we will inform Houdini that Mr. Dingwall never saw Eusapia in his life, and that he is not at all certain that she was always fraudulent. On page 128 we are told that Mr. Harry Price had a sitting with Mrs. Deane, whereas the fact is that Mr. Price has never had a sitting with this particular photographic medium. These are only a few of the silly mis-statements in Houdini’s “crusade for truth,” and none of those mentioned has been corrected in the list of errata. We are almost tempted to say with Macbeth: “And be these juggling fiends no more believed”!

There is an interesting chapter on Slade, and an alleged confession extracted from the slate-writing medium by a namesake of Houdini’s—Remigius Weiss. The “confession” is printed on page 99, but why this most important document has not been reproduced in facsimile is a mystery not elucidated by the author. As there are no fewer than six portraits of Houdini scattered throughout the pages, it is to be regretted that photography was not brought in as a witness to this very strange “confession.”

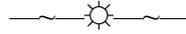
Houdini records (p. 20), another confession by Ira, the survivor of the two Davenport brothers, that their “phenomena” were produced by perfectly “by natural means.”

Houdini gravely warns us (p. 189) that not the least of the evils of Spiritualism is the insanity which it causes," and informs us that an “English doctor,” wisely unnamed, “has estimated the number of such cases at a million.” I am afraid that the perusal of Houdini’s book will not effect any cures.

Students of the “nu speling” will find many choice examples in *A Magician Among the Spirits*. We read of Eva C. and the Villa “Carmine”; Mlle. “Tomchick”; Mr. “Baggley,” etc., etc. The author informs us in his *Introduction* he doubts “if any one in the world has so complete a library on modern Spiritualism” as Houdini. What a pity he did not make use of it!



Rescue the history of Dutch Spiritualism



It took the staff of the Dutch ‘Het Johan Borgman Fonds’ foundation over eight years to complete the task they set themselves but the end result is magnificent.

The history of Spiritualism in the Netherlands 1880 – 2015 is now publicly available to everyone.

The huge archive is deposited at the regional archival institution in Utrecht. Everyone interested can go and visit it. It contains, among others, over 5,600 files, each of these folders filled with original documents, handwritten letters and photographs.

Included is a library of the most important – and rare – books and journals, some of these dating back to the 1860s. During WWII the German occupation forces issued a law that made it illegal to have any letters, books or journals about ‘occult’ and ‘Spiritualistic’ or to practise seances and hold meetings.



The Germans also actively confiscated libraries, archives and personal belongings that were considered to be of an occult nature.

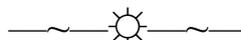
The ‘Het Johan Borgman Fonds’ staff spend much time in localising the last remaining prewar books and journals. After the Iron Curtain fell in the early 1990s a small collection of correspondence that once belonged to the local Amsterdam Chapter of the Spiritualistic society, Harmonia, was recovered from Russia. A rare find.

Most documents in this huge archive are in Dutch but correspondence in English, French, German and Spanish can be found in the section of the International Spiritualist Federation (ISF). The index to this archive is available and searchable on the internet.

There are two collections, No. 1390 and No. 1841.¹⁷ Everyone can visit this archive in Utrecht on weekdays during office hours. It is free of charge.

For more detailed information and questions e-mail: info@hjbfnl

The photograph is of Wim Kramer discovering historical spiritual documents in 2015 that were hidden for over half a century in the mantelpiece



¹⁷ See: <http://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/english>



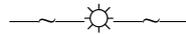
PIONEER

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay A.G.M. 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.



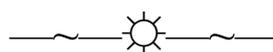
The Huddersfield A.G.M. this year, 2018

Marking the journal's fifth birthday

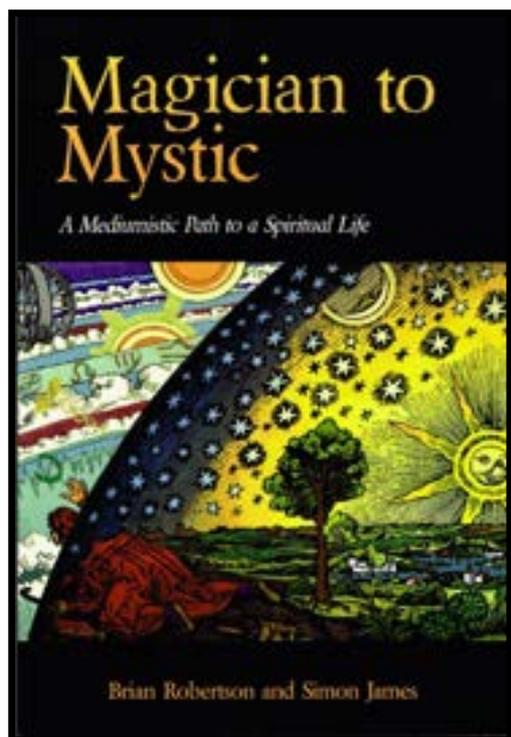
**Pioneer is pleased to announce
it has reached:**

**ONE THOUSAND
individual subscribers!**

Additionally, there are SNUi & on-line readers



Book Review:



Magician to Mystic

A Mediumistic Path to a Spiritual Life

by Brian Robertson and Simon James

The pages will take the reader through the various avenues of psychic and spiritual development – underlying the stages and phases of development of conscious awareness, leading to a well-disciplined development of mediumship on a solid foundation.

This is well demonstrated by the writers' extensive knowledge and teaching abilities to clearly define and emphasise these various stages, the pitfalls, understanding and philosophy of the development of mediumship throughout the book.

The book gives an esoteric heritage of the mediumistic foundation:

“Our work is an outflowing of esoteric knowledge deeply rooted in ancient spiritual thought and expressed throughout history’s cultural and religious traditions.”¹

The chapters nicely bring together the phases of understanding and development; Chapter six, for example, is the “Three Aspects of Being”; these are the primary aspects of our being – spirit, soul and physical body are discussed, leading to psychism and mediumship.

The ensuing chapter focuses on energy, vibration, aura and colour, etc., leading to becoming a balanced medium in Chapter eight. These constitute just a small portion of the book; other subjects include altered states, e.g. trance mediumship and healing, etc.

Magician to Mystic, eighteen chapters, 187 pages, complete with a glossary of terms. References, list of illustrations, information about the authors and their Inner Quest Foundation.²

This new book comes highly recommended.³

Paul J. Gaunt.



Brian & Simon book signing at the Arthur Findlay College.

¹ Page 32.

² Inner Quest Foundation: <https://www.innerquestfoundation.com>

³ Available at the Arthur Findlay College bookshop directly by calling the College on 01279 813636 or from the SNU website: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop>

The aura is an integral part of our makeup and forms a relationship with the production of mediumship; the article below is taken from the "Two Worlds", October 14th, 1938. The article's author, James Allen, looks at the relationship of the aura to the production of the phenomena of the séance room, a source of energy at the command of the spirit operators:

THE HUMAN AURA

WHAT IT IS

By JAMES H. ALLEN



THE New English Dictionary defines an Aura as a "subtle emanation from any body," but before we are able to consider the possible relationships of the Aura we must find for ourselves a much more comprehensive answer to the question, "What is the Human Aura?" than is contained in the Dictionary quoted.

It appears to be an easy matter to frame an answer to our question by stating that it is the haze of colour which clairvoyants claim to see surrounding all human beings. But it is essential that we know much more about the Aura than its appearance alone.

As the faculty of clairvoyance is not common to all, we want to know if it is possible for us to independently verify its existence, and having done this to ask ourselves if it is associated only with human beings, or is common to all living things? Is there any similar phenomenon associated with non-living things? Is it affected by changes in both body and mind, or is either affected by changes independently of the other? Is it affected by change in external conditions, and does it play any part in the production of the phenomena of the séance room?

To some types of clairvoyant vision, the human body is seen to be surrounded by a haze, or faint cloud shaped like an egg, extending beyond the outline of the form to a distance of from twelve inches to three feet. This haze or cloud is the Aura. At a first glance, it appears to be one complete whole, diffused with changing colour, and constantly in motion. A closer and more detailed examination reveals the possibility of its being, divided into two or more distinct divisions, each of which, whilst capable of acting one upon the other, is yet the result of different causes.

The evidence available from clairvoyant sources, although perhaps differing in detail but agreeing in principle, indicates that the Aura in general can be found associated with all living things. As far as our present understanding will take us, there is no evidence, however, which entitles us to subdivide any Aura, except that of a human being. The human Aura appears to be divided into two separate Auras—the health Aura, which appears to belong to the physical body, and the mental Aura, which appears to be more nearly related to the mind and its activities, but which acts upon and reacts to, changes in the health Aura,

The health Aura appears to possess a definite structure and is seen to be built up of radial or striated lines, which in a normal healthy person stand out at right angles to the plane of the surface of the skin. If the health of the body be affected, that portion of the Aura related to the affected shows a definite and distinct change, which varies according to the extent or trouble. Its normal healthy colour appears to be a deep rich rose, such as is

seen through the skin if the hand be held against strong sunlight. In ill-health, the Aura in the vicinity of the seat of the trouble becomes discoloured, usually with a dark green or brown, accompanied by a dislocation of the radial lines or their complete disappearance. If the whole of the physical organism is affected, the whole of the health become pale in colour, with perhaps local discolourations and a more or less complete dislocation of the radial lines. Of the meaning of these changes and their relationship to specific diseases, so little is known at present that it is not safe to dogmatise.

These changes in the health Aura seem to indicate that this portion is definitely related, and belongs solely to, the life forces which animate the cell structure of the physical body as distinct from the spirit inhabiting that body. This indication is confirmed more particularly by the experience of psychic healers, which tends to show that a healthy animal organism produces invariably a healthy vital health Aura, regardless of the mental or moral status of its possessor.

Belonging to the physical body, and indicating the changes which take place in it in health and disease, it necessarily follows that when the spirit has vacated its earthly organism this portion of the Aura will remain with its "dead" body, registering the further changes taking place, and disappearing slowly as chemical and organic dissolution sets in. The

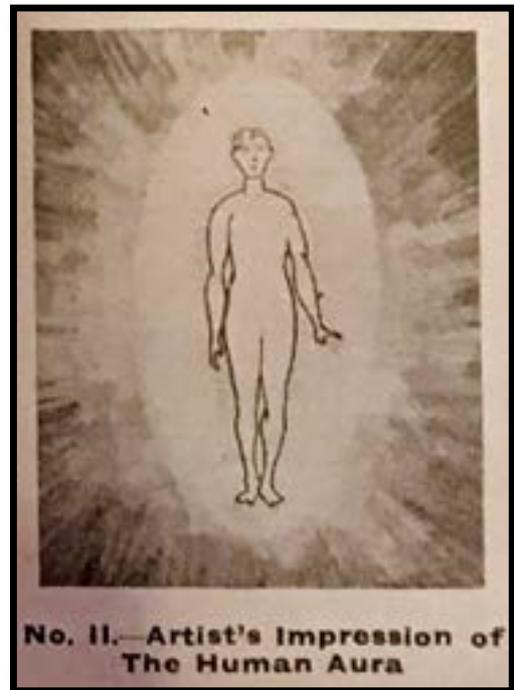
mental Aura, however belonging as it does to the mind of man, goes with him into the next world, and in that rarer atmosphere becomes perhaps so intensified as to be visible clearly to the vision.

It is probable, too, that as the health Aura seems to belong to the physical body only, and bears little or no relationship to the mind, except in so far as the latter affects the health of the former, the mental Aura bears a definite relationship to the etheric body, and may be found eventually, perhaps, to be affected by it in some degree.

How far the mental Aura may be affected by changes in the health condition of the physical body, is not known at present, but it is certain that some effects are produced which are probably of a temporary nature.

Thought of any kind produces a visible effect upon the mental Aura, the extent of which depends upon the intensity of the thought forces at the time. Emotional thoughts appear to have an effect which is transient in its nature, but which might become more and more permanent according to the intensity of the emotion and the length of time in which a particular emotion may be indulged in. The immediate effects of these changes are always visible in the colours of the outer or mental Aura, but produce a repercussive effect upon the health Aura. As an effect produced is always proportionate to its cause, the greater the repercussive effect, and if the emotion which may be given rein to be of a discordant nature, the greater is the disturbance set up in the health Aura.

As the capacity for acting and being acted upon seems common to all forms of radiation, we may perhaps propound the hypothesis that Aura is a field of energy, and for the sake of convenience assume that it is radiated from within.



No. II.—Artist's Impression of
The Human Aura

The second article continues and concludes in the next issue:

THE AURA AND THE SEANCE ROOM

AN observer who has attended a series of seances for the production of phenomena of the same type must have noticed that the energy used by the spirit operators in producing results varies both in intensity and quantity upon each occasion, even if the same people are taking part. Inquiry of the operators as to whence they draw their energy, and what is its nature, brings the reply that it is from the aura of the medium, chiefly, that the energy is drawn, and that it is a form of energy known to them as magnetism, and some-times as “psychic force.” As in the present stage of our knowledge, the aura presents itself to us as a field of energy radiated from both the physical body in the case of the health aura, and the mind in the case of the mental aura, it appears that the amount of energy at the command of the spirit operators will depend largely upon the amount available at any given time in the auric field of the medium. This leads us to inquire as to what may affect the amount of energy available, and if that which causes a reduction or increase in the quantity is a cause internal or external to it, or both.

Colour

Observation under varying conditions indicates that both auras are affected adversely or otherwise by either external or internal causes, and that they may be affected by both external and internal causes at the same time. Taken as a whole, they may be affected in two ways, either by an increase in the intensity and brilliance of its colour, sometimes accompanied by an increase in the apparent distance of its periphery from the body, or by a decrease in the intensity and brilliance of its colour, with an appearance of muddiness, sometimes accompanied by an apparent shrinkage of its outline towards the body.

Emotional Stress

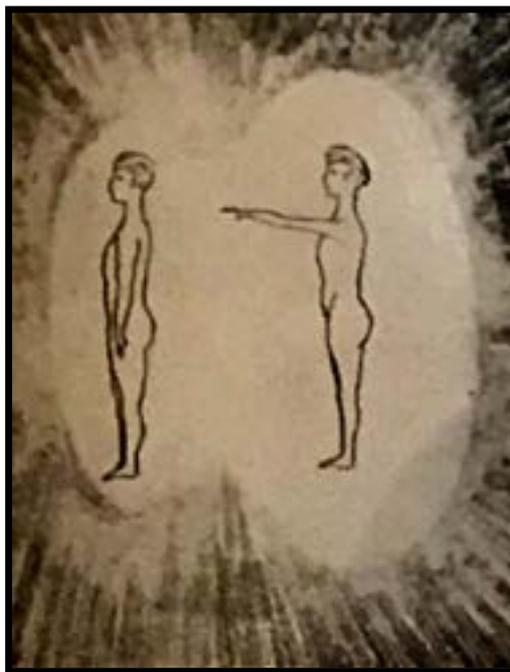
These latter changes always accompany some emotional stress, the former being coincident usually with those emotions of pleasurable or exalting nature, and in the case of mediums, the close association of a spirit operator, and the latter coincident with emotions of the reverse order; the changes in the apparent distance of the periphery from the body being visible in cases of extremes of emotional stress only. Experience has taught us that extremes of emotional stress on the part of the medium are detrimental to the production of physical phenomena; therefore, it becomes apparent that the amount of energy at the command of the spirit operators does not depend upon the intensity of the energy in the auric field of the medium, and as we find that when the mind of the medium is calm and at rest the phenomena are of a more stable and constant nature, we are led to conclude that the quantity of psychic energy which is—to borrow an electrical term—at a constant voltage and amperage, or, to put it more clearly, when the rate of discharge and the intensity are constant, i.e., with little or no variation both during the seance and for some time prior to it.

A closer examination of the facts at our disposal indicates that there is something more than just the auric energy of the medium entering into the composition of the energy used by the spirit operators when producing physical phenomena. If the production of physical phenomena were dependent upon the former only, it is reasonable to suppose that the medium could command the phenomena at any time when the factor of “constancy” was present. Such is not the case, and mediums in general appear to have little or no command over the phenomena or their production. We are led, then, to seek some form of energy which might be evolved with the aid of the auric field of a specific type of medium, especially as the spirit operators do not appear to be able to produce this phenomena without this type of auric field.

Psychic Force

Study of the phenomena indicates that in order to affect matter the spirit operators must have at their disposal a form of energy which is capable of acting in two worlds or states at one and the same time, and our answer may be found in their claim that they use “Magnetism” or “Psychic Force” for this purpose.

As to the kind of energy which could be applied to the auric field, it is probable that it is “thought energy.” The act of thinking, of itself, is incapable of acting directly upon physical matter; its energy must be transformed or converted into muscular action, as far as our physical environment is concerned; but thought does affect the energy which is visible in the aura, and its changes are markedly and almost instantly affected by any emotional upheaval. This would appear to indicate that any supposition along these lines has some justification.



As the aura acts at a distance from the body, it follows that when it is brought within range of the sphere of activity of another, it will affect that other in greater or lesser degree according to its receptivity.

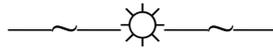
Such changes can be witnessed by the clairvoyant observation of the aura of trance mediums during the process of entrancement. As the aura of the “spirit operators” enters the passive field of the medium’s aura, the latter begins to take on more or less of the dominant colour of the former; this in turn affects the subconscious mental processes of the medium’s resulting in the medium’s physical organism expressing the personality of the operator in degree, according to the intensity of the energy applied. It can thus be seen that it is possible for the mental state of any person to affect the auras of others to such an extent as to render them liable to the same emotional stress, even though the mental state be not expressed in words.

When we come to consider the effect of emotional disturbance upon the phenomena of the seance room, we must keep constantly in mind the variability of human beings—the fact that whilst it is possible to group the human race into several more or less distinctive mental types, the possibility of variations within the bounds of any given type is infinite—with the result that each individual reaction to any cause which may affect the mind will vary, so that what may be of only passing interest to one will create a deep impression upon another, with a corresponding change in the output of “auric energy.”

“Auric energy” should not be confused with the form of energy we have called “thought energy,” because the latter may be largely potential in its nature, whilst the former, being active, is kinetic. “Thought energy,” however, may become kinetic and, as such, may be translated into “auric energy,” and become visible by causing changes in the colours of the aura. Seriously considered, this mental factor, which appears to contribute so much to the success or failure of a seance, gives much deeper meaning to the term “harmonious circle” than we have perhaps hitherto realised.

A similarity of temperament and aspiration would tend to monotony rather than harmony, and just as the constant repetition of one or two notes on a musical instrument would quickly become monotonous and tend towards mental stagnation, so also would the constant radiation of auric energy upon rate of vibration tend to stagnate the psychic atmosphere.

Harmony in music depends upon the correct combination of different notes, and so does mental harmony depend upon the right combination of different minds, each suppling something which is lacking in the other. If this be true, then the choice of sitters for a successful seance should depend upon each being the complement of the others rather than their being of the same mental temperament. The intelligence and ability of the spirit operators will then determine the success or failure of the seance, rather than the chance harmonious mingling of the sitters.



“Ordered by the spirits”

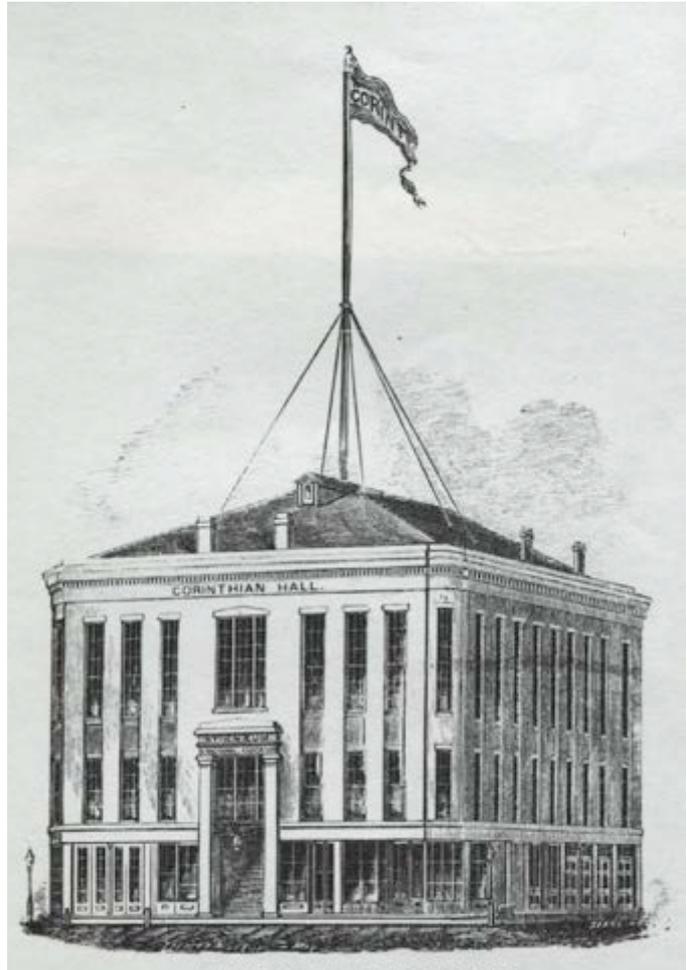
HOW THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING CAME ABOUT TO DEMONSTRATE MEDIUMSHIP

The beings of the investigations—The first psychical researchers

Eliab W. Capron, in his *Modern Spiritualism*, published in 1855, records on pages 90-92:

The first message on this subject was given through the alphabet thus: “You all have a duty to perform. We want you to make this matter more public.” We urged the awkwardness of the position we should be placed in, the ridicule that would be heaped upon us or any one who should attempt to lecture on this subject. The answer to this was: “That will be so much the better,—your triumph will be so much the greater.”

The plan proposed by the spirits was as follows: Corinthian Hall should be hired; Mrs. Fish and Margaretta should go there; E. W. Capron should deliver the lecture, explaining the commencement of the sounds at Hydesville, and their progress up to that time, and George Willets should act as the business man, doorkeeper, &c. At each meeting there must be a committee of five persons, appointed by the audience, to investigate the matter and report at the next meeting. The spirits promised to make sounds so loud as to be heard in all parts of the hall. The names of several persons were given to accompany Mrs. Fish and her sister on the platform.³ Among these were Amy Post, and one or two other ladies, Rev. A. H. Jervis, N. Draper, Esq., Lyman Granger, and other well-known citizens. The charge for admission was to be twenty-five cents. All these directions were given by using the alphabet, without a suggestion on our parts.”



To this plan we objected that Corinthian Hall, being the largest in the city, was larger than necessary, and too expensive; that people would not attend in numbers sufficient to pay expenses, and that we were not able to pay the bill ourselves. We were assured that we should have enough to pay expenses, and the end would be a complete triumph for all concerned. We were assured that it was the best course in order to silence all slanders and establish the truth; and they declared that this would prepare the way for a

³ Leah (Fox) Fish and Maggie Fox.

more general development of spiritual communication which would take place at no distant day.

After receiving so much of the directions, and still declining to go forward, the writer returned to Auburn. Catharine Fox was there with us, and through her the spirits urged us to do as we had been directed at Rochester. Finally, the spirits proposed that meetings should take place at private houses, where large parlors could be had, in order to test the ability of the spirits to make the sounds in the presence of a promiscuous assembly. My friends wrote me, urging the trial, at least, of that test. After much deliberation, we consented to make the trial, not without many misgivings as to the result. My friends at Auburn predicted a failure and disgrace for being engaged in so unpopular a cause; but I had made up my mind to make the trial, testing every inch of ground to see whether the promises would be fulfilled. I went to Rochester and commenced the meetings in private houses. They were often crowded to a jam, but the spirits made their promise good. The rapping was loud and distinct in every instance.

After testing the matter in this way for several nights, and receiving more minute directions and constant encouragement, we gave notice of a meeting to be held in Corinthian Hall, on the evening of the 14th of November, 1848 [This should read 1849].

At the appointed, time, an audience of some four hundred persons assembled to hear what might be said, and also to hear the sounds, as the spirits had promised that they would produce the sounds sufficiently loud to be heard in all parts of the hall.

The lecture consisted of a simple and plain explanation of the whole matter, from its commencement to that time, carefully avoiding any assertion as to what it was; but merely stating, from well proved facts, what it was *not*. The audience listened with respectful attention, and at the close of the lecture appointed the following gentlemen as a committee of investigation, namely, A. J. Combs, Daniel Marsh, Nathaniel Clark, Esq., A. Judson and Edwin Jones.

This was the first great step towards laying the whole matter before the world in a way that should either settle its falsity or establish its truth. The fact that the audience appointed an intelligent committee to investigate the subject was very freely commented upon in a tone of assurance that now a "fraud would be exposed." So sure were the editors of the *Rochester Democrat*, that this was the last of the rappings, that they wrote an article, and had it in type, saying that the whole thing was exploded. When the committee reported, they had the article suppressed. They were disappointed in a very important and interesting item. The committee reported, in substance, as follows:

"That without the knowledge of the persons in whose presence the manifestations are made, the Committee selected the hall of the Sons of Temperance for the investigation; that the sound on the floor near where the two ladies stood was heard as distinctly as at other places, and that part of the committee heard the rapping on the wall behind them; that a number of questions were asked which were answered not altogether right nor altogether wrong; that in the afternoon they went to the house of a private citizen, and while there the sounds were heard on the outside (apparently) of the front door, after they had entered and on the door of a closet. By placing the hand upon the door, there, was a sensible jar felt when the rapping was heard. One of the committee placed one of his hands upon the feet of the ladies and the other on the floor, and though the feet were not moved, there was a distinct jar on the floor. On the *pavement* and on the *ground* the same sound was heard,—a kind of double rap as if a

stroke and a rebound were distinguishable. When the ladies were separated at a distance no sound was heard; but when third person was interposed between them the sounds were heard. The ladies seemed to give every opportunity to the committee to investigate the cause fully, and would submit to a thorough investigation by a committee of ladies if desired. They all agreed that the sounds were heard, *but they entirely failed to discover any means by which it could be done.*"⁴

Each one of the committee spoke for themselves, and they were well agreed as to the facts as stated.

After this report and some discussion on the subject, the audience selected another Committee composed of the following persons Doctor H. H. Langworthy, Hon. Frederick Whittlesey, D. C. McCallum, William Fisher, of Rochester, and Hon. A. P. Hascall (late member of Congress), of Leroy. At the next lecture this Committee reported that they went into the investigation at the office of Chancellor Whittlesey, and they heard the sound on the floor, on the wall and door; that the ladies were placed in different positions, and, like the other committee, they were wholly unable to tell from what the sounds proceeded, or how it was made; that Dr. Langworthy made observations with a stethoscope to ascertain whether there was any movement of the lungs, and found not the least difference when the sounds were made; and that there was no kind of *probability or possibility of their being made by ventriloquism as some had supposed; and they could not have been made by machinery.*

Much excitement was manifested by the audience at the announcement of the second committee's failure to account for the sounds. Just in proportion as the honesty of the mediums were proved did the wrath of a portion of the community enkindle against them.

On the third evening, a much larger number were present, and a portion seemed determined that it should be found out. Mr. W. L. Burtis declared that those girls would not have *him* on the committee for a hundred dollars, intimating that *he* was known to possess unusual facilities for the detection of such a fraud. He was immediately voted on to the committee, and then declared that, if he could not find it out, he would forfeit a new beaver hat.

Mr. L. Kenyon declared that if he could not find out the trick, he would throw himself over Genesee Falls; and *he* was straightway voted on to the committee. 'The other members of the committee were no more favorably disposed. The whole committee was composed of Dr. E. P. Langworthy, Dr. J. Gates, Wm. Fitzhugh, Esq., W. L. Burtis and L. Kenyon. This committee met at the rooms of Dr. Gates, at the Rochester House, and appointed a committee of ladies, who took the young women into a room, disrobed them, and examined their persons and clothing, to be sure there were no fixtures about them that could produce the sounds. When satisfied on this point, the committee of ladies tried some other experiments, and gave the young ladies the following certificate:

⁴ Note a claim of fraud made against Kate in particular by Mrs Norman Culver: *The raps are produced with the toes.* See *Mrs. Norman Culver, and Kate Fox* (Pyspioneer, Vol. 7, No. 9).

“When they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied around the bottom of their dresses, tight to the ankles, we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly.

“(Signed)

MRS. STONE,
MRS. J. GATES,
MISS M. P. LAWRENCE”

In the evening the committee, through their Chairman, Dr. Langworthy, made a very full report of their examination during the day. They reported that they had excluded all friends of the two ladies from the committee room and had the examination only in presence of the committee of gentlemen, and ladies chosen by them. Notwithstanding all this precaution, these sounds were heard when the ladies stood on large *feather pillows, without shoes*, and in various other positions, both on the floor and on the wall; that a number of questions were asked which, were answered, were generally correct. Each member of the committee reported separately agreeing with and corroborating the first statements.

None but those who were present can tell the inquisitorial trials that Mrs. Fish and Margareta were forced to undergo during these three days of trial. Never were two persons more thoroughly scrutinized, and never was triumph more complete.

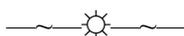
The report of the last committee was more full and complete than any of the former ones. Mr. Burtis, who was so sure that he could find out the whole thing, was honest enough to report fully and frankly in the ladies’ favor; and Mr. Kenyon did not throw himself over Genesee Falls, or explain how the sounds were made.

The report seemed to work the rowdy portion of the audience who evidently came there to make disturbance, into a perfect furor. Josiah Bissel, Esq., soon after the audience had assembled, passed out, and soon returned with his hands full of “torpedoes,” which he distributed among the boys, old and young, to throw upon the floor, explode and make a noise. This gentleman (?) was soon appointed “chairman of the meeting,” by this gang of riotous men and boys, although others had hired the hall and paid for it, not for the purpose of a riotous meeting, but to investigate this strange phenomenon according, to certain rules.

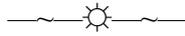
The prominent and leading men, in all this noisy and indecent conduct, were, besides Mr. Bissel, ex-alderman Seeley and a couple of men by the name of Jerome, part proprietors or employees in the *Daily American* office, and a Major Packard, cabinet-ware dealer. The latter made a speech, in which he pretended that the sounds were made by leaden balls fastened to the ladies’ dresses! Finding that all attempts to explain the matter further were useless, we left the hall in possession of the rowdies and the police, the chief of whom informed J. Bissel, Esq., that if any one was taken into custody it would be him.

Thus ended the public meetings; but they had done their work, and set a ball in motion which has already rolled over the whole Union, and much of the civilized world besides. The attention of the public was called to it. The press commenced its comments, generally in ridicule, but still in a way that aroused the curiosity of people to know what it was.

[E. W. Capron, Auburn., George Willets, Rochester. *Rochester*, Nov. 22, 1849].



Is Spiritualism Indebted to Christianity?



This article was published in “Psychic News”, December 12th, 1936, page 9, by W.H. Evans. The paper’s editor, Maurice Barbanell, noted:

Here is an article that will provoke controversy. The writer has given forty years of study to our philosophy. What do you think of his views?

A GREAT deal of the misunderstanding about what, I suppose, may be called plain Spiritualism and Christian Spiritualism arises from ignorance. As a matter of fact, what is called Spiritualism, “without affix, prefix, or suffix,” as some proclaim it, is nothing more than Unitarian Christianity.

The principles by which plain Spiritualists set such store are all to be found in the New Testament. Emma Hardinge Britten’s inspirers only save a summary of what was known and taught amongst first century Christians.

The difficulty with many people is that they are unable to separate Christianity, *per se*, from its clothes. They confuse the teachings of Jesus with the interpretations put upon them by the Churches.

Actually, a great deal of what the Church teaches is not Christianity. The Rev Percy Dearmer recently pointed out that, so different is the teaching of the Church from the religion of Jesus, to the Church the Christianity of Jesus is a “new religion.”

Reason v. Prejudice

Unfortunately, people are apt to mistake their prejudices for reasoned opinions, and proclaim the only true view is the one seen between the blinkers of their ideas.

In a recent diatribe against Christian Spiritualists and Christian Spiritualism, one writer indulged in a loud and vociferous criticism of those who differed from what he called the S.N.U. brand of Spiritualism, as if it were not the prerogative of any Spiritualist to reason out for himself his own religion.

So blatant and harsh was the writer that, by the time I had reached the end of his article, I concluded he had written it under the control of the spirit of an old Spanish Inquisitor. It certainly breathed the spirit of those people.

All those who differed from him must be cleared out of the Movement; the Bible must be removed from our rostrums, and only a particular brand of Spiritualism be taught. The logic of all this is that we are to have boards of examiners, heresy hunts and expulsions of the unorthodox Spiritualists.

That spirit is evil. It is separative and destructive. Its inspiration is of the Pit. It is a doctrine of hate masquerading in the cloak of freedom. I do not think those who make such criticisms realise that they are simply following in the footsteps of the ones who have tried to shackle human thought by binding it in creed and dogma.

Are Spiritualists free from dogma? No, they not, neither plain Spiritualists nor Christian Spiritualists. They have their set beliefs, which they hold as dogma. They have their own orthodoxies and they cry aloud against those of other people. It is all so pitiable and so small.

One would think that Christian Spiritualism was a new phenomenon. It isn't. Back in the early 'seventies of last century there was published in this country a paper called "The Christian Spiritualist." It is no new thing. Spiritualism began amongst Christian people.

Our Best Book

The first Spiritualists were Methodists and Quakers. The influence of Christianity runs all through the Spiritualist movement. The best book on the religious side of Spiritualism ever written automatically from the Other Side is "Spirit Teachings" through the hand of the Rev. Stainton Moses, and is definitely Christian.¹ I suppose it would, if certain people had their way, be put upon their *index expurgatorius*, as would be "The Scripts of Cleophas," through the hand of Geraldine Cummins.

Over and over again, from the earliest days of the Movement till now, the messages which have come through have been no more nor less than an amplification of the teachings of Jesus Christ. These are facts which have a meaning and we should face them. We can no more cut ourselves off from the contact of Christian influences than we can do without sunlight.

Our mental environment has been formed by Christian influences. We were taught by the Churches in our youth; our education has fostered the spirit, and though we may differ on points of doctrine, we are generally at one when it comes to the simple religion of love taught by Jesus.

There is another thing missed by the self-styled intellectuals, that is the Spirit of Christ, which is still alive in the world. I declare it is a fact, I know it in my own life and I bear testimony to its power to give peace, comfort and blessing. Those who so glibly denounce Christian Spiritualism should first of all seek to know whether there is any regenerative power in the Spirit of Christ. If they have not experienced it, they are not entitled to pronounce upon it.

Surrender To God

Anyone who has experienced the power of acceptance of and surrender to the Will of God knows how fertilising to his own spiritual life is the Spirit of Christ. In fact, that spirit comes to birth in his soul, giving him a wide-eyed tolerance. The spirit of the inquisitor finds no lodgment in his heart or mind. He realises that "the ways to God are as many as the breaths of men," and will not denounce those who travel another road.

I have a profound interest in and affection for, any who feel so keenly that they fall into the error of supposing theirs is the only way. I have travelled that road myself. Once, in the days of my darkness, I, too, denounced those who called themselves Christian Spiritualists, and like the writer who wishes the Bible removed from our platforms, did myself once make the same plea.

If we are to keep alive the fires of separative sectarianism, then brotherhood will be impossible, the work of the spirit people be hindered and our Movement kept marking time. It is time we sought the points of agreement and realised the larger Spiritualism that

¹ Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2016: "Visit to the College of Psychic Studies – Paul J. Gaunt".

is above orthodoxies, creeds, or dogmas; that can sink personal opinions in the spirit of service, and can realise that within our own hearts is nestling the Christ-child waiting to grow to manhood and direct our steps.

There is one thing about the Spiritualists' National Union which I commend to those who like to speak in its name: it is the spirit of tolerance it shows. It opens its arms to all Spiritualists.

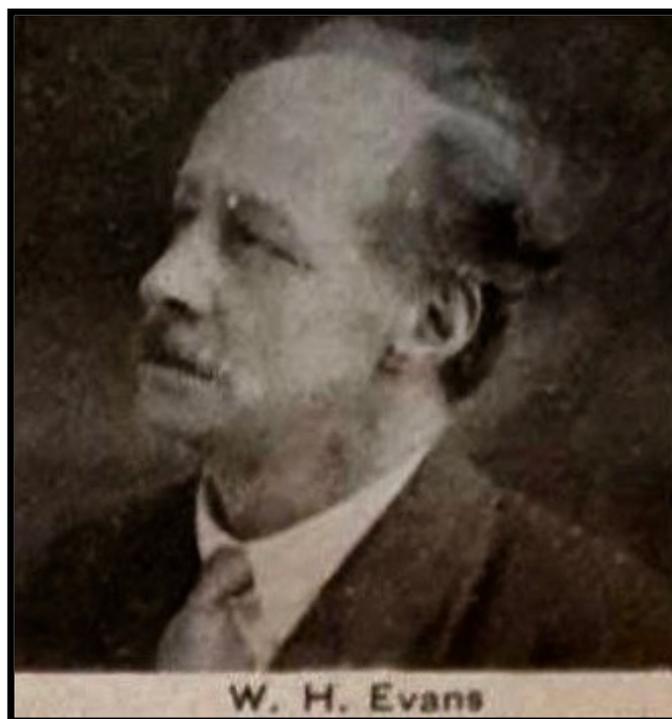
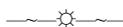
It is wise in that it realises that the sectarian spirit is separative and disruptive. And while it asks those who would join it to accept its principles, it allows each the right to interpret them in his own way.

Bar To Progress

So long as that spirit is maintained, it is bound to make progress. But if it ever declares that anyone who wishes to wear the label "Christian" is not to be a member, on that day it will sign its own death warrant. Fortunately, those at the head are broadminded and can see where the evil lies.

By and by, we shall outgrow the need for creeds and dogmas of the more crude type. At present, we must be kind and compassionate to those who are on the road. Every soul will find its way to the Father's heart and reaching it will not be asked. "What did you believe?" but "What did you do, my son? Did you express the spirit of goodwill and love?"

And if we have shamefacedly to admit that we were at times inspired by the spirit of bitterness and hate, His cloak of love will cover us within its influence, all our little shams will shrivel and our bitterness and hate be dissolved.



To play the role of devil's advocate, this is without doubt a thought-provoking article. Historically, in my opinion, little criticism can be given to the article's accuracy as to the history of the formation of the development of the Modern Spiritualist movement. Perhaps it also gives credence to the thinking of one of the SNU Honorary Presidents-in-Spirit, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's, proposal of adding a Christian-based Eighth Principle to our Seven. Below is quoted from Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015, "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U., and his Propaganda Work":

At the 1927 SNU Annual Consultative Conference held on Sunday July 3rd at the Art Workers' Guild Rooms, Queen Square, London under the presidency of Robert Owen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hon. President, moved the following:

"That a new principle be added to the Seven Principles of Spiritualism, declaring that while admitting that every Creed has its own message from on high, however by human frailty, we in the Western World acknowledge the original teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth and look upon them as an ideal model for our own conduct."

A special Committee was appointed to deal with the proposed Eighth Principle, which was presented to the 1928 AGM held at Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales on July 7th and 8th July. Needless to say, Doyle's resolution to add an extra Principle as proposed failed.

It should be noted that, strictly speaking, our Third Principle, "The Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels", was not part of Emma's submission of *her* summary of her creeds/principles given at Oldham in 1887, which were later used and adapted by William Johnson (last Federation President, first Union President) when the Spiritualists' National Federation was reconstituted in 1901 as the Union, becoming our Seven Principles.

1887: I believe in the Fatherhood of God,

1901): The Fatherhood of God.

1887: The Brotherhood of Man,

1901: The Brotherhood of Man.

1887: None

1901: The Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels.

1887: The Immortality of the Soul,

1901: The Continuous Existence of the Human Soul.

1887: Personal Responsibility,

1901: Personal Responsibility.

1887: Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here,

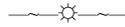
1901: Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for all the Good and Evil Deeds done on Earth.

1887: And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good.

1901: Eternal Progress open to every Human Soul.



Albeit Emma did give a similar principle in 1871 when she submitted four of her creeds/principles, “I believe in the communication of spirits as ministering angels”, she appears not to have used this again and it was not included in her submission at Oldham; for more information please see *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 2016, “National Federation to National Union”.



What originally caught my eye on the above Evans article was the remark
“Spiritualism. . . . is nothing more than Unitarian Christianity.”

It had been previously noted in *Psypioneer* that there was a Unitarianism link with UK Spiritualism; Unitarians believe in the Unity or unipersonality of God, as opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity – hence the name ‘Unitarian’. Unitarianism only became legal in 1813 but was particularly influential in the 19th century.

Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5, May 2010:

How much overlap was there between the early UK Spiritualists and the Unitarians?

An outstanding study by John Buescher, *The Other Side of Death*, left no doubt that there was heavy influence on American Spiritualism from the Unitarians and Universalists.²

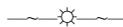
Has the Unitarian link with UK Spiritualism been not fully appreciated because it was later an embarrassment to both parties?

We have already reprinted some relevant evidence, such as the family background of Percy Wilson,³ and the role of Margaret Wilkinson, sister of Emma Hardinge Britten, in Manchester Unitarianism.⁴ Now we learn that William Johnson, who presided at the first AGM of the SNU, was laid to rest in a Unitarian graveyard.⁵

It can be noted today:

“Unitarian Society for Psychological Studies”

Founded in 1965, the Unitarian Society for Psychological Studies aims to provide a forum for discussion on issues such as survival of consciousness and continuing spiritual development beyond physical death. . .



² “The Other Side of Salvation”, by John B. Buescher, published by Skinner House Books, Boston, 2004.

³ Percy Wilson, SNU President 1950-1953; see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 2010: “Our new president, Percy Wilson”.

⁴ Mrs Margaret Wilkinson; see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010: “In Memoriam—Mrs. Margaret Wilkinson”.

⁵ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 5, May 2010: “Another pioneer promoted – William Johnson – The Two Worlds, 1914”.

This is what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said on Spiritualism just a few years after his conversion to Spiritualism, published in the "Two Worlds", January 18th, 1918, page 19:



Sir Conan Doyle upon Spiritualism

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE, the eminent novelist, was recently interviewed with reference to his views upon Spiritualism. The "Reading" for this week states his ideas as stated by himself, and they are sufficiently valuable to be read at every Spiritualist meeting-place. The questions were put by the interviewer, and the answers were given by Sir Arthur.

"Does it not seem absurd that such things as moving table should be associated with a matter so august as man's survival of bodily death?"

"So I thought at first, and it took some years of experience before I shook off the feeling that it is absurd to associate moving tables with religion. But the trouble arises from concentrating upon a detail and missing the larger issues behind it. If an unknown law is shown in moving a table or a tambourine,

then it is the law and not the object upon which attention should be concentrated. This talk about details and missing the larger things is one of the peculiarities of the position. It is as if someone, in discussing the Church of England, were to miss everything about the spirituality and virtue of that Church, and to harp continually upon the absurdity of having an eagle to uphold the lectern."

"The difference seems to me to be that your religion is to some extent based upon the phenomena, but the Church of England is not based upon the lectern!"

"The humbler phenomena have little connection with the creed of Spiritualism. They are a device of the Great Designer, by which public attention is drawn to the matter. The higher the phenomena, such as automatic writing and trance speaking, have certainly much to do with religion. They are the means by which the truth comes through. But I may add that the truths seems to me to commend themselves to their own intrinsic worth. They are the one line of thought which makes Christianity reasonable to me and to many more."

"Where do you find Christianity in other directions unreasonable, Sir Arthur?"

"The whole doctrine of original sin, the Fall, the vicarious Atonement, the placation of the Almighty by blood—all this is abhorrent to me. The spirit-guides do not insist upon these aspects of religion. All these points of mystical Christian philosophy centre round the death of Christ. It is the life which we have to take as our religious centre."

"Is not that Unitarianism?"

"Plus a great deal which I have never associated with Unitarianism. The Unitarians, for whom I have always had deep respect, look on Christ as a man. We look upon Him

as a high spirit who became incarnated to give us an example. He is so much higher than man that He is nearer God—the Son of God, in Oriental speech. Of course, he declared Himself that He was not God, and how people can keep on insisting that He was, in face of His own clear words, I can never understand. ‘I and my Father are one’ means only that He was doing the work of God. The title ‘Son of Man’ is a beautiful term, showing that He had come to serve man-kind.”

“Unitarians, I suppose, would admit that Christ was a highly spiritual man?”

“A high spirit, in the sense we use the words, is something more than man. We hold that in both His moral and His psychical attributes He was more than man though, of course, infinitely less than God. There is a remarkable little book which impressed me much, upon ‘Christ and Psychical Phenomena,’ by Dr. Abraham Wallace. It made me understand the New Testament as I had never understood it before. In fact, I do not see how one could possibly understand many passages unless one had a knowledge of psychical matters.”

“For example?”

“Well, take His words when the sick woman touched Him. They were, ‘Somebody touched Me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of Me.’ This is exactly how a healing medium would feel. Notice also how in another passage it is said He could do no wonders in a particular city because the people had no faith. And yet our critics wonder when a medium gets no results with a hostile circle.”

“Would you say, then, that the early Christians were Spiritualists?”

“Of course they were Spiritualists. Think of St. Paul, with his ‘natural body and spiritual body’; and look at John with his precept, ‘Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.’ Is not that exactly what a wise Spiritualist would say now who does not accept every message that comes to him, but tests them by his reason and by the general body of information already recorded? The ‘lying spirit’ is unfortunately a fact now, as then.”

“Does all this mean that Spiritualism is destined to be a new religion?”

“I hope not. I do not want one more sect added to the list. I want to see it as a unifying force, the very centre of the world’s thought, forming a rallying point upon which the Christian creeds could unite. At present a Christian is simply helpless before the materialist—and there are a hundred unconfessed materialists for one who assumes the name. What can the Christian do? He quotes texts and describes his own intuitions, but neither have any effect upon the materialist. There is not an atom of proof anywhere, mere legend and assertion. The analogy of Nature certainly is that death ends all. But the Spiritualist comes forward with the weapon the Christian needs—actual proof of continued life. His reward, as often as not, is that the Christian reviles him and accuses him of having dealings with the Devil. I can well understand the materialist reviling him, for it is a very discomposing thing to have the ground cut utterly from beneath your feet. You must either be man enough to admit your error, or you must refuse to face the truth and take refuge in the assertion that everyone who differs from you is a dupe or a knave.”

“You speak of the materialists as numerous?”

“They seem to me to be in a majority, not as an organised body, but as individuals. England is spiritually dead—a mummy wrapped up in ecclesiastical bindings. When the very things which they profess with their lips to believe are put before them as really true, they draw back in amazed incredulity. All this scoffing talk about ‘spooks’ in the papers can only come from people who do not believe at all in continued life. If they knew that

those they loved were actually living on the other side, they could not apply a comic and vulgar word to them.”

Sir Arthur did not recommend everyone to begin an investigation of psychical phenomena; at least, on the experimental side. “If one has lost some loved one,” he said, “then one may with success begin upon the experimental side, as did recently Mr. Wilkinson, who described his experiences convincingly in the ‘London Magazine’ for October. But in ordinary cases one should master some of the literature—it would take a long life to master it all—before any actual seeking for phenomena. The importance of phenomena is much over-rated. In the literature you will find ample proof by every law of evidence, without any experiments at all.”



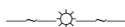
To return to the lead article by Evans, he is quite correct: *The first Spiritualists were Methodists and Quakers. The influence of Christianity runs all through the Spiritualist movement.* The last issue of Pioneer published the first demonstration of public mediumship at the Corinthian Hall at Rochester on 14th November 1849 by Leah and her younger sister, Margaretta (Maggie) Fox, and the first controlled investigations into the physical phenomena which were produced at the demonstration and afterwards to the committees set up to investigate.

Catharine (Kate) Fox was not present and was staying at this time with Eliab W. Capron at Auburn, who addressed the meeting at the Corinthian Hall. Auburn is a prime starting-place in the development of Modern Spiritualism; this was recorded by Emma Hardinge in her two-volume work, “Modern American Spiritualism”, 1869, as published below.

Emma was herself a Christian Spiritualist at the start of her work; she gave music lessons in the rooms of the ‘Society for the Diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge’ and edited their periodical, ‘The Christian Spiritualist’. It would be in Troy that her *first* public lectures were held in 1857:

...even up to my first great trial lectures at Troy, on July 5th, 1857, I had clung religiously, as I had termed it, to the orthodox faith in which I had been brought up, nor had my experiences as a test Medium contributed to shake that faith. Indeed I had sometimes listened with equal horror and indignation to what I designated as the *unchristian* and infidel talk of many of my Spiritual associates.

Thus, then, when the New York Spiritualists, stimulated by the glowing accounts of my *début* as given by Troy friends, invited me to occupy their platform on the succeeding Sunday, July 12th, I accepted the offer, confident that I, through my Spirit inspirers, could so severely rebuke the infidel spirit which I felt was existing amongst my New York associates, that in all probability I might convert many of them to the true Christian faith. The Spirits had promised me that on that special occasion I should hear every word I spoke, and so I did, but the result of those same two New York lectures was, that instead of converting any of my audience to orthodoxy, I converted myself entirely away from it, nor has my incessant study of ancient history, science, and God’s Bible of Creation ever suffered me to relapse again into the mists of superstition invented by Priestcraft, or shaken my assurance of my own personal responsibility both here and hereafter, for all the good or evil I have ever done on earth.⁶



⁶ Taken from her “Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten”, 1900, page 52.

Below is a rather interesting overview of the start of the modern Spiritualist moment just after the demonstration at the Corinthian Hall at Rochester, published by Capron, in the last issue of Pioneer:

CHAPTER V. SPIRITUALISM IN AUBURN, NEW YORK.

PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM FROM 1849 TO 1855—CATHARINE FOX AT AUBURN—MRS. TAMLIN AND MRS. BENEDICT—SPIRIT MUSIC—THE OPPOSITION—TROUBLES WITHIN THE CAMP—THE APOSTOLIC CIRCLE.

IT was in November, 1849, that the scenes were enacted in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, described in the last chapter.

The immense geographical areas embraced in the thirty-six States of the Union, and the fact that no regular system of human propagandism issuing from a central source and ramifying through the country, or, indeed, anything analagous to such a procedure, has ever been attempted, to account for the spread of Spiritualism, embarrasses the historian in describing its progress. "Progress," in fact, it can scarcely be called; for, if modern Spiritualism had been promulgated as well as inaugurated by the Rochester mediums, its course might have been traced in their footprints; but whilst we are considering the effects upon some town or State which the visits of the Misses Fox produced, behold we find a great spiritual outpouring in sections of country where the echoes of the Rochester vibrations could never even have reached.

Spiritualism did not radiate from a definite centre, but sprang with a spontaneous and irresistible life of its own, independent of human propagandism, the contagious force of public sentiment, or the psychological effect of common report. If the ends of the countless threads that with sudden and magical rapidity appeared to be inclosing the whole continent of America in one vast woof of spirit-power, were not spun, held, and intelligently directed by the unseen people of the spirit country, then all theories of causation must fail, and the marvellous growth and blossoming of Spiritualism, the germs of which no visible hands had planted, will forever remain one of the unfinished problems of the universe. Apart from the obviously supramundane character of its production in various sections of country at once, it is not difficult to trace the secondary causes of its rapid growth in the all-absorbing nature of its revealments and the passionate emotions of love and hatred which it excited in its friends and foes. In fact it would be difficult to determine which was the most effective form of propaganda for the spread of the belief, namely, the zealous enthusiasm of its admirers or the bitter persecution of its antagonists.

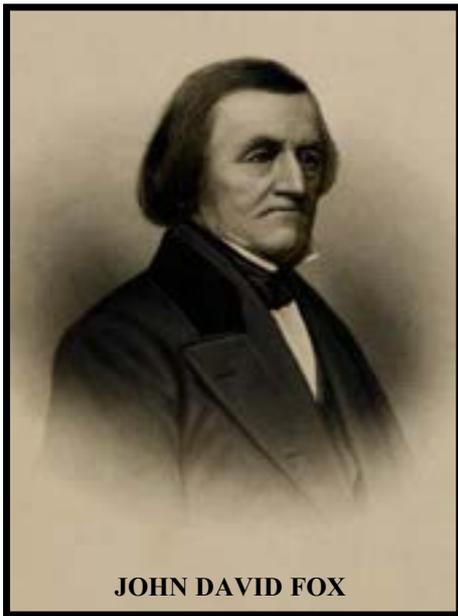


Catharine "Katie" Fox

To do justice to the uprising of this mighty power, we must consider its manifestations in different States about the same period of time. The first which we shall notice is the State of New York, in which the communion between mortals and spirits first took the form of a scientific telegraphy.

In the city of Auburn, New York State, resided Mr. E. W. Capron, to whom allusion has already been made in connection with the earliest manifestations and the Corinthian Hall investigation. To strengthen the convictions of a spiritual source for the phenomena, an opinion which had irresistibly forced itself upon his reason, Mr. Capron induced Mrs. Fox to permit her youngest daughter, Catharine, to spend some time in his

family. During the *séances* conducted through the mediumship of this young lady, many of the principal inhabitants of Auburn had the opportunity of witnessing the most astounding phenomena under circumstances which precluded even the suspicion of deception. Spirit music was produced; hands were seen, felt, and even examined, forming and melting apparently in the clasp that held them; messages of affection, timely warning, and prescient intelligence were constantly spelled out through the raps; the furniture moved in supra-mundane feats of power, and almost every conceivable phase of intelligent spiritual phenomena was exhibited to all who chose to come and witness it. Two remarkable results followed the first introduction of “the power” into Auburn. The first was the fact that though the press were permitted free access to the circles, and the most abundant opportunity for investigation, yet the strength of the occult force, whose evidences they beheld, only seemed to arouse in the most of their number a vindictive and unreasoning spirit of antagonism, which broke forth in unqualified and often senseless slander.



JOHN DAVID FOX

For example: *The Auburn Daily Advertiser* coolly stated that old Mr. Fox [a quiet, inoffensive farmer, chiefly remarkable for simple-minded devotion to the Wesleyan Church and his retired, peaceful habits] had by a cunning contrivance of springs and wires managed to produce all the marvels witnessed at Hydesville! The fact that every plank, board, and brick, or inch of matter connected with the possessed house had been ransacked in vain by hundreds of persons in the attempt to detect any trickery, all went for nothing with this shrewd editor. The still more awkward fact that the phenomena had continued to increase in strength and variety for upwards of a twelve month, moving about from place to place, house to house, person to person, involving the action of above a hundred different mediums; and that the poor old gentleman accused of its production had never, except in the first two or three months of the Hydesville excitement, been in the spirit

circles or in any way connected with the movement—all this was with equal *sense* and *candor* utterly disregarded, and good Mr. Fox’s “springs and wires,” invisibly fixed into *nothing*, still continued to stretch from the cottage at Hydesville and to rap over hundreds of miles sounding down to the valley of the Mississippi along the vast seaboard of the New England States, and up to the northern regions of Lake Superior! Wonderful invention of a quiet little New York farmer! and marvellous springs and wires, the intelligent action of which could reveal past, present, and future with an accuracy that would have put to shame Egyptian magic or Chaldean astrology! We must here remark that if from time to time we insert the puerilities and baseless slanders which have been levelled against “the cause” and its adherents, it is not for their worth or efficacy, but rather to show the utter futility and even desperation of that opposition which has been forced to create such childish fictions in order to discredit the spiritual hypothesis.

The second result of Miss Kate Fox’s visit to Auburn seemed to be the unfoldment of medium powers not less remarkable than her own in many persons who attended her *séances*. The most prominent cases of this kind occurred in the persons of Mrs. Tamlin and Mrs. Benedict, mediums whose names have since become an integral part of the great American spiritual record. Several other ladies were also developed in the Auburn circles as mediums and clairvoyants. A great variety of gifts in the direction of physical, writing, healing, seeing, and trance mediumship also became rapidly manifest in various families of the highest respectability, and the great majority of these developments took place

irrespective of Miss Fox's presence, although, her visit first called the attention of the community to the subject, and induced the formation of the circles in which these powers in the various media became externalized. In Mr. Capron's work on the early Spiritualism of America are recorded some very interesting accounts of the manifestations at Auburn; amongst others, the following incident, which were also verified to the author by Mr. Henry C. Wright, an eye-witness of the scenes. Mr. Capron writes:

"Mrs. Tamlin was, so far as I have been able to learn, the first medium through whom the guitar or other musical instruments were played, without visible contact, so as to recognize tunes. In her presence it was played with all the exactness of an experienced musician, although she is not acquainted with music, or herself able to play on any instrument. The tones varied from loud and vigorous to the most refined touches of the strings that could be imagined."

At a circle held at Mrs. Tamlin's, when about seven or eight persons were present, whose testimony was afterwards publicly tendered for the truth of what follows, Mr. Capron goes on to say:

"I had magnetized the medium, and, after various manifestations of the spirits, she said that they were about to do something new which she could not understand. After sitting a few minutes, we heard a low sound like a distant locomotive whistle. Soon, however, the sound grew louder, and softened into the most exquisite music. One of the company was requested to sing and she did so; the most beautiful music accompanied. It was like the notes of an exquisite Æolian harp, but any attempt to describe its beauty would fail. We frequently had the same kind of music in the presence of Mrs. Tamlin. At times it would resemble the finest conceivable tones of the human voice, and almost seem to be dissolved into words.

"Another phase of this musical manifestation was the imitation of 'Fabyan's' horn. This was first produced when Henry C. Wright was present. He called for the spirit of N. P. Rogers and asked him to sound the horn, when immediately a sound came like the sounding of a horn and its reverberation among distant hills, echoing and re-echoing for a long time. Mr. Wright had visited the White Mountains in company with N. P. Rogers some years before, and there had heard Fabyan, the hotel-keeper, wind his horn among the hills, and it was this sound that was so exactly imitated. Mr. Wright afterwards published a description of this scene in a pamphlet."

So long as the manifestations continued to be of the character above narrated, their appearance in Auburn was hailed with delight by bereaved mourners, to whom conclusive evidences of the presence and watchful guardianship of beloved spirit friends was clearly proven.

It excited the interest of the scientific from the fact that wonderful phenomena of a novel and interesting character were produced. It startled the learned by the exhibition of ignorant adults and uninstructed children speaking in foreign languages, and often with marvellous eloquence. Clairvoyance, psychometry, and healing by the laying on of hands or spiritual prescriptions, testified to the beneficent character of the intelligence and the vast range of uses which it included.

But the profound ignorance of all psychological phenomena in which this material age has been steeped, soon operated to mar and deform the infant movement.

The world had to learn that the spirit country is peopled from earth, and that spirit-life commences from the point where mortal existence ends. Unconscious of this solemn truth, the early communicants with the unseen world were unprepared for the visitation

of the *dark spirits* whom the sad experiences of earth had manufactured into criminals. Unaware that life, whether here or hereafter, is *progress*, not violent and unnatural change, investigators were appalled at the representations, produced through media, of the same vicious tendencies in spirits which they had beheld with indifference from the same spirits whilst inhabitants of earth; in a word, they did not realize the fact that spirits were still human, and that the soul in many respects remained unchanged by the mere act of physical dissolution. In this state of perplexity and ignorance the return of earth's criminals was generally met, either by the superstitious and unavailing exercises of old Catholic rites, or submitted to blindly in the idea that all spirits must necessarily be authoritative, until the unwary medium became the subject of the distressing condition now known as "obsession." Still, though the first circles were conducted in a condition of mental blindness scandalous to the religious teachers who should long since have instructed mankind concerning "spiritual gifts" and spiritual existences, in course of time the investigators learned *experimentally* to realize the true character of the spirit-world, and that more conclusively by their failures than they could have done by contemplating the sunlit side of the picture only.

But whilst the philosophical Spiritualist began to realize the true conditions of immortality from communion with the beings who were living in its experience, the egotist and fanatic appropriated as their share of the great spiritual outpouring, precisely those elements which were best calculated to stimulate their vanity and pander to their superstitious imaginings. Amongst the Auburn Spiritualists were to be found several extremely ignorant but strongly bigoted persons of the Second Advent persuasion. The phenomena of modern Spiritualism, interpreted through their own narrow credal views, appeared to them to be the actual inauguration of the long-promised "millennium," whilst they—the "true believers"—must of course be the chosen ones through whom the millennial dynasty was to be established on earth.

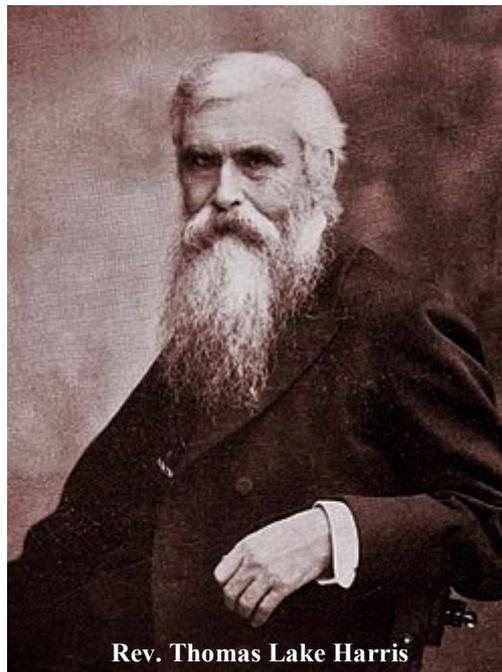
Quite early in the movement a circle had been formed, which at first had received the modest title of "The Auburn Circle;" but no sooner did the "chosen few" of the millennial belief gain a foothold in this happy gathering than they bent themselves to the work of converting it to their own purposes and using the manifestations as an endorsement of their peculiar opinions; in fact, as an eye-witness of the scenes here enacted described to the author, "in return for their conversion to Spiritualism they strove to convert the spirits to Second Adventism."

In pursuance of this notable idea they secured the services of Mrs. Benedict, an impressible rapping medium, through whom the influences mortal and immortal that operated in this circle, dictated plans of action designed to make "the universe rock," and that portion of it which they modestly called *this little planet*, a convert to their faith and a subject to the spiritual authority of *John the Divine*, *Daniel the Prophet*, *Paul the Apostle*, and other Biblical worthies whom they assumed to have become temporarily reincarnated in their mediumship. The title of the circle was changed from the "Auburn" to the "Apostolic Circle;" Mrs. Benedict, the medium, was dispatched to New York, where, under *spirit direction*, she summoned a certain Baptist preacher, named James D. Scott, to come to Auburn to minister in the work. A series of papers were published purporting to emanate from various distinguished personages of Jewish origin and of the Apostolic age.

Some of these publications were well calculated to produce the results which their authors predicted for them, namely, a revolution, though not exactly in the universe, or even in the "little planet" earth, but simply in the fortunes of the luckless publishers, who found the issue of the said pamphlets exciting a very revolutionary effect upon their worldly prosperity. To the disbelievers in the Divine origin of these papers they certainly

created no little feeling of indignation at the audacity which could append the names of prophets and apostles to their absurd puerilities, whilst even the most credulous of the well-educated Spiritualists had cause to mourn over the deterioration in grammar and orthography which befalls the exalted dead by a long residence in the spirit-world.

About the commencement of the year 1850 the “Apostolic Brotherhood” assumed a more respectable literary shape under the authority of the Rev. James Scott, and actually rose into eminence by the accession to their ranks of the renowned poet, preacher, and medium, the Rev. Thomas L. Harris, who was also spiritually called to “the work.” With the leadership of these accomplished gentlemen,—who claimed to act under the highest spiritual guidance,—the movement gained in numbers and in importance until it seemed to absorb and control nearly all the Spiritualism in Auburn, reflect itself through the chief of the communications, crystallize into a numerously attended religious meeting, and finally to culminate in the famous “Mountain Cove movement,” of which a detailed description will be given in a later chapter. And here it may be asked whether these shadows, cast by human pride, presumption, and fanaticism, did not irrevocably quench the dawning fight of the still embryotic spiritual movement?



Rev. Thomas Lake Harris

We answer, most unquestionably not; although many were the confident predictions of such a result; indeed certain journalistic magnates who had hitherto been indefatigable in castigating the cause through their columns, now abandoned their efforts with the complaisant remark that “the Spiritualists themselves were performing the work of self-destruction, and it was only necessary to give them rope enough and they would inevitably hang themselves.” In view of what has been already narrated, there is no doubt but that this enlightened policy would have had the desired effect had it so happened that *all* the Spiritualists of Auburn were included by the followers of *Pope Harris* and *Cardinal Scott*; but besides a very considerable number outside of their ranks, even some of those who had been subject to their authority gained by their experience some very wise and useful lessons, and not a few of these deluded ones, instead of rushing to the destruction so liberally predicated for them, exchanged their leadership for *Pope Judgment* and *Cardinal Reason*, dignitaries who were henceforth enshrined in plenary authority over the spiritualistic circles at Auburn.

Amongst the lessons that these rulers taught was the very important one that no spirit, mortal or immortal, should stand between the creature and the Creator; that it was necessary to try the spirits *out of the form* by precisely the same rules of good and use as those which applied to spirits *in the form*, and finally that the spirit-world was of no more authority as spirits unbodied than the earth-world as spirits still embodied. These lessons the recipients deemed cheaply learned, even though the price paid for them was the ridicule of a community profoundly ignorant of the subject they ridiculed.

As to the “faithful” amongst the “Apostolic Brotherhood,” they soon disposed of the question, as far as the people of Auburn were concerned, by quitting that “reprobate community” for the holy retreat of “Mountain Cove” under the leadership of their inspired shepherds. After this instructive episode Spiritualism in Auburn rose, Phoenix-

like, resurrected from the ashes of fanaticism into purified life, strength, and increasing numbers. Mediums began to multiply, the gifts of the spirit became constantly more abundant, and the ranks of Spiritualism were swelled with daily added converts.

Sunday meetings were in due time established, and a well written weekly paper entitled *The Spiritual Clarion*, together with an annual statistical register, was issued from the office of the Rev. Uriah Clark, an ex-Universalist minister, who established the above-named periodicals in Auburn, from whence they long continued to go forth as welcome evangels of the spiritual Gospel to the world. ‘The city now numbers thousands of Spiritualists; nor, with all the “rope” that Christian ministers and learned editors so generously allowed them, have they yet “hanged themselves,” or permanently hindered the progress of their glorious cause.



To conclude: W.H. Evans’ article, which started this discussion, noted:

There is one thing about the Spiritualists’ National Union which I commend to those who like to speak in its name: it is the spirit of tolerance it shows. It opens its arms to all Spiritualists.

It is wise in that it realises that the sectarian spirit is separative and disruptive. And while it asks those who would join it to accept its principles, it allows each the right to interpret them in his own way.

After the death of Evans this would indeed change. The SNU churches were infiltrated with Christian Spiritualists; please see *Pioneer*, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: “Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?” A short quote below:



Jean Bassett

This is exactly what happened. The Union started to lose churches to breakaway independent Spiritualist groups and to Christian Spiritualists, especially the Greater World Christian Spiritualists League (GWCSL), founded on May 30th, 1931, later known as the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Association (GWCSA). By the mid-1930s it was having an impact on Union churches. Some Union churches were starting to run on Christian lines, the Seven Principles being taken over with Christian trappings. Attempts were made to retain the traditional teachings of Union Spiritualism within their churches, including discussions with the Greater World and other groups, but with little success. In 1988 the Union withdrew ‘liberty of interpretation’.⁷ In ‘100 Years of National Spiritualism’, by Jean Bassett, published 1990, Jean stated that liberty of interpretation was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association; below is quoted from pages 86-87:

⁷ Charles Coulston, SNU Consultant, notes: “Liberty of interpretation issue: the Council of the Union, which was at that time the policy-making body of the Union, agreed to accept this [legal] advice from the Union’s solicitors and the Council’s acceptance of it was relayed to members at the Union’s 1988 Annual General Meeting. The reference to liberty of interpretation was accordingly deleted from the Union’s Articles of Association and elsewhere from that point in time.”

“...At least ten churches were being run by declared Christians on Christian lines. A small minority, but too many for a religion which was open, because of its declared freedom of philosophy, to people of all other religions. The signing of the Seven Principles should have protected the possibility of this eventuality, but many of the people concerned used our traditional tolerance against us. They stated that their ‘liberty of interpretation’ gave them the freedom to include a belief in Christianity while following Spiritualism. Gordon Higginson put the feeling of the majority of members into a few words at Conference: “I have nothing against Christian Spiritualism, but if the church was National Spiritualist then it must remain National Spiritualist. If they did not want this then they should find their own buildings and not pinch ours!”

“The subject of Liberty of Interpretation caused even more dissent. This phrase had been part of our tradition from around 1902. It was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association, but had been viewed with pride by generations. No one had considered that it would be used in such a way as to distort the essence of our Principles. Because of this, a member of Council queried the legal validity of the phrase. Legal advice was sought and the Union was advised that the phrase had no meaning or validity in the context of a legal framework. It was with some regret that it was withdrawn from general usage. But the Union pointed out that ‘Personal Responsibility’ covered each individual’s right to think for his or herself, whereas the Churches did have to stay within the cover of the Memorandum and Articles without personal interpretation.”



W. H. EVANS WAS KNOWN AS WILLIE

One of Spiritualism's finest philosophers

Mr W.H. Evans was known as Willie! He rendered an overwhelming literary contribution for the movement over decades—he was a Spiritualist household name. He also contributed to the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) and the British Spiritualist Lyceum Union (BSLU) educational courses. He authored a number of books, including *Spiritualism, a Philosophy of Life*, 1912, *How to be a Medium*, circa 1920, *Twelve Lectures on the Harmonial Philosophy of Andrew Jackson Davis*, 1925, and *A New Heaven – A Study of the Life Beyond*, 1950.



He worked as both a trance and inspirational speaker. In 1953 Maurice Barbanell paid tribute to his long service to the Spiritualist movement and the Spiritualist press.⁸ It was 57 years since Evans first began to write in “Two Worlds”, of which Barbanell noted:

“His pen and his voice have always been placed at the service of our movement. For 50 years he has contributed to “Light” each week. Almost weekly he reviews books for “Psychic News”.

In the “Two Worlds”, December 12th, 1953 issue, the last article by Willie Evans aged 76, was published on page six – it states: Poignancy is added to this the – Last Article Written by a Dying Man.

Some background on this rather forgotten pioneer:

FIFTY YEARS WITH THE ‘TWO WORLDS’ MY JUBILEE

BY W. H. EVANS⁹

Forty-eight years ago this October my first full page article appeared in THE TWO WORLDS; but my association with our paper goes back a couple of years earlier, for I had sent several paragraphs and fill-ups which were accepted and used by the editor Mr. E. W. Wallis. Thus I now reach my Jubilee as a contributor to this journal, and I am glad to say that my relations with the various editors have always been most friendly.

When I first became acquainted with Spiritualism I had no idea of the work I should do, or the part I should play in exercising a formative influence upon its philosophy. I well recall one Sunday morning at 8, The Octagon, Plymouth, where I was first introduced to the subject of Spiritualism, being told by one of the mediums at one Sunday morning circle, that I had talent which would be used and recognised as of value. The medium was Mrs. C. Lethbridge. I was very astonished at this prediction for it never entered my mind that I should do anything at all in the movement. I was interested, of course, and wondered much about it, but did not think anything would come of it. But there were those who knew what latent ability I had, and also how they could use it. “There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.”

⁸ Pyspioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8, August 2013.

⁹ The “Two Worlds”, October 18th, 1946.

Speak Much and Write More

How I came to write was in this wise. Mr. and Mrs. Lethbridge started a home circle and invited myself and my eldest brother to sit with them. At one of these circles, Mr. Lethbridge was inspired by one of his guides to tell me to write: just sit down and the inspiration will be given to you. I fell into the habit of sitting on Sunday mornings, the only free time I had, and writing little essays. They just bubbled up in my mind. Some of these trifles I sent to 'our paper' and in due time some of them appeared. I was also told at this circle, through my brother's mediumship, that "I should speak much, and write more." So it seems that the unseen knew their instrument and intended to make full use of me. I am glad to say that I have always been a willing co-operator with my helpers.

With E. W. Wallis

But it was in October 1898 that my first full page article appeared in this journal. Mr. Peter Lee was acting as editor at the time, Mr. Wallis being away in the United States on a tour. When he returned he very kindly accepted the matter I sent to him. Occasionally a MS would come home to roost, but in the main my work has been accepted. Mr. E. W. Wallis left THE TWO WORLDS to become editor of *Light* and I have a connection with that paper which goes back well over forty years. Will Phillips succeeded Wallis and I sent him occasional articles. But about this time I started in business and turned my thoughts to the serious business of building up my connection. I have spent forty years at the shoe maker's bench; as one reader humourously once put it "I repaired people's understandings on week days, and ministered to their souls on Sundays." Anyway shoemakers are the most religious folk in the world, for they lay down their a(w)I and prepare their innermost soul for the last. But I must be serious.

With J. J. Morse

It was not to be that I should desert my pen for the hammer and knife. An injury to my spine brought on caries, and I became paralysed in both legs. This seemed to be the end and the general opinion was that as far as this life goes I was finished. But I never thought so, I made up my mind to get well, and through the healing power of my friend Mr. C. Adams, I did. Being laid aside from active work I turned again to my pen, and started writing for James Allen's journal *The Light of Reason*, and also for 'our paper.' Then J. J. Morse became editor and my really busy time as a contributor began. Almost every week something of mine appeared, and I am grateful for the constant encouragement I received from that splendid worker.

Oaten and now Thompson:

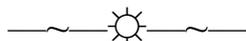
The years pass on and Mr. Oaten succeeded J.J. as he was familiarly known to us, and now Mr. E. Thompson is in the editorial chair. I am still writing and hope to continue till the end. Of late I have had to stop my platform work. I have a fifty year record of that, too. Finding that the inspiration was not so ready, and that I was left very much on my own, I found the work rather too much for me. I took this withdrawal of power as indicating that I should rest from such labours. So I have stopped the platform work, but the inspiration for the writing seems to be deeper than ever. There is in inspiration a law of rhythm. It is like the tide, it ebbs and flows. One learns to note this, and if a week or two goes by without any writing being done, I don't worry, knowing that the inspiration will return.

Inspiration

Some people seem to think that if one is inspired no effort is needed; in the actual writing that is often so, for it brings a sense of exaltation and ecstasy. The effort is in preparing oneself, and that is a daily thing. It is more important to prepare oneself to receive inspiration than it is to prepare matter for either speaking or writing. And inspired utterance carries the power of inspiration with it; it in turn inspires others. One should have a well stored mind; and I have always read widely on all kinds of topics. Life is varied, and should be considered from as many angles as possible. One learns to become tolerant as the years go on; kindly towards contrary opinions, there is some truth in all opinions, and it is that we need to get at.

Reward

Fifty years! it seems such a long time in prospect and such a little dot in retrospect. I shall not continue as long again, but I hope to be privileged to share my thoughts and inspirations with my fellows for many years yet. All this work has been a labour of love, for no psychic journal has ever been able to pay its contributors. But there is a payment which, if not in the coin of the realm, is in the gold of spiritual enlightenment. And that is the better part which cannot be taken away.



New One-stop Website:



www.pauljgaunt.com

The home page gives a direct link to all the back copies of “Pioneer”; subscribe free, etc.

The home page links to:

Lectures on the History of the Spiritualist Movement with some specialist subjects.

Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College as advertised elsewhere in this journal, with a link to book and further information

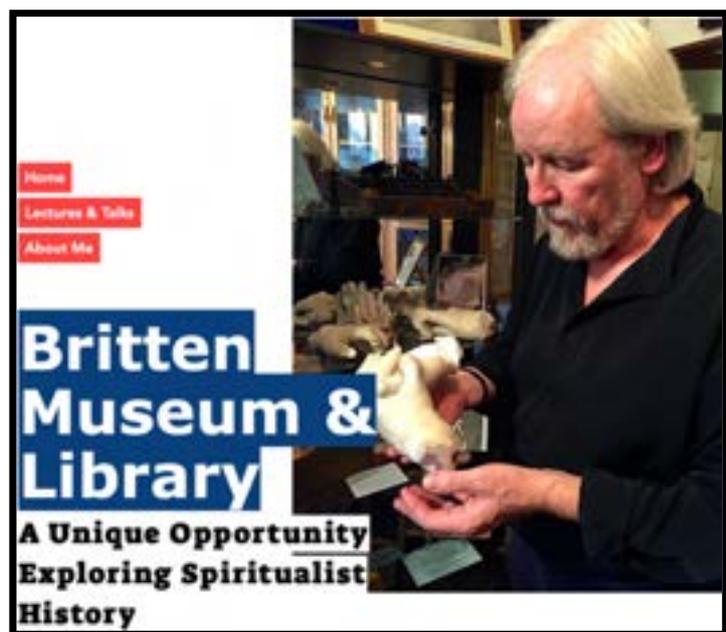
This page also has some free downloads of the factual information on

“Hydesville”

“SNU Seven Principles”

Primarily advisable for the SNU educational courses

Also, a link to all “Pyspioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer

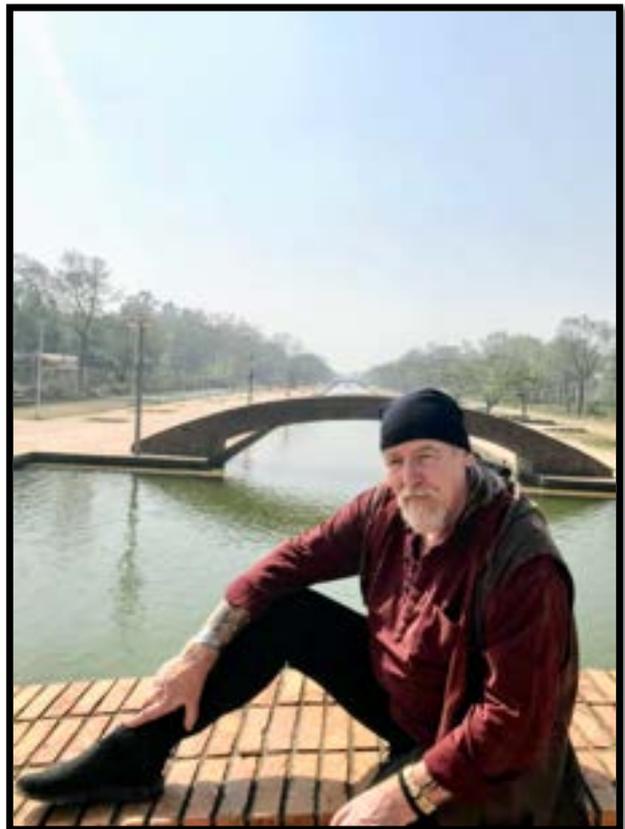


Feedback facility is available on all pages

FIFTY YEARS OF SPIRITUALISM

Paul J. Gaunt

On October 30th 2019, while in Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha,⁹ I celebrated my fifty years' involvement within the Spiritualist movement under the auspices of National Spiritualism, soon becoming a Class B member of the Union. My church was affiliated to the SNU, hence my membership of the Union; however, the church was run on strictly Christian lines, which did not fully fulfil my expectations or sit well with me. Nevertheless, I became a very active church member fifty years ago; the church was very well attended and the committee were of a much older generation—very unlike today!



It was within this environment at Bedford Church that much of my early life was spent. I introduced several of my friends to the church. Along with a few people in the church already, namely Hugh Aldous and David Spring, we formed, with the church's blessing, the POL group "Purpose of Life"; this primarily was to raise money and awareness of Spiritualism. We did the usual things like jumble sales, psychic evenings, coffee mornings, etc. Robert (Bob) Cracknell would do Psychic Evenings, where, for example, we would put numbers on the underside of the chairs completely out of sight and Bob would give a reading, say seat number four, the person on the seat and the psychic having no idea who the person was; he gave some remarkable demonstrations.

During this time I met two friends, a medium called Robin Stevens, and Connie Ransom; they were a big inspiration to me. We decided to do a six-week one-evening-a-week workshop (for want of a better name) on 'Public Speaking'; Robin, a fine speaker, agreed to do this with a friend, David Hopkins. Wow! This was a great education for me; David and Robin together were fabulous putting over the importance of a good talk, leading me to the rostrum.

I started chairing the church meetings and taking the platform for the address, then the church circuits with various mediums; one medium whom I worked with was Gena Brealey,

⁹ Photograph taken at Lumbini: it has a number of older temples, including the Mayadevi Temple, and various new temples, funded by Buddhist organisations from various countries, have been completed or are still under construction. Many monuments, monasteries and a museum, and the Lumbini International Research Institute are also within the holy site. In addition, there is the Puskarini, or Holy Pond, where the Buddha's mother took the ritual dip prior to his birth and where he had his first bath. At other sites near Lumbini, earlier Buddhas were, according to tradition, born, then achieved ultimate enlightenment and finally relinquished their earthly forms.

a daughter of Helen Duncan. However, I found I was so often talking to the converted, so to speak, and reliant on a medium. So I changed direction and started to give talks to non-Spiritualist groups, e.g. the Women's Guild and suchlike; I did this until 1982, then stopped public speaking completely.

With regard to the church, the POL group was most successful in raising awareness of Spiritualism in Bedford and in 1973 I moved from Bedford to the Arthur Findlay College to live and work—but that's another story. After around eighteen months at the AFC I went to London to see a show, 'Jesus Christ Superstar'; I noted an advert for a one-way coach trip to India, so I booked. It was a three-month journey to New Delhi, where I remained for a while. Gordon Higginson kindly kept my job open; on returning to the AFC the management had changed from Jimmy Young (second AFC manager) to general manager Charles Sherratt.



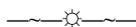
At Bedford we started to hire school halls, town halls, local theatres, etc. and put on all-day events. We worked the prices that anyone could attend with or without an entry payment. Maurice Barbanell would send back issues of "Psychic News" to put on each seat free. We had on several occasions Harry Edwards and his group of healers, and Rose Gladden. Mediums included Gordon Higginson, Robin Stevens, Carmen Rogers and Matthew Manning. The demonstrations were packed; my contacts at the AFC were most useful and we also brought along Albert Best, Ron Baker, the then SNU General Secretary, and for good measure Charles Sherratt to address the meetings; he was a fine speaker.

These are some of my very fond memories of over forty years ago. My introduction was not sought inasmuch as I did not intend to become in any way involved; in fact I knew nothing about Spiritualism or in fact had any interests within that avenue.

My introduction was powerful and at the time very disturbing, but so evidential; I have never needed to look for further proof from when it all began for me on October 31st 1969. My story was first told in "The Ark Review", the journal of the Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship, issue 128, January/February 2003, pages 17-19.

However, published below is the fuller original version, as it was heavily edited for space in the Ark:

OUIJA EXPERIENCE



Early Modern Spiritualism was a time of demonstrable power from the spirit world largely beyond the senses of man; and yet through the recorded history of mankind there are numerous examples of spirit communication, sometimes being swallowed in religious pampering or categorised as superstitious evil.

It was, however, the events that surrounded the Fox Family in 1848, with its powerful demonstration of spirit communication, that made America and indeed much of the world stand up and take note of much that history had chosen to ignore.

Much ground had been prepared prior to 1848 by the likes of Emanuel Swedenborg, Anton Mesmer and Andrew Jackson Davis, their philosophical foundation stones paving the way to the demonstrable truths of 1848.

The crudity of the employment of communication, alphabetical raps and later table tilting, reached Victorian England in 1852 by American medium, Mrs Maria Hayden

and soared openly to epidemic proportions soon after amongst England's elite. This laborious, yet efficient method of spirit communication remained popular even with the progression of mediumistic development. The method of delivery in spirit communication was of basic irrelevance. The relevance was the fact that the veil between life and death had been broken, and survival of death with individuality was for all and not dependent upon religious belief. This so-called, 'crudity' was an open doorway to Modern Spiritualism for those ready to cross; a doorway that I crossed in 1969.

Halloween night, 1969, was the night in which all my preconceived ideas were to change direction.

There is no significance in it being All Hallowed Eve, except had it not have been, perhaps the events of that night may not have taken place.

After partying this night with two friends, we decided to try out the ouija board, mainly for youthful thrills and excitement, a 'scary' finale to Halloween Night. Later, while we were all sitting a fair distance from the table, the upturned glass and cut out letters etc were still where we left them. Suddenly the glass shot off the table flew through the air, and smashed against the wall some distance away!

Impressed with the results, albeit rather nervous, I decided to have another go the following evening in my bedroom with my friend John from the previous evening this time however, in a more serious and responsible manner. We soon made *contact* with a woman who called herself Laura. We were so impressed with the clarity and quality of the information she gave us. We continued with our 'corresponding' for a week or so, each time getting more and more information about Laura. Suddenly her tone became decidedly chilly.

She began to describe how badly her husband had treated her shortly before her death. Laura had given us such clear information, her full name, place of burial, husband's name, and address etc., that we decided to check out all that we had received.

We located the place of her burial and all the information she had given was correct full name, dates of birth, death location etc.

Weeks followed and we persisted our corresponding and checking to the point of visiting her husband whom, by this time had remarried. He became extremely agitated and angry when I confronted him with information we couldn't possibly have otherwise known.

By this time things had well and truly gotten out of hand. The whole situation was affecting our lives at home and at work, and so we stopped using the ouija board. This did not however, see the end of Laura contacting us! My bedroom had a decidedly heavy feeling to it my cat who would normally sleep at the bottom of my bed, would not even come close to the room.

So, scared by these astonishing revelations we called to see the local vicar, a Catholic priest, and a convent. Albeit they were all most helpful, but by far did not solve or help our desperate plea. It was just after this something quite extraordinary happened to me while walking along a passage, I had what I can only explain as a daydream—but so totally vivid.

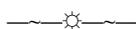
I was that night to sit alone and contact Laura, have a bible and ask her to move the glass totally on her *own volition*. I was to hold the bible at the edge of the table, and the spirit Laura to move the glass on it. I had one hand on the table and the other holding

the book, this was in no way a religious act—but simply a symbolic act to move on as I felt in my daydream.

I can feel the goose pimples on my arms typing this after so many years, she actually did this and it was almost as if someone had switched on a light, the whole atmosphere changed. And unbelievably shortly after, my cat took its place at the bottom of my bed.

After John and I sought the help of the local Spiritualist church, and I shall never forget at the first service we attended. We were approached by the medium, Robert (Bob) Cracknell, whom we had never met prior to this day, and he so astonishingly pointed to us waving his finger between us—and asked if we had been using a ouija board, he told us to meet him after the service.

Thankfully, all was resolved, and now over fifty years on, the experience remains clear with me still. This was for me the most evidential experience of spirit communication I have ever encountered. As shaken as I was by the events that unfolded, this was my introduction to Spiritualism.



Today, in my later years, I spend time in Kathmandu, Chitwan national park and the Himalayas, Nepal. Here I dedicate time putting together much of the issues of Pioneer, my Powerpoint presentations and the Arthur Findlay College yearly Christmas murder mystery, etc.



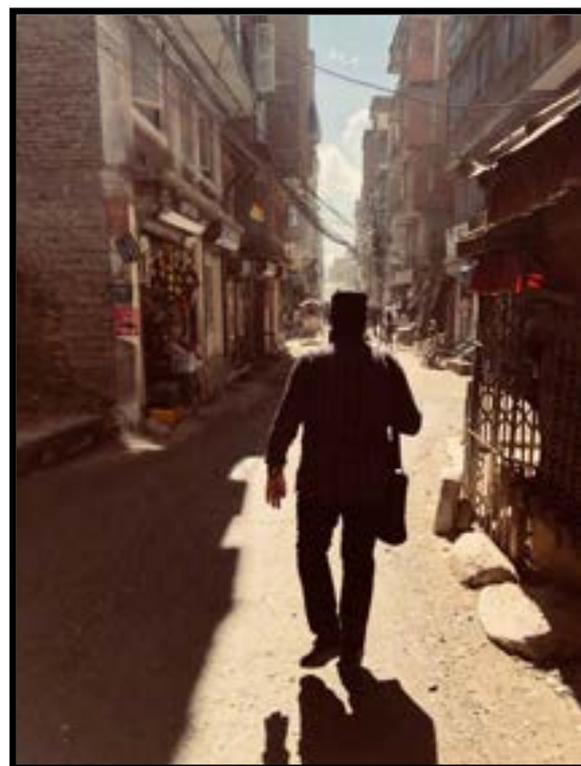
The photograph below depicts my favourite routines: a stroll through the older parts of the city, just outside the Thamel area, where I always stay. Just behind me is the devastated part of Kathmandu's Durbar Square; many of the capital's landmark buildings and temples were badly damaged or destroyed from the April 2015 earthquake. Further up this road is another one of my favourite haunts, the Swayambhunath Stupa, known as the Monkey Temple.



The streets are dusty but an air of magic always surrounds me; for me life is in itself a spiritual mission, no leaders, self-occupied, with no self-perceived

thoughts as I stroll down the many streets, with the Hindu and Buddhist monuments, etc. always present.

For me as I walk, a spiritual experience is not necessarily a deep-rooted experience of enlightenment; it's, in part, a process of conversations with people of so many diverse ways of life, belief systems, etc., which holds a lasting, life-changing experience for me

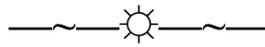




Little is known about Crestern Roskelly; this statement is printed above:

Ectoplasm has been described as a halfway house between matter and spirit. It has been handled and examined by front-rank scientists who have experimented with it for years and chemical analysed it. Its chemical properties are almost identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.

This is indeed a bold statement, which is completely unreferenced; one may understandably wonder who all these scientists are and their conclusions, *identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.*



Announcement

Leslie Price, who is a sub-editor of Pioneer, along with Charles Coulston, advised me at the beginning of this year that he is stepping down owing to other commitments.

Without doubt Leslie is one of the foremost historians in this country on psychical research, theosophy and Spiritualism. I first came into contact with Leslie around 1999, when I started to research the SNU Principles; I had no computer at this time. I sent a letter to Leslie, as I saw an advert for his online newsletter, Psychic Pioneer, which ran from 1999 to 2001. All these issues today are available in the Britten Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College.

This resulted in my involvement with Leslie in pursuit to make public original researched materials of psychic pioneers; in May 2004 Leslie was founder editor of Psypioneer, covering a wide range of Spiritualistic material. A year later I took ownership of the journal and Leslie continued as contributor and sub-editor; in 2016 I retired as proprietor and editor to concentrate on my work at the Arthur Findlay College and the SNU Pioneer, which began in 2013.¹³

Leslie was once again a great support for me and continued to sub-edit Pioneer from 2013.

Leslie has been inspirational to me over the last two decades for his continued valuable support and his fine knowledge, which has taught me so much about psychic pioneers. Thank you.

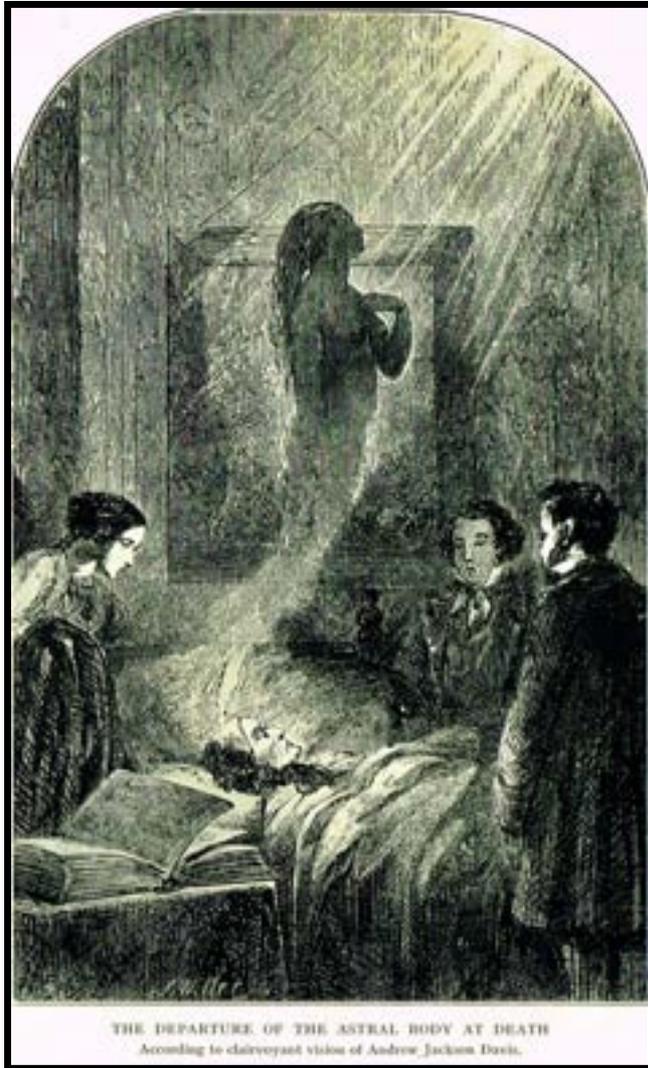
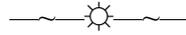


Leslie Price & Paul Gaunt

¹³ Leslie decided not to continue with Psypioneer but it is used in almost every Pioneer as referenced materials.

ASTRAL PROJECTION

Liberating the Double



Astral projection, it is said, can be practised over time to perfect certain techniques leading to conscious projection, or it can take place *naturally* purely as an involuntary experience. Today there are various books on the subject giving instruction. It should be noted, to limit confusion, that different authors call the *astral body* by different terms such as: Vehicle of Vitality, Soul Body, Double, Etheric Body, Vital Body, etc. The terms reflect some of the different sources, for example the “Vital Body” of the Rosicrucians. We will find that much of the history of the projection of the astral body and its techniques come from within secret societies of magic, and occultism.

Of course, occult practices have naturally crossed closely with the freehold of Spiritualism throughout its history; some of our pioneers were involved with, or participated within, its practices. For example, Sir William Crookes was an early member of the Theosophical society, later being initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. William Stainton Moses was another member of the early Theosophical Society.

Emma Hardinge Britten, her husband William, Madam Helena Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott and others were the founder members of the inauguration of the Theosophy Society in New York. Two meetings were held on October 16th and 30th 1875, in which the society’s Preamble and bylaws were adopted and officers elected; these two meetings were held at Dr and Mrs William Britten’s reception rooms at their home on 38th Street, New York.

Not long after there was a falling out, primarily between Emma and Blavatsky, resulting in their going in separate directions. In 1897 the Theosophical Society had reorganised, moving its meetings mainly to India with a handful of its original founders. From this time onwards Emma would become a severe critic of the Theosophical Society; this can be strongly noted when Emma became editor of the *Two Worlds* in 1887, when she would launch strong attacks against the teachings of the Theosophical Society.

It is here in part within these early journal pages that we find links to her occult associations from her early teenage life, and also *I personally believe* that we find Emma writing under her occult pseudonym, “Sirius”, the “One Who Knows.”

“Occultism Defined by the “One Who Knows” was published in the Two Worlds, November 18th, 1887, of which the first part is republished in *Psypioneer*.⁹ This gives some insight into Emma’s occult life, which she claims started in her thirteenth year. It can be noted in her autobiography, pages 3-4:

... I became *called* and associated with a secret society of Occultists and attended their sessions in London as one of their clairvoyant and magnetic subjects, that I myself began to comprehend why a young girl fairly educated, and blessed with many advantages, should be branded with such peculiarities of disposition as must inevitably shut her off from all companionship with children of her own age and standing.¹⁰

The society of Occultists to whom I can now only allude, and who are named in “Ghost-Land” as the “Orphic Circle,” obtained knowledge (by means I am not at liberty to mention) of those persons whose associations they desired.

None of the members were known as such outside their circles, the existence of the society was undreamed of, and those whom they *chose* to affiliate with *they knew of and called*. I having been thus favoured obtained a clue to my own exceptional early experiences, which the subsequent developments of Spiritualism stamped as natural Seership.

As the powers so mystical in my own person were thoroughly comprehended by the “Adepts” of the “Orphic Society,” as I may venture to call them,
...



In more recent years some valuable research has been done by historians Robert Mathiesen, Pat Deveney, Marc Demarest and others.¹¹

Mathiesen notes:¹²

Occult Training in the Earlier Theosophical Society.

John Patrick Deveney has proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the Earlier Theosophical Society offered its members practical training in various occult practices, including what is now called astral projection, and has connected this fact with the pledge of secrecy for the society’s members that was instituted on January 19, 1876, followed a few months later by the adoption of such things as secret words and signs of recognition.

It also appears that the Earlier Theosophical Society offered its members a system of degrees at about the same time; here is what W. J. Colville had to report (at second hand) in 1884:

⁹ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 12, direct link via: www.pauljgaunt.com

¹⁰ Image of the young Emma Floyd circa 1847.

¹¹ Marc Demarest’s website: Chasing Down Emma.

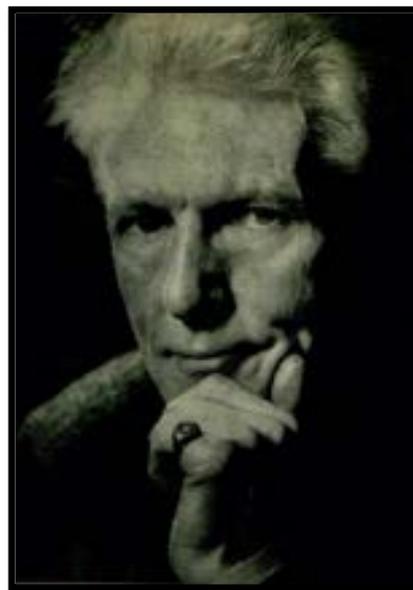
¹² “The Unseen Worlds of Emma Hardinge Britten”: Brown University Theosophical History Occasional Papers Vol. IX (2000). Mathiesen’s quote is taken from: *Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society*, by John Patrick Deveney. Theosophical History, 1997.

PROJECTION OF THE “ASTRAL” BODY

A Description of the Method of Projecting the Human “Double” at Will

Carrington notes:

Regarding the use of the word “astral,” I have not intended to restrict its use, as in Theosophical literature; but have merely employed it as a convenient term, well understood, to signify the astral or etheric or mental or spiritual or dream body, or “double,” of man. Theosophists distinguish between these terms — perhaps rightly: psychical researchers, on the other hand, have been content, so far, to prove the objective existence of a “body” corresponding to any of these conceptions. Thus, the term “astral body” is used in the present chapter, only in its most general sense and widest meaning.¹³



One of the latest achievements of “psychical science”—which is constantly making new and important discoveries — is the voluntary projection of the “astral body” of man—the expulsion of the human “double” or etheric counterpart of the physical body — by methods under control of the human will. Occult science has long since proved that — besides this physical body, which we know — there is also a more subtle and refined envelope — the “spiritual body” of St. Paul — and that this body is capable of being detached, at times, and of being “projected” — leaving the physical body entranced, while the subtle body journeys and makes itself manifest to others at considerable distances. The specific methods to be employed, in order to ensure this, have only lately been disclosed; and it has remained for Dr. Charles Lancelin — a French scientist and occultist of note — to describe the necessary practices in full.

Dr. Lancelin has been well-known in scientific and occult circles in France for many years; he is the author of a number of works — the most important of which are: *Fraud in the Production of Mediumistic Phenomena*, *The Beyond and its Problems*, *My Experiences with the Devil and Devil-Worship*, *Sorcery and Witchcraft*, and *a Study of a Hyperphysical Subject* — all in French.



In his latest work, *Methodes de Dédoublément Personnel: Exteriorization de la Neuricité: Sorties en Astral*, a volume of more than 550 pages, Dr. Lancelin has gone deeply into this subject of self-projection, and given us a detailed scientific account of the actual methods followed, in order to effect this apparent miracle. This is the first time that this occult knowledge has ever been divulged, and it has caused no little stir and sensation in France. Experiments had been tried before, it may be said, by M. Hector Durville,¹⁴ President of the “Magnetic Society” of France and author of a number of books upon psychic subjects; by Dr. Baraduc, well-known for his work upon the nervous system and human vitality; and by the late Colonel Albert de Rochas, of the French Army, who was regarded by many as the foremost scholar of psychic science in his day.

¹³ See Figs. 15 and 16.

¹⁴ Image of Hector Durville standing.

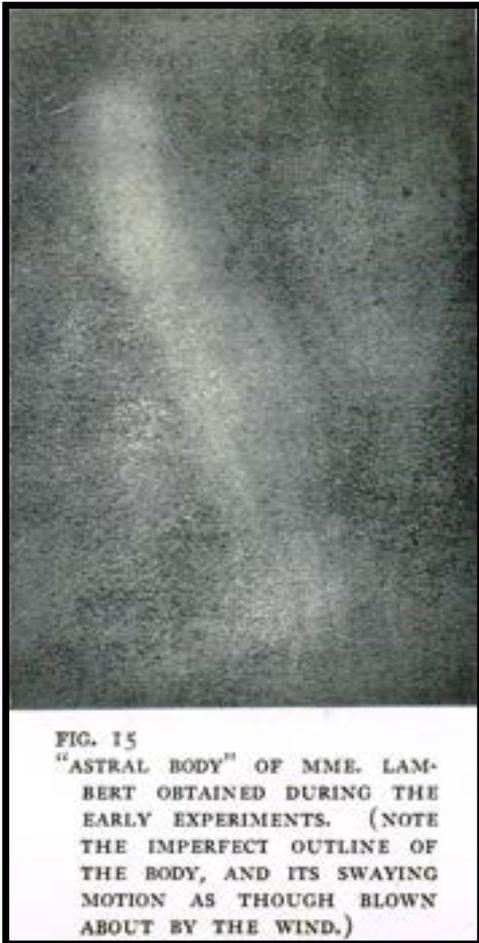


FIG. 15
 "ASTRAL BODY" OF MME. LAMBERT OBTAINED DURING THE EARLY EXPERIMENTS. (NOTE THE IMPERFECT OUTLINE OF THE BODY, AND ITS SWAYING MOTION AS THOUGH BLOWN ABOUT BY THE WIND.)

All these experimenters achieved success in this field of research; and Dr. Lancelin has not only summarized their researches, but also extended them in the minutest detail — in the remarkable work which he has lately published. It is this which I propose to summarize in the present chapter.

According to M. Lancelin, there is a real "science and art" in this astral duplication, which consists, essentially, in the ability to externalize the neuric (nervous) force, composing the astral body, and the "sensibility." The right or suitable temperament must be chosen for the experiment; and if this is not found, the experiment is liable to fail, or only to succeed partially. "Temperament" must not be confused with "character," or mental make-up. Temperament is a physiological state produced by the predominance of an element, organ or system in the human body. There are four chief types of temperament — nervous, bilious, lymphatic and sanguine. Of these, the nervous temperament is the best for psychic experiments of all kinds; the bilious is the most receptive; the sanguine is liable to hallucinations, both subjective and objective; while the lymphatic is the least suitable of all, from every point of view. Of course, one's temperament is usually a compound of all of these, which are rarely found in their ideal state; but the

predominantly nervous temperament is the one best suited for this test — as for all other psychic experiments.

Now, there is at all times a certain out-flowing of nervous force, or "externalization of neuricity," as it is called, in all individuals, but this becomes very pronounced in certain types of individuals known as "mediums" or "psychics." In them, this force which is thus radiated can be measured by means of specially constructed instruments, known as Biometers, Sthenometers, etc. Several instruments of this kind have been devised by French experimenters. They show that there is a repulsive force generated from one side of the human body, and an attractive force from the other side. In normal human beings these forces should be equal.

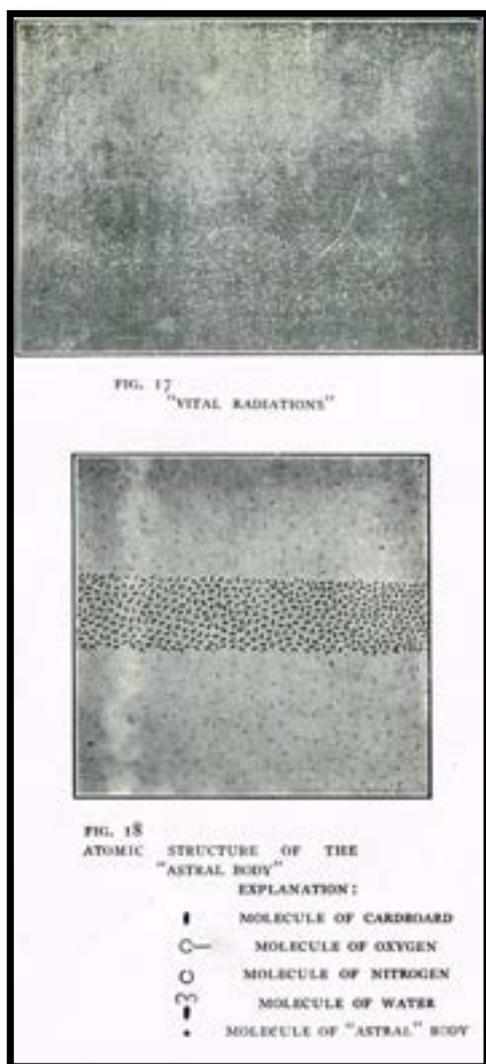
When they are not, odd things are likely to happen in their immediate environment. Their relative power can be tested by means of these instruments. (See Fig. 17.)

These energies depend upon the state of the health, the emotions, the mind and also upon the will. For the experiment to succeed, as we shall see, the subject must be in good health; the emotions calm; the mind placid; and the will exceedingly strong. However, it is not the conscious will which performs the miracle; but the *sub-conscious will* — the will which is active in sleep. It is



FIG. 16
 LATER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE "ASTRAL BODY" OF MME. LAMBERT, OBTAINED AFTER FURTHER EXPERIMENTATION. (NOTE THE CLEARER OUTLINE AND RELATIVE STABILITY OF THE FIGURE.)

this which is difficult to train, and can only be reached by psychic and occult methods. Once reached and strengthened, however, it is capable of performing all sorts of marvels, while the subject is asleep or entranced.



This subconscious will has its own psychology; it is said to consist of four essential elements — possession, deliberation, determination and action. The last three of these are the so-called “solid” states of will. (The medium Eusapia Palladino was wont to say she could succeed in moving objects at a distance if her will were sufficiently “solid.”) Within this mystic citadel, a double action takes place — (1) the will acts within itself, and (2) it controls its environment. Upon the degree of power which this subconscious will possesses depends the success of the experiments.

The first thing to do, then, to ensure the success of our “astral projection,” is to *dynamize the will* — to hyperdynamize it, in fact, so that it is over-charged, and capable of bursting out, like champagne, when the cork is removed. There are various methods of doing this. One of the simplest is to repeat to oneself many times just before dropping off to sleep, “I have will — I have energy!” This must be kept up until sleep actually supervenes, and memory is lost. Then one may think of the next day’s work clearly, in detail, and make up one’s mind not to deviate therefrom, even under great pressure and temptation. This will give the subconscious will a force that nothing else can equal.

The subconscious will thus strengthened, the next step is to create a “division of self,” so as to loosen the astral body from the physical body. The subject, to do

this, should go over his entire body in thought — while lying in bed — covering every inch of its surface, and *willing* that the astral body shall be detached from the physical body at that point. Try to feel this body loose inside you. Then focus all your mental energy upon the solar plexus — at the spot where the ribs divide ¹⁵ — and, while breathing quietly and deeply, *will* that you go



¹⁵ In this, Dr. Lancelin is at variance with many experienced Occultists, who contend that the safest and easiest point of egress is a point low down on the forehead, between the eyes. Some personal experiences and experiments tend to confirm this view. Further, this method is dangerous, unless undertaken under wise guidance. At some future time I hope to extend and amplify this question at considerable length — giving more specific exercises, and instructions.

out from your physical body at that point. Project yourself outwards into space. Imagine yourself going out; try to transfer your consciousness to the body without you. Try to look out of its eyes, hear with its ears, feel with its body. You will suddenly find yourself enabled to do so; then your first great step will have been taken.

When you have progressed thus far, says M. Lancelin, look around you, in your newly acquired “astral body,” and notice the furniture in the room; notice everything in detail. Then try to go out through the door of the room, — down stairs, and out of the front door into the street. Then walk along the street — into the door of your friend’s house, to whom you wish to appear — and go upstairs into his or her room. Notice everything as you go. When there, try to make your presence felt or seen. This is the second hardest step, and the one we know the least about as yet, in its technical details.

The person to whom you are to appear must be more or less “clairvoyant” or “psychic.” He must be quiet and receptive, in darkness or semi-darkness, and should, if possible, aid you by *drawing* you by an effort of will — so that his duty is not altogether passive, but active also. One of the best states for the perception of the astral body of another person is the hypnotic trance. The French experiments were nearly all made in this condition — though it is not necessary.

Once by the side of the “seer,” the astral phantom should endeavour in every way possible to make its presence felt. It may do this by becoming visible, by speaking (becoming audible), or by touching the “seer.” The phantom may also be able to rap. If not, it has been found by experience that the astral form may be enabled to prove its presence by impressing photographic plates (by placing its hands upon them), by touching sulphide of calcium screens, or by operating some delicate instrument, such as a Biometer. Its objectivity is thus established.



As to the “trip” between one point and the other, the necessary things for the phantasmal form to develop are — (1) self-conscious will, and (2) sense of direction.

Various factors have been found to influence the results advantageously, or the reverse. We may thus summarize the most important of these: —

Sex. This should preferably be male for the projector, female for the recipient or seer of the phantom.

Humidity. The air should be dry and clear, barometer high.

Atmospheric electricity. If high, this is prejudicial to the experiment.

Temperature. This should be high — say 20° F. below the heat of the body when the experiment is taking place.

Clothing. No restrictions of any kind can be allowed.

Light. Complete darkness is by far the best; a dim twilight in any case is all that may be allowed.

Sitters. If possible, projector and seer should be alone; if any one else is present, they must understand what is happening, and be in sympathy with the experiment.

Silence must be preserved throughout, no noise must disturb the sitter at either end of the “line.”

Time. The best time is between 11 P.M. and 3 A. M.— that is, when natural sleep is most likely to supervene.

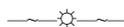
Position. The most comfortable—in an arm chair, on a couch, or in bed. If lying down, it should be on the *right side*. You must *not* lie upon the front of the body.

The *Mind* must be calm, and the *emotions* placid.

It is well to *eat* very little on the day of the experiment.

There are certain *dangers* attendant upon this experiment — especially if undertaken rashly, and by one unaccustomed to such trials. (1) There are *material* dangers — such as would accompany any dissociation experiments. A psychic expert would understand this. (2) *Intellectual and Moral Dangers.* Those having weak characters, weak wills, or uncontrolled lives are liable to be influenced by outside, evil intelligences, and “open the door” to possible “obsession.” Sound advice by a master or adept is advisable here. (3) *Psycho-physical dangers.* These are dangers which happen in the astral world, and react upon the mind and body of the subject. (4) *Hyper-physical dangers,* which leave the door open to dangerous principles.

To avoid these, one should have technical instruction in this matter of self - or astral-projection, and, in any case, care, *sang froid*, fearlessness, moral force and a strong will are essential. If these are lacking, the subject had best leave the experiment alone. But if he has them, or can develop them, a road is opened to him which is one of the most fascinating in the occult world; he will be enabled to leave his physical body at will, and soar upon the wings of the wind in the astral and ethereal worlds; and he will see things there beyond words to describe; he will behold visions and hear that which “it is not lawful to utter” — for they pass the ordinary comprehension of man. Such is the testimony of M. Lancelin.



In February 1929 Hereward Carrington, along with Sylvan J. Muldoon, published “The Projection of the Astral Body”.¹⁶

“In my opinion, it is this . . . notion of a subtle body, which for so many centuries has played the dominant rôle in the traditional psychology of both the East and the West, that is most deserving of being retried, reviewed and revised, to serve as a working hypothesis to co-ordinate and explain a very large number of these puzzling psychical phenomena.”

G. R. S. MEAD, in *The Subtle Body*.



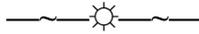
“These self-projections represent the most extraordinary achievements of the human will, and are perhaps acts which a man might perform equally well before and after death.”

F. W. H. Myers, in *Human Personality*.



¹⁶ A free download is available at “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals” (IAPSOP), which is highly recommended for researching original materials, etc. Charles Lancelin material is also available, albeit in its original French text. Google: IAPSOP.

ELEMENTALS



Elementals, it may be said, are forces which may be employed by occultists and it is said that they can produce various effects in the séance room; it would be at this point that Spiritualists would generally disagree.

Emma Hardinge Britten accepted the reality of gnomes, etc.:

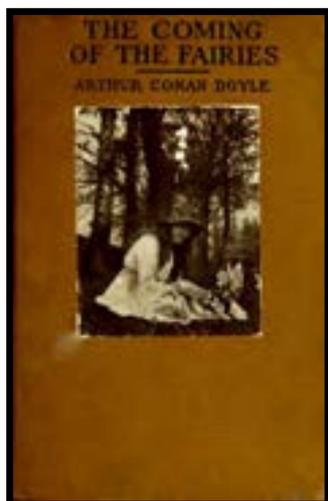


I FIRMLY, emphatically believe that we have ample demonstration of a human origin in every manifestation where human forms are presented or human intelligence rendered. I cannot say I know this, but I believe it, and I think an immense array of the testimony our experiences in Spiritualism furnish us with, all tends to confirm this belief up to the point of absolute certainty.

At the same time I not only believe in, but I *know* the fact of the existence of other than human spirits. I have seen them, held some kind of intercourse with them, and confidently believe they can *measurably* intervene in human affairs. I have never seen any in human form except in such a caricature, miniature, or distorted resemblance of that divine image, that I should not have been liable to mistake them for human beings.¹⁷



In 1937 an interesting paper was given at the Lianberis Conference by Ernest W. Oaten, who illustrated his lecture with extracts from his own experience in “Fairies, and Fairy Lore”. Oaten’s friend, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, had previously in 1920 investigated what were known as the “Cottingley Fairies”; below, Oaten uses the first of a set of five images taken between July 1917 and August 1920.



In 1922 Doyle published “The Coming of the Fairies” (available as a free download).



¹⁷ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 12: “Spirits of the Mines – Emma Hardinge Britten”.

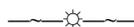
Below is taken from the Two Worlds, May 14th, 1937:



FRANCES AND THE FAIRIES:

This photograph of fairies, taken in 1917, was submitted to experts, who asserted that it was a perfectly genuine, single exposure, taken in the open. The girl described the fairies as green, pink, lavender—each fairy having its own colour

FAIRIES, AND FAIRY LORE



AT the express request of a number of the party I agreed to open a discussion on the above subject, and I did so on the basis of broad principles. It may well be considered a legitimate branch of psychical investigation since, like the legends of ghosts, hauntings and spirit-appearances, fairy lore occupies a place in the traditions of all races, and all times.

Folklore used to be dismissed contemptuously as beneath notice. We now regard it as the womb out of which present conceptions have been born. The mystic lore represents man's attempt to explain the inconsistent phenomena of life in constant and understandable terms.

We must dismiss from our minds the efforts of Hans Andersen and Grimm to symbolise moral truths in allegorical stories based on local tradition, and get to the actual beliefs and legends of pastoral peoples.

Let us remember that all knowledge depends upon the responsiveness of our consciousness to our surroundings. That is why spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. Spiritualism has become an established fact to many of us, because some people (mediums) have developed faculties which respond to an etheric or psychic world which lies immediately beyond the range of our physical senses.

Material things must be materially discerned. The blind, the deaf and the paralysed live in a modified world compared with ours. Even the colour-blind, and those who are tone-deaf, are unaware of some of the realities which exist around them. We only know what we are capable of knowing, and a slight extension of our normal consciousness may conceivably relate us to phases of reality of which we are ignorant. That is why the Spiritualist can look with a pitying eye upon those whose sense perceptions are limited to a purely physical world.

Since an extension of knowledge can be regarded as the logical result of evolutionary processes, the man is foolish who (short of contradiction) denies a thing merely because his consciousness does not respond to it.

Lord Lytton said, "A man is generally right in what he affirms and wrong in what he denies." He generally affirms from knowledge, and denies from prejudice.

Psychical investigation has shown that the consciousness of individuals is capable of wide variation. Some folk respond to things of which others have no perception.

Clairvoyance, psychometry and mediumship generally are typical, hence it is often waste of time to talk of psychical things to a man who has no psychical perceptions.

The extension of our knowledge into new realms often depends upon noting unexpected happenings and abnormalities, and devoting time and care to their observation and analysis. We should expect these abnormalities to occur amongst a small minority of the race, and they may apply not to any limited time but scattered along the whole line of history.

Invisible Beings

Now, the belief in fairies, elementals, etc., is just as widespread in the traditions and folk lore of ancient and modern people as was the belief in spirits a century ago. Both beliefs are peculiar to no particular place or time. In many cases the belief in Nature spirits runs parallel with that of belief in the spirits of the dead. Generally, they are synonymous and inseparable.

These beings have been given many names based upon their peculiar activities—their habitat, nationality, form and dress—fairies, dwarfs, giants, gnomes, sylphs, sprites, salamanders, leprechauns, sidhe, pixies, knocker corrigans, djinns, elves, demons, brownies, lutins, little people, iruntarinia, etc.

Belief in survival, a spiritual world, spiritual beings, and fairy lore, all spring from a common root. All these problematical beings belong to a world normally invisible but capable of making an occasional incursion into this world. They appear and disappear at will, or when disturbed, and the traditions exist amongst all peoples, ancient and modern. Nor do they spring from the most ignorant of peoples, but rather from the intelligentsia of the races.

Errors and Illusions

Quite probably many of these legends are based upon errors and illusions and faulty observations; the shadows thrown by a peat or log fire, the reflection of light on falling rain, the mirage, the moan of wind through the trees, all give rise to the possibilities of error and malobservation. Nevertheless, a common tradition existing amongst races widespread in culture and distribution, yet containing common and constant factors, suggests something actual behind possible errors.

The Opium Eater

Take the opium eater and his dreams of exaltation. It seems to me silly to suppose that he is enjoying nothingness; his consciousness must be responding to something. At any rate, for the time being, it is real to him. To call it subjective may differentiate it, but certainly does not describe it.

Take the creative power of the human consciousness. It is possible to visual a doll-like form, to endow it with vitality transmitted from yourself and project it into the conscious perception of a person at a distance. The form may be seen at both places, and may produce effects and carry messages.

It is possible to load these temporary creations with goodwill or malevolence, and to trace the effects they produce; but remember, their task accomplished, they return home, bringing the goodwill or its opposite, and react on their creator. That is why the black magician has a short if disastrous life. The whole tradition of talismans, amulets, charms, etc., rests upon this basis.

Bone of Ill-Omen

The story of the Egyptian bone, related recently in *The Two Worlds*, suggests that the ancient Egyptian race had the power of saturating an object with such force and making it enduring. The student who knows the process could, however, neutralise such power in a few minutes, either by overlaying and sealing it, or by drawing it off.

Now if we have this creative power is it not possible that the inhabitants of a larger world have the same ability in an extended degree?

We here assembled know of the existence of a spirit-world: we see it and talk with those who dwell there; it is a real world, far more enduring than this one.

In our physical world every country and climate has its own fauna and flora. Has the spirit-world a fauna and flora peculiar to itself? My experience affirms that it has, and it may well be that what the primitive mind calls Nature spirits, fairies, etc., are the primitive types of life existing in that world, or in a state of life midway between the two.

Human beings attract human beings. May not a pastoral scene attract types of psychic life as flowers attract bees and butterflies?

It is impossible to conceive that the fairy faith could be so widespread and well established unless there, were some substantial facts behind it.

My personal experience is limited. The outstanding feature was an experience when I was about fifteen years old—before I had even heard of Spiritualism.

I had been walking in Somerset. The day was hot and sunny. It was early afternoon. Seeking to cool my perspiration lay on a sunbathed slope overlooking a valley—not very far from Cadbury Camp. My head rested on my clasped hands, and I mused for half an hour, completely relaxed. I did not sleep. Sitting up, I was surprised to see a knot of little people passing and repassing, like a crowd in a market-place. They were not more than a dozen yards from me. They appeared to be 12 to 15 inches in height. The headdress appeared like a helmet at the front, but a little baggy at the back.

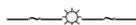
They were, apparently, all men. They wore fancy coats of dark blue and yellow, shaped to the body, skin-tight pants of bright red, and long, pointed shoes. They appeared to be doing nothing in particular, and apparently did not observe me. I watched them with a curious contemplation for quite a quarter of an hour. When at last I rose they disappeared into thin air. I have always thought of them as “my bowmen!” I don’t know why, as they had neither bows nor arrows.

On another occasion I watched fire-spirits (salamanders) gambolling in and out of the fire—a log fire on a hearth.

I once met a Wesleyan minister in Belfast, an Englishman who for some years had ministered to a congregation in a remote district in West Ireland. He told me that on first going there he laughed at fairy lore, but said he, “When you have on a score of occasions seen these pretty creatures dancing on your own lawn you accept the facts, even if you are careful who you relate them to.”

Are there fairies? It is a matter of evidence; there is a wide field for the true investigator, and plenty of material to start on.

I can recommend the beginner to read such books as Taylor's *Primitive Culture*, a very old book that gives a broad, general outline, and Evans Wentz's *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*.



Editor's note:

The story of the 'Cottingley Fairies' is indeed an enchanting story of two little girls, cousins Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, who had arrived in England from South Africa to stay with her aunt and uncle.

It was during this time in July 1917 in the family's garden in the Cottingley village home, Yorkshire that the first photograph was taken by Elsie using her father's camera. The last photo, the fifth, was taken three years later in 1920.

These photographs, on reaching the public, naturally caused much debate, disbelief, acceptance, etc. I believe that one of the first to accept these as factual was the Theosophist lecturer of a London branch of the Society, Edward Gardner. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote an article about the photographs that appeared in the December 1920 issue of *The Strand Magazine*.

It would not be until the early 1980s that Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths would both confess in interviews that it was all a hoax, using cardboard cut-outs of fairies copied from a children's book of the time. Elsie died in 1988 and her cousin Frances in 1986.

However, it is maintained by some, including Frances and her daughter¹⁸ in some reports, that the fifth and final photograph was genuine as shown!

Edward Gardner notes in his 1945 book, "Fairies: The Cottingley Photographs and Their Sequel":

Fairies and Their Sun-Bath. Taken August 1920. Camera: Cameo Quarter. This is especially remarkable as it contains a feature quite unknown to the girls. The sheath or cocoon appearing in the middle of the grasses had not been seen by them before, and they had no idea what it was. Fairy observers of Scotland and the New Forest, however, were familiar with it and described it as a magnetic bath, woven very quickly by the fairies and used after dull weather, in the autumn especially. The interior seems to be magnetised in some manner that stimulates and pleases.

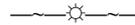


¹⁸ Frances' daughter, Christine Lynch, appeared in an episode of the television programme, 'Antiques Roadshow', in Belfast, broadcast on BBC One in January 2009, with the photographs and one of the cameras given to the girls by Doyle. Christine told the expert, Paul Atterbury, that she believed, as her mother had done, that the fairies in the fifth photograph were genuine.

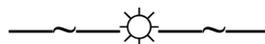


Doyle gives a similar description to Gardner in “The Coming of the Fairies”:

This is especially remarkable, as not only would it be exceedingly difficult to produce such a negative by faked work—impossible in the opinion of some experts—but it contains a feature that was quite unknown to the girls. The sheath or cocoon appearing in the midst of the grasses had never been seen by them before, and they had no idea what it was. Fairy lovers and observers, of the New Forest and elsewhere, describe it as a magnetic bath, woven very quickly by the fairies, and used after dull weather and in the autumn especially. The sun’s rays through the sheath appear to magnetise the interior, and thus provide a “bath” that restores vitality and vigour.



Britten Museum & Library



“HOW IS SPIRIT CONTROL EFFECTED?”

This was the subject dealt with by one of the controls of Mr Frank T. Blake at the Psychic Congress at Llanberis on April 28th, 1939



Frank Thomas Blake was a trance medium for a healing control known as “The Doctor”. Blake gave many years of dedicated service to the Spiritualists’ National Union; he was President of the Southern District Council (SDC) for many years. He was one of the founder members of Bournemouth National Spiritualist Church; he was a Vice-President of the Union and President 1938-1941 and sadly died while in office.

Blake has been previously featured in *Pioneer*, primarily for his work as a healer.¹² At the 30th SNU Annual General Meeting, held in Glasgow in July 1932, the Exponents Committee recommended Blake for the Healing Diploma.

We can further note his involvement with the “No World War” predictions: “Prophecies – SNU President Frank Blake”.¹³

Below, *the Two Worlds*, June 2nd, 1939, presents a summary of the address; this was reported by former SNU President John McIndoe.

HOW I EFFECT CONTROL

By a control, Through Frank T. Blake

SOMETIMES it is a puzzle to me myself to know just how I control my medium. It is easy enough to make contact with my medium, but there is nothing in the nature of constant interference with him. He and I respect each other’s individuality, but in collective work we have learned to respond to each other.

Just now you are looking at Blake’s physical body; that covers the presence of another body similar in its shape and function, but more subtle, invisible, yet far more permanent. It is slightly less in height and girth but the difference is small. We call this other body the etheric body. Both these bodies are clothed by an aura

The Human Aura

This aura is observed by clairvoyants around the physical body, near which it resembles a cloud. It has texture. It can be felt, if you approach it as I (the control) do, for my etheric body is aware of its contact with it.

To take control I enter that aura, and blend my own with his. They mingle together and thus are brought into strict coincidence. With their conditions thus harmonised and their properties fused, my mind can exert its influence on his mind, brain and nervous system.

¹² See Vol. 1, No. 3, “Healing”, continued in the following issue.

¹³ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No. 2.

It is wise to contact the mind first. Some do not; they contact first the nervous system, and thus produce contortions in the physical body and unnecessary nervous reactions. By contacting first the mind, there is evoked an awareness of the approach and a willingness which makes complete control easy. That is the method adopted when definite, intimate use of the medium's physical body is required for comparatively short periods.

For sustained control over long periods of time there must be complete control over mind and brain. The brain determines the flow and the language which the control can use in giving his message. As I hold my medium now I have quietened down the activities of his physical extremities, You could not just now excite into intense action the lower parts of his body. The heart's action is slowed down; it must be watched. Its best is steady but considerably lower than normal.

“I Am Not Inside Blake”

I have not disturbed his etheric body. It is still in strict coincidence with his physical body. Sometimes it has to be out of coincidence, partially or completely withdrawn. I seldom do this through “The Doctor” frequently does when he is in control. But I am not going to walk about or use Blake's arms violently. It is sufficient for my purpose that my mind is in control.

Where is Blake's mind? That is difficult to answer. At no time during physical life is the whole content of a mind in action. That is also true of discarnate mind. The mind cannot be envisaged by sight, physical, etheric or psychic. But you can see around a man who is mentally active, a field, as though the atmosphere around him had been set in motion by mind. It is in that field of movement that the control finds his closest contact. If you had the power to see it you would perceive the air around Blake now in a state of agitation. That is the mechanism by which my mind exerts its influence on his mind.

The Effects of Control

It has been suggested that control undermines the independence of the medium's mind and destroys his individuality; but there is no such thing as complete independence of mind in anyone. Association with another affects both mentally, As with you, so with us. My mind was influenced by countless contacts with other minds while I was incarnate. It is now influenced not only by discarnate minds, but also by incarnate minds which I contact when in control. That part of my mind's content which has influenced Blake naturally leaves something of itself with him. Hence the foolishness of promiscuous companionship—incarnate or discarnate. But it should not be forgotten that while your mind is reacting to another, it in turn is being influenced by you.

Deep Control

To control Blake so that he could walk about or engage in muscular activity, my manner of approach and of control would be similar, but carried to such a point as to give me control over his muscular movements. At present my etheric body is close to his. Its head is here (indicating a little above and behind the medium's head), but there is no disturbance of his physical or etheric body by this control. But for control to do walking, writing, and so on, I should have to displace his etheric body with my own. Then the physical organs, the eyes, the hands, etc., can be used in a more or less natural manner and by training; such control can be maintained for fairly long periods.

Danger

The danger comes at the moment of retiral from control. Unless due care is taken, the medium's etheric body may have gone away to a considerable distance. The two cords

which link the physical and the etheric body will be drawn out correspondingly, and if there is a sudden departure of the control, a short interval may elapse before repossession occurs, and this break, though short, may induce a feeling of nausea and weakness, and a sense of fear. The control should know how to leave the medium so that the medium is not disturbed.

The lecture, of which the above is a résumé, took 35 minutes to deliver.

Questions

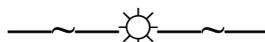
Answers to many questions followed. Some interesting points were: If the needs of medium and control have proper consideration, there is no harm to either the control or the medium.

Contortions are not always due to wrong approach by the control. If in the early stages of development a medium acquires the habit of contortions, it may continue after development. Though he has gone under control himself very many times, and knows that he is quite safe, Blake has not yet managed to overcome the momentary dread and fear of crossing the point where blackness supervenes—the moment of emptiness in which the mind loses consciousness of its surroundings.

Insanity does not imply a defect in the mind, but merely in the functioning of its instrument, the brain. A wise control saves his medium from any unnecessary effort while under control.

In genuine voice and materialisation phenomena, the physical and the etheric body of the medium are in strict close coincidence, because in such phenomena the power and the qualities of both are required.

J. B.





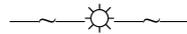
PIONEER

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.



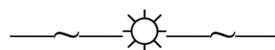
The AGM this year, 2020

Marking the journal's seventh birthday

**Pioneer is pleased to announce
it has reached:**

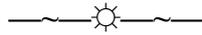
**TWO THOUSAND
individual subscribers!**

Additionally, there are SNUi & on-line readers

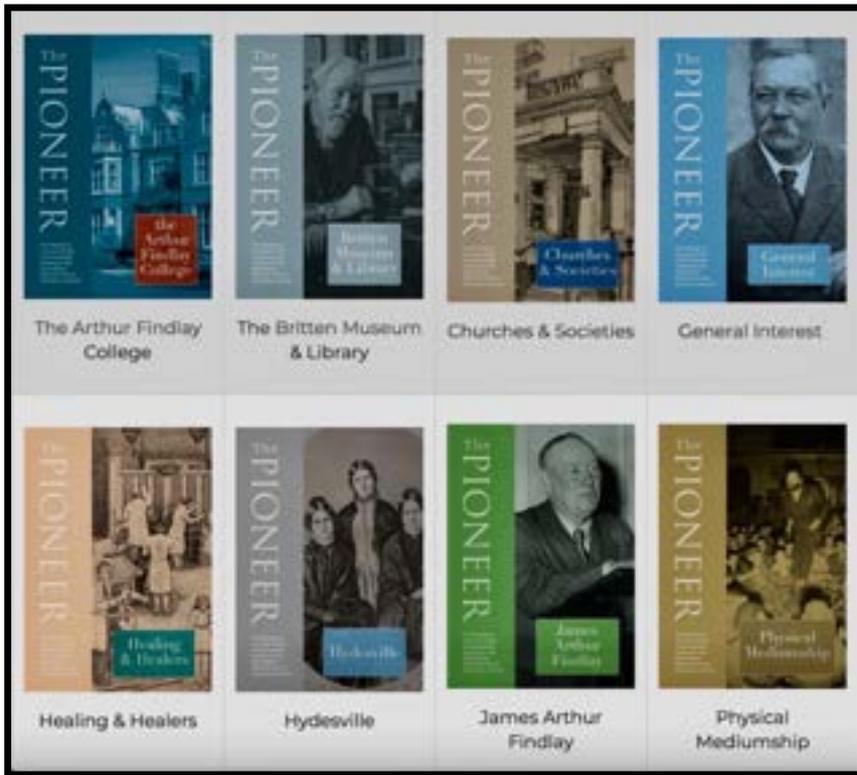


NEW SNU PIONEER PAGE

Looking for a specific subject?



All the articles published in Pioneer over the last seven years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible

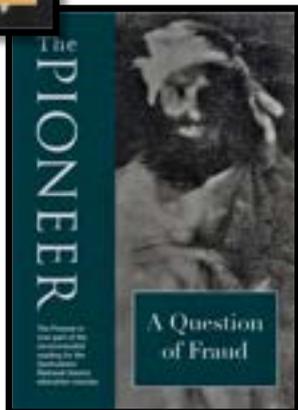
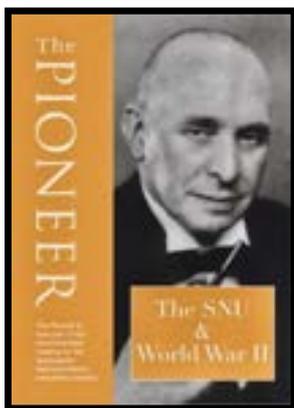


A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

Designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

<https://www.snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal>

The Pioneer journal is a unique insight into the history of the Spiritualists' National Union and its pioneers.



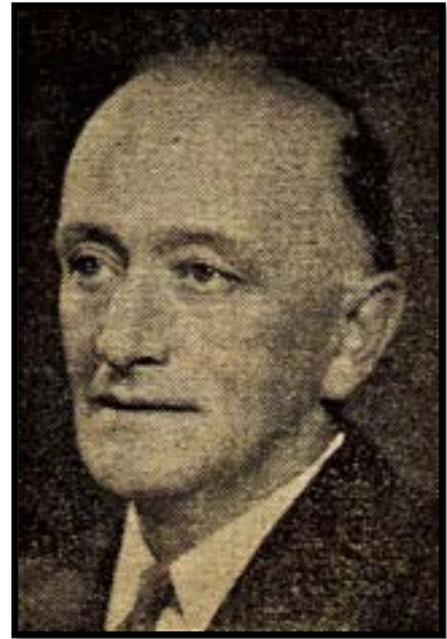
B. ABDY COLLINS

Psychical Researcher, Spiritualist and Author

Abdy Collins was a staunch supporter of the physical medium Helen Duncan. He was one of the defence witnesses at her trial held before the Recorder of London, Sir Gerald Dodson,¹ at the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, E.C.4., commencing on Thursday 23rd March 1944.²

The SNU appointed legal team Mr Charles E. Loseby and Mr J. Simpson Pedlar as Duncan's counsel. Abdy Collins was called to give evidence on the fifth day of the trial on Wednesday March 28th; we can note some information on Collins in the trial records:³

B. A. Collins.—B Abdy Collins, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, and District and Sessions Judge. For the last ten years: Psychical Researcher, on the Council of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), and a member of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPi), living in Bedford.



We can note in *Pioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 5: “International Institute for Psychical Research” & “The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay”; Findlay was then Chairman of the IIPR.

In 1939 Abdy Collins gives a significant account of the medium Jack Webber's psychic removal of the medium's coat shortly before Webber's untimely death on March 9th, 1940, aged thirty-three years.

The following extracts are taken from an article published in *Light* (page 427-428, 1939), written by Mr. B. Abdy Collins, C.I.E., well known for his books and writings on psychical research.

“I wish to draw attention to one phenomenon which is quite in a class by itself and cannot be explained; they are explained by those who accept the facts, as caused by psychic rods or voice boxes emanating from the medium and directed by his sub-conscious mind.”

“The phenomenon to which I refer is the removal and replacement of Mr. Webber's coat. In order that its importance may be clearly appreciated, I will briefly describe what happens. Mr. Webber wears an ordinary closely fitting black lounge coat, which is sewn up all down the front with a needle and coarse thread by one of the sitters. He then sits in an armchair into which he



¹ Sir Gerald Dodson was Recorder of London for 1937-1959; “... the most senior permanent judge of the Central Criminal Court has the title of Recorder of London.”

² See *Pioneer*, six-part series, starting in *Pioneer*, Vol. 2, No. 1: “The Effect of The Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union”.

³ “The Trial of Mrs. Duncan”, which is available to read or download online: Editor, C.E. Bechhofer Roberts (Gray's Inn and the South-Eastern Circuit, Barrister-at-Law).

is securely bound. The middle of a long piece of rope is fastened to the back of the chair and Mr. Webber's arms are tightly tied to the arms and his legs to the legs of the chair. This is effected by two sitters each taking one end of the rope and winding it round and round his limbs and the chair arm and leg, securing it with knots here and there and finally bringing the ends of the rope together, when they are sewn up and sealed in several places.

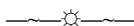
...

"The two persons sitting either side of him are then asked each to grasp one of his hands. 'Black Cloud,' the soi-disant Guide, speaking through the medium, then announces that the coat will be removed, and the light is switched off. In a very short while, he again asks for the light to be turned on, and there is Mr. Webber sitting bound in his chair as before, but his coat has been removed with the stitches in front intact. It may be lying on the medium's knees or on the lap of one of the sitters. After any examination the sitters wish, 'Black Cloud' announces that he will replace the coat, the two sitters grasp the medium's hands and the light is switched off. Very soon, 'Black Cloud' calls for light and Mr. Webber is found sitting in the chair, his hands still held, and the coat on him again as it was at first.



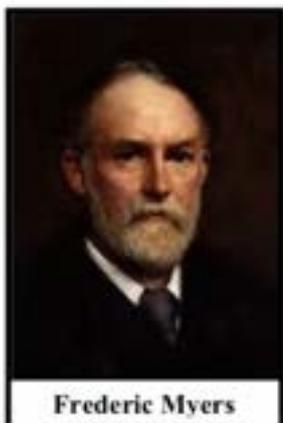
"The facts are undoubted. They have been 'witnessed,' if that is the proper word, by many hundreds of persons. I myself have twice 'seen' the coat removed in this way and once 'seen' it replaced. The coat is removed while Mr. Webber's hands are held, his arms are tightly bound to the arms of the chair and the front of the coat is closely stitched together. It is not a conjuring trick. How is it done? The only explanation seems to be that the coat is 'dematerialized' in some way, or else that matter as represented by the coat is passed through matter as represented by Mr. Webber. Anyway, this is a phenomenon which cannot be explained by invisible psychic rods, or 'pseudo-pods.' Apports brought into a closed room have been explained in much the same way as I have suggested, but our sceptics get over this simply by denying that any case of an apport is properly substantiated. Here they cannot deny the facts. If they refuse to accept the testimony of others, they can easily verify the facts themselves. What 'explanation' can they offer?

"If nothing will induce them to accept the spiritist hypothesis, then at least they must admit that some unknown force does somehow remove the coat. The scientific world will at last have to agree that there are phenomena which are not governed by physical laws, and that there is something beyond the material world, as hitherto unknown. For myself, it seems less absurd to ascribe these activities to 'spirits' than to try to explain them by the activities of the medium's subconscious mind. The latter hypothesis seems to get us nowhere. It does not explain how the coat is removed and replaced. We require an intelligence with a knowledge and ability that is more than human. . . ." ⁴



⁴ For further information on Jack Webber please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5: "Jack Webber – John Boaden Webber 1907 – 1940", "Ectoplasm Examined – Seen and Handled by Experimenters", "The Mediumship of Jack Webber – Full Face Materialisations", and "Editor's Note". The above article was published in Harry Edwards' book, "The Mediumship of Jack Webber", originally published in 1940; for a recent reprint please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6: "Ann Harrison – Responds to the Jack Webber article ..."

Telepathy, Psychic and Spirit Communication



Frederic Myers

These are general classifications for some of the various modes of mental phenomena but to what extent do they each blend into each other? On this point there can be no set rules. The Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1881-1882. The now defunct *Psypioneer* put forward material which strongly suggested that the Society had very close links with the Spiritualists in forming the SPR which had not been recognised in their history. The British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) provided a substantial platform and was of influence in the founding and launch of the SPR. The BNAS had an influential membership and in itself did not hold any religious or philosophical dogma, its members being from all walks of life. The BNAS maintained an "Experimental Research Committee" and a "Séance Committee".

One *Psypioneer* article showed that the original twenty-nine-member Council and Officers of the SPR were 55% BNAS members.⁶ The SPR was formally founded in February 1882 and the first investigations were in thought-reading, changing to thought transference; later, this was simply renamed by Frederic Myers with his new word, "telepathy".

The SPR website notes:



Edmund Gurney

The group charged with collecting historical and current evidence produced the first landmark in psychical research, a two-volume study of visions and apparitions titled *Phantasms of the Living* (1886). This substantial work, written mainly by Gurney, together with Myers and, provided careful analyses of more than seven hundred personal experiences; many were dubbed 'crisis apparitions', those of people seen at a time when, as was later learned, they were in fact dying or in life-threatening situations in another location, a phenomenon viewed by Gurney as a telepathically-generated hallucination.



Frank Podmore

This covered "Telepathy, Psychic and Spirit Communication", "Spontaneous Telepathy", and "Thought Transference".

This includes a story from 1880 of a ghostly nature; please see the above-quoted issue for the full story:

... At that moment, however, she heard the door open, and, looking round, saw a very stout old woman walk in. She was dressed in a nightgown and red flannel petticoat, and carried an old-fashioned brass candlestick in her hand. The petticoat had a hole rubbed in it. She walked into the room, and appeared to be going towards the dressing-table to put her candle down. She was a perfect stranger to Reddell, who, however, merely thought, 'This is her mother come to see after her,' and she felt quite glad it was so, accepting the idea without reasoning upon it, as one would in a dream. She thought the mother looked annoyed, possibly at not having been sent for before. She then gave Helen the medicine, and turning round, found that the apparition had disappeared, and that the door was shut. ...

Below Abdy Collins approaches the subject of ghosts, which he notes are sometimes *taken for a living person*. This article was part of a series of articles (no. 13) by B. Abdy Collins, "The Whole Case for Survival", published in *Psychic News*, April 3rd, 1948:

THE EXPLANATION OF GHOSTS

WHAT IS A GHOST? BY A GHOST I MEAN A FIGURE OR PHANTOM WHICH HAUNTS A PLACE AS OPPOSED TO AN APPARITION WHICH APPEARS TO SOMEONE WITH WHOM IT HAS SOME AFFINITY OR RELATION, ONCE AND FOR ALL AT A CRISIS OF SOME KIND.

Are there really such things as ghosts? Yes, certainly; there can be no doubt about it. They are seen by persons who have the capacity for seeing them only in a particular place.

The most certain and irrefutable case of all is that known as the Morton case recorded in full in the *S.P.R. Progs.* (Vol. VIII), and analysed at length by Myers, on page 227, and following of "Human Personality" (abridged edition).⁵

It occurred in a modern house built in the 1860's and the ghost was clearly identified as that of the second wife of the first occupant of the house who died in 1878 while living elsewhere.

After standing empty for a few years the house was occupied in 1882 by a family consisting of Capt. Morton and his wife, five daughters and two sons.

None of them knew anything about the house being haunted. Rose, the eldest unmarried girl, aged nineteen, first saw the ghost two months after they went in. For next five years it was seen frequently by various members of the family, by friends and by the servants, not only in the house but in the garden by daylight as well as at night.

Rose kept a diary in which she noted everything as it happened and sent it to a friend living in the north of England. So there was a contemporary record of all that occurred.

SOLID FORM.

The ghost was dressed in the conventional nineteenth century widow's garb and always held a handkerchief to her face. She was so solid and natural that she was often mistaken for a living person (e.g., when she passed close to the charwoman in the garden at teatime in the summer).

She never spoke, though once or twice she gasped as if about to speak and if cornered she suddenly disappeared or somehow eluded her pursuers. She was unsubstantial and passed through strings put up across her path without disturbing them.

Everyone could not see her—Capt. Morton for instance, failed to do so, even when she was pointed out to him—but four of the five girls and one of the sons could do so and apparently all the various servants and the gardener.

She continued to be seen frequently and clearly till 1886, then by degrees she became less substantial and even transparent. and after 1889 was not seen again.

⁵ Originally: Myers, F.W.H. (1903), *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (2 vols.), London: Longmans, Green.

SIGNED STATEMENTS

The case was carefully investigated by F. W. H. Myers, who often stayed with his mother in Cheltenham, where the house was from 1884 onwards. He examined all those who had seen the ghost and took signed statements from them, so there can be no doubt as to the facts. What is the explanation?

The most thorough book on haunting is an Italian monograph by Bozzano, of which a French translation is available. I have translated it into English and hope some day it will be published. He collected and analysed 532 cases of hauntings which he considered sufficiently documented.⁶

Of these he classed 158 as poltergeists and the rest as hauntings proper. In 304 of the latter cases there was a death (in 207 a tragic death) which preceded the appearances. In 114 the phantom seemed to observe the persons present, while 41 spoke.

None of his cases appear to be so full and satisfactory as the Morton case. As a general rule the ghost is not identified, it is only seen very occasionally and by one or two persons, while no contemporary record is available.

SEEN IN DAYTIME

A very interesting case is that reported by the Misses Scott from St. Boswell's in Roxburghshire (S.P.R. Journal, Vols. VI and IX). Over a period of eight years (1892-1900) from time to time the sisters saw the figure of a man dressed as a clergyman in the style of a century or more previously walking along or close to a road near their homes in broad daylight.

It was seen by two sisters at one time and also once or twice by other persons. I reproduce Miss M. Scott's account of her second or third encounter on June 12, 1893:

"On Sunday last . . . at a few minutes before ten in the morning, having occasion to pass that way I perceived far in front a dark figure. . . . I had not gone far . . . when I discovered it to be none other than the apparition we had looked for and failed to see for so many months.

I did not then feel at all afraid and hoping to get a nearer inspection boldly followed, running in close pursuit, but here the strangest part of it all is that, though he was apparently walking slowly, I never could get any closer than within a few yards for in but a moment he seemed to float or skim away.

"Presently he came to a standstill and I began to feel very much afraid and stopped also. There he was !—the tall spectre dressed as I have described before. He turned round and gazed at me with a vacant expression and the same ghastly pallid features . . .

"While I stood he still looked intently at me for a few seconds and then regained his former position. Moving on a few steps he again stood and looked back a second time, finally fading from view at his usual spot by the hedge on the right."

UNIDENTIFIED

In this case the figure could not be identified, but in more than one respect it resembles the Morton ghost. It was seen by daylight in the open; it showed some reaction to its environment; it eluded attempts to corner or arrest it; it was never seen when it was

⁶ Professor Ernesto (Signor) Bozzano, 1862-1943, was an Italian psychical researcher, e.g. series of experiments with Eusapia Palladino. He was also a Spiritualist; there is an autobiographical sketch by Bozzano in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 2, February 2009.

expected or anyone looked for it or wished to see it, and it was seen from time to time by a number of people over a long period.

Another interesting case in which the ghost is taken for a living person is that narrated at great length by Miss Vatas-Simpson in S.P.R. Progs. (Vol. III, p.126) and investigated very fully on behalf of the Society.

Her mother kept a diary from which long extracts are given. She and the children constantly saw a strange old lady in the house but though she complained to her husband he would not believe her. Finally, he had an experience which convinced him there was something in their stories.

He was sitting alone at his desk one evening absorbed in his work. Happening to look up he saw within his office doorway a little old lady standing. Even though he was angry at her intrusion he rose and addressed her politely. Finding she neither spoke or moved he advanced a little nearer.

Still she said nothing but kept looking at him with a soft sweet expression, her face very pallid. Giving her a little time to reply in case she was out of breath from coming upstairs he again approached her, when she moved gradually a little farther into the room.

“DON’T DENY IT”

Then in spite of his coming nearer she remained motionless. He made a quick step towards her and lo ! she was gone and no trace could be found of her. He flung open his door and called the servants, angrily demanding why they had let in a stranger at that hour. No one had done so.

“Don’t deny it,” he cried. “Who is the woman? What does she want? I see no one at this hour of the night,” and so on. It took a long time to make him believe that no one had entered the locked house.

These are just a few of the many cases which have been collected and carefully investigated. That ghosts are seen and sometimes talk cannot be doubted. A number of other strange cases will be found in my book “The Cheltenham Ghost.” which will be published shortly. What do they mean and are they evidence of survival?

A theory has been put forward by a number of distinguished persons who cannot deny the facts that they are caused in some way by impressions of events on the houses or places they haunt or on the ether which permeates them and that they are seen by persons endowed with a certain faculty under favourable conditions.

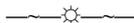
But this theory simply does not fit the facts. Why for instance are ghosts not much more common ? Why is not almost every house haunted ? How is it some ghosts speak and give information known to no one ?

Bozzano gives twelve reasons why this theory will not fit, and he and Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell agree that the only satisfactory explanation is the same as for apparitions of all kinds which we have already discussed.⁷

They are part of a series and are due to the activity of the mind of a deceased person still surviving obsessed by some idea or bound by a tragic event or earthly longing to a particular place.

⁷ George Nugent Merle Tyrrell, 1879-1952, was a British psychical researcher, member of the Society for Psychical Research and its President, 1945-1946. Tyrrell authored a number of books; in 1943 he published “Apparitions”. I believe he coined the term “out-of-body experience” from this book.

They dream constantly of it and in some way influence those who can do so to see them at that spot and no other. Certainly it is difficult to see how the Morton case at any rate can be explained otherwise.



In 1951 J. Arthur Findlay wrote Bernard Abdy Collins' obituary notice, published in Psychic News, November 3rd:

A TRIBUTE TO ABDY COLLINS:

**JUDGE CONVERTED HIM TO SPIRITUALISM
DISCUSSIONS ON GOLF COURSE**

THE READERS OF PSYCHIC NEWS, BESIDES HIS MANY OTHER FRIENDS, WILL LEARN WITH DEEP REGRET OF THE PASSING OF BERNARD ABDY COLLINS AT HIS HOME IN BEDFORD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 22.

We all know that he has passed on to a happier and fuller life, free from suffering and pain, and no one deserves the change more than he does.

For the past two years he has suffered bravely from an infection of the bone in his upper right leg. Gradually this got worse and it was decided that the leg should be amputated.

This was a serious matter for a man of 71 years of age, but the operation was successful and for a time it seemed as if he would recover. Unfortunately he had a relapse, from which he did not recover and gradually he passed peacefully away.

Bernard Abdy Collins was born on February 17, 1880. He was educated at Malvern and Brasenose College, Oxford, and entered the Indian Civil Service in 1903.

After some district experience he became under-secretary to the Bengal Government in 1909 and then filled a similar post in Bihar and Orissa.

He was Registrar of Co-operative Societies from 1913 to 1918 and from 1920 to 1926 Director of Industries in Bihar and Orissa.

After serving as Education Secretary in the same province from 1922 to 1926 he was appointed in 1927 Director-General of Commerce and Industry in Hyderabad State and retired from the India Civil Service in 1933, having been made a C.I.E. in 1926.

He served in the Ministry of Home Security from 1941 to 1945.

He was much interested in psychic phenomena. During his retirement he worked as managing director of "Psychic News" and published two monographs, "Death is not the End" and "The Cheltenham Ghost," in 1939 and 1948 respectively.

He was twice married, first in 1912 to Beryl, daughter of Colonel J. B. Lynch. The marriage was dissolved in 1922, and he married secondly in 1929 Miss Bertha Watson.

There were two children of his first marriage, a son and a daughter, and three children of his second marriage, a son and two daughters.

His interest in Spiritualism began after he returned from India, and it commenced in a rather unusual way.

I was visiting Sir Cyril Atkinson last month at his home in Aldeburgh. He was a Justice of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice and has for many years accepted what Spiritualism stands for.

This had come about through the death of his daughter, some twenty years ago, with whom, since then, he has been in regular communication.

We were talking about Abdy Collins, and what follows is the gist of what Sir Cyril Atkinson told me:

“You know, it was I who introduced him to the subject, and it all took place on the golf course. We went round together from time to time and I told Collins what Spiritualism had meant to me. At first he was a complete disbeliever but I interested him in the subject and he started his own investigations.”

So that was how Abdy Collins became interested in Spiritualism. Before he took up his duties with “Psychic News” he had been editor of “Psychic Science” and an active member of the Society for Psychical Research.

IN WHITEHALL

When I was looking out for a new managing director for Psychic Press, just after the war, I was told by Mr. Percy Wilson to try and make contact with Abdy Collins.⁸

He was then-engaged at Whitehall in the Ministry of Home Security, supervising Air Raid Precautions, which duties, with the close of war, were coming to an end.

I asked him if he would become managing director of Psychic Press, which controls “Psychic News,” and he gladly consented.

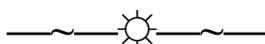
For the last six years we have worked happily together, and he was always energetic and enthusiastic in furthering anything which would help forward the work of propagating Spiritualism and all it stood for.

LUCID WRITER

No one could have had a more loyal or helpful colleague, and personally I shall greatly miss his presence.

He was a lucid, interesting and well informed writer on psychic matters, and, besides the two books already mentioned which he published, he wrote many valuable articles for “PSYCHIC NEWS” which greatly interested our readers.

He would have many friends on the other side to meet him, and we are sure that the change, for him, is for the better, but nevertheless we all sympathise deeply with his wife and family in their great bereavement.



⁸ J.A. Findlay was the Chairman of Psychic Press Ltd, the then proprietors of Psychic News.

Memories are made of this!

Reminiscing, by Paul J. Gaunt:

Back in the day, as a popular expression goes, sparked off some unexpected memories while putting this issue of Pioneer together. While taking a break, drinking my coffee and having a bite to eat, I received an email with a question about the once popular yearly Psychic News Dinner Dances and who would be the “Spiritualist of the Year”.

This led me to reminisce back to almost fifty years ago to my early years in Spiritualism, attending numerous events; one of my favourites was the yearly Royal Albert Hall meeting, either attending by minibus from my church in Bedford or going in a small group from the Arthur Findlay College in the early 1970s. Some of the more senior readers will remember the medium Brenda Dunrich, who I first met at my church. Brenda was born in Australia; she was also well-known as an actress, appearing in the popular BBC radio series “The Archers” and “Mrs Dale’s Diary”. Earlier she was known for BBC Sunday-Night Theatre and ITV Play of the Week.



One of my fondest memories of Brenda, who demonstrated at SAGB twice weekly, was not her mediumship but her beautiful, eloquent, controlled voice. As the famous Spiritualist meeting at the Albert Hall started the lights were dimmed and silence totally engulfed the large, tiered hall—then it was echoed with the tranquil voice of Brenda Dunrich with a reading.

When I moved to work at Stansted Hall in 1973 Brenda was a frequent guest; she would say to me, “Paul, if you’re going to the village, be a darling and get me twenty Dunhill.” Funny how these long-forgotten thoughts seem to come from nowhere! Sadly, in June 1977 Brenda suddenly died; she was 59 years old.

Thinking of the more recent pioneers in living memory, I was drawn to the 1974 Psychic Dinner Dance, which I attended on Saturday June 1st, 1974 at the Europa Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London; five hundred people attended the occasion.

Unexpectedly, on entering the hotel I met up with the first medium I came into contact with, who was conducting the meeting in late 1969. I first attended, seeking help after an experience on the ouija board; this is the well-known psychic detective Robert (Bob) Cracknell.¹⁴ His cases over the years, like the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper, etc., are showcased on his website, revealing some of his work and psychic investigations which Bob has been involved in over the last 40 years or so.¹⁵ I had a delightful evening with Bob and his partner Jenny, spending the night at their residence.

As the proceedings of the evening got underway nobody was more surprised than the Scottish cleric, the Rev. David Kennedy, when he was declared ‘The Spiritualist of 1973’. He was the first Minister to achieve this honour; the award was given for his book, “A Venture in Immortality”, which caused a furore in his native land. It describes his first wife’s survival evidence through mediums. Kennedy mentioned to Maurice Barbanell that he wished the award

¹⁴ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: ‘Fifty Years’ Involvement within the Spiritualist movement – Paul J. Gaunt – Ouija Experience

¹⁵ Google: Robert Cracknell Psychic Detective.

had gone to Albert Best, who was *the medium mainly responsible for the irrefutable evidence which convinced him of Spiritualism's truths.*



In David Kennedy's forthright acceptance speech, partly quoted below, he said:

"I am proud to call myself a Spiritualist. I *am one* — there's no beating about the bush."

He was a Spiritualist because he no longer cared about some things he used to care about as a clergyman. He mentioned as examples church unity, who was or was not baptised or took communion.

'Church has failed'

"But I do care that the Church has failed to speak of life after death, and millions of hearts break in silence because they don't know or believe they are immortal souls."

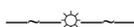
He quoted some sayings of the:

"founder of our religion," Jesus.

"Be not afraid of those who kill the body." "Today you will be with me in paradise." God is a god of the *living*, not the dead."



[David and his wife Shirley shown]



Maurice Barbanell's speech was a grand mixture of humour and quips; after toasting former SNU president Percy Wilson, then chairman of Psychic Press, Barbanell toasted the 82-year-old veteran, who was celebrating with his wife Winifred their twelfth wedding anniversary.

Barbanell, commenting on guests at the top table, said,

there were six ministers, "three Spiritualists and three of the others.

"I don't know who is taking over who; whether the Churches are taking over Spiritualists, or Spiritualists the Churches."



He was talking about Canon William Rauscher [right], former president of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, and Canon Robert Lewis, who were sitting with David Kennedy.

Barbanell joked:

"Cannons to the left of them, cannons to the right of them ..."

Until writing these unplanned reminiscences I had no idea that one of the American ecclesiastics was in fact Canon William Rauscher, who in later years I would come into contact with. Rauscher is not just an Episcopal priest; he is today known for his work as a psychical researcher, an accomplished magician, magic historian and a fine lecturer and author. His work has brought him into personal contact with such mediums as Arthur Ford and Eileen Garrett. It was through *Psypioneer* in the early 2000s that Bill started to make many valuable contributions to the journal with his personal original insights into well-known mediums, for example Vol. 1, No. 8, “Knowing Arthur Ford” by W.V. Rauscher, Vol. 1, No. 10, “Remembering Eileen J. Garrett” by William V. Rauscher. Leslie Price’s Book Review, published in Vol. 3, No. 2, “On the Spiritual Frontier in America”, gives a valuable insight into his work.

In Vol. 4, No. 5, Bill sent me the material for the article, “Fraud Uncovered at Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp”, where infra-red photography uncovered a great deception. On a more positive note, *Psypioneer*, October 2008, published “The Grave of William Stainton Moses”; this article was due entirely to Bill Rauscher’s information and photographs that led me, eventually, to finding the grave of the Rev. William Stainton Moses, M.A., in Bedford’s old cemetery. *Psypioneer*, March 2009, published “Rev. William Stainton Moses, M.A.” – Canon William V. Rauscher.

(Right) The photograph of the Moses family plot at Bedford cemetery, taken July 10th, 1974. To Bill’s right is the grave of Moses’ parents, and on the left lies Stainton Moses. My hunt for the plot in 2008 was not quite straightforward; albeit Bill had given me reference marks, etc., the state of the graveyard was sadly dilapidated. After days of searching while visiting my parents I came to my last day. My wife Cindy then accompanied me in my search; after some hours with some garden shears Cindy cut through some growth, then to reveal the hidden treasure, the grave of Rev. William Stainton Moses.¹⁶



Behind this:



**is the grave of
William Stainton
Moses**

**See Pioneer
Vol. 3, No. 3**



¹⁶ Moses is interred at the old Bedford cemetery, which was established in 1850 and opened in 1855. Through gross neglect the grave itself is very difficult to locate and is not readily visible unless the actual location is known. The original site is a large plot containing a family gravestone and a large Celtic Cross structure standing in excess of six foot, marking the earthly resting-place of William Stainton Moses. The whole Moses plot is edged with stone but is now totally entwined with ivy and other creeper-like growth, so the grave cannot be seen from the various paths and access points.

PN's Annual Dinner Dance as it was generally known; more correctly, it was the 'Annual Psychic News / Two Worlds Dinner Dance'.

Barbanell noted:

The oldest practising medium present was Peggy Parrish, 83.¹⁷ There was also world-famous healer Harry Edwards, who had celebrated his 81st birthday that week.

The youngest mediums present so far as he knew were David Young, 31 and Robin Stevens, 33, who was also the SNU London District Council president.



The Dinner Dance was indeed the Who's Who of Spiritualism in the 70s; many I knew from the Arthur Findlay College, such as Bertha Harris, Don Galloway, healer Maurice Tester, psychic artist Coral Polge, course organisers Cecily and Bob Moore with Albert Best. Others in attendance were mediums Ena Twigg, Gay Muir, Jessie Nason, direct-voice medium Leslie Flint, author Paul Miller and psychic surgeon George Chapman, to name a few.



Many photographs were taken at these events, with some shown in this article. I was in a group photograph with Albert Best, published in the Psychic News issue referred to in this article. Just over three months later, in Psychic News, September 21st, 1974, I was shot to fame, albeit by mistaken identity! While reading this issue I was shocked to find a photograph of myself taken from the group photograph with Albert, with the heading,

“Teenage psychic is ‘Britain’s remarkable boy”

The photograph was mistaken for the up-and-coming psychic, Matthew Manning, who was around the time of Uri Geller; Manning was then 19 years old, I was 23. Matthew was not at the Dinner Dance but I was mistaken for him by a few guests. Shortly after I did the slide show for a talk by Matthew at a propaganda meeting in Bedford; one of Matthew's slides was

indeed the image of myself, about which nobody was any the wiser, taken from the PN article reporting on the spectacular phenomena of this young man. At the Britten Museum and Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College a stainless-steel teaspoon bent by Matthew Manning in 1976 for Charles Sherratt, former General Manager of the College, is displayed. To my knowledge Matthew continues his work today as a healer.



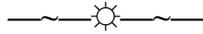
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Today the digital archive of Psychic News is available online, giving the reader access to our history from May 28th, 1932, then a weekly newspaper.¹⁸

¹⁷ See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 5: “William (Billy) Parish”.

¹⁸ <https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2939726>

PSYCHIC NEWS WAS FOUNDED BY MAURICE BARBANELL AND JACK RUBENS



Over the years there has been some ongoing confusion as to this fact—a few years ago the correct information was input and corrected within the SNU, i.e. its Yearbook, education courses and general publications. However, the confusion continues as to who founded *Psychic News*; this is due to the many erroneous notices available from different sources, for example:



Psychic News – Wikipedia:

The name of the paper was devised by one of its founding editors, Maurice Barbanell, who said that he was told to use it by his spirit guide. The other founding members were Hannen Swaffer, a Fleet Street journalist, and Arthur Findlay, a notable figure in the history of Spiritualism in Britain.



This sweeping statement holds three errors: Barbanell ... *was told to use it by his spirit guide*, Hannen Swaffer, and Arthur Findlay *were other founding members*. This misinformation is addressed by Leslie Price (founder editor) in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 9, January 2005, as published below:

PSYCHIC NEWS IN PERSPECTIVE

The origin and history of the weekly Spiritualist newspaper “*Psychic News*” is sometimes confusing. The SNU web site states: 1932– *Psychic News* founded by Arthur Findlay under the editorship of Maurice Barbanell. The web site of PN itself more modestly claims that Findlay was closely involved, along with Hannen Swaffer. The first issue appeared on 28 May 1932.

Findlay’s own account in “*Looking Back*” recalls that soon after the publication of his book “*On the Edge of the Etheric*” in 1931, he received a letter from Maurice Barbanell asking him to write an article for PN.

The newspaper had just been born, and it was only a week old, but his letter had effects much greater than the article I wrote. I met him a few days later and found that he, and the other founder of *Psychic News*, J.M. Rubens, required financial help to continue publication. This I contributed and we formed a company *Psychic Press Ltd*, to finance and manage this new Spiritualist journal.

It will be seen that by his own account, Findlay did not found PN, but he certainly saved it from extinction, and as principal shareholder became controller of it for many years. Another perspective on these events was given by Maurice Barbanell himself in an article for *Psychic News*, reprinted in a special issue of the SNU’s own newsletter “*New Communicator*” of 14 July 1995 to mark their acquisition of PN. Around 1930 Barbanell was lecturing on Spiritualism throughout Britain with Hannen Swaffer. Jack Rubens was accountant to HS and later to MB. Merrifield a Spiritualist financier had offered financial help to enliven psychic journalism. Ernest Oaten had been invited to bring “*Two Worlds*” to London where HS and MB would enliven it free of charge. Oaten declined, perhaps suspecting that he would be sidelined.

Rubens then suggested MB should start a modern Spiritualist newspaper. MB hesitated, but that same evening in an Estelle Roberts sitting, was told by Red Cloud to get on with it – full time. (Red Cloud’s name for MB was always John the Scribe, supposedly a past life reference to MB promising to do this writing work in this life).

Seeking confirmation, MB sat with Kathleen Barkel whom he had never met. Her guide White Hawk told him that Northcliffe was interested in the projected newspaper. At the next sitting with Mrs Roberts, Red Cloud asked him if he was satisfied. He was, and Northcliffe and Stead then gave advice on the policy of the newspaper – to be independent. (Stead allegedly communicated earlier at a Vyvyan Deacon séance that a new paper, called Psychic News, would be coming within six months.)

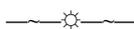
There was insufficient money for the new paper, but Red Cloud said “You supply the faith, we will find the money”. HS declined to invest, which left Rubens and Barbanell with a joint capital of £666 13s 4d. (Swaffer did write many articles later.)

Barbanell states that he wrote to Findlay while planning the first issue. It was on the evening of his first meeting with Findlay that Red Cloud said in circle “I have today sent you the man who is to supply the money”. MB told this to Findlay who agreed to invest £1000, which soon ran out. Findlay then increased his shareholding to £3000, but insisted on voting power and control. Findlay promised not to interfere editorially and he did not. PN soon became profitable.

It will be seen that in Barbanell’s account the newspaper is founded with much encouragement from spirit guides. MB and Findlay take decisions on that basis. The paper has a paranormal origin. Findlay is also seen by the other side as an essential part of the recipe for success. He is the man sent with the money.

Did Findlay know Barbanell and Swaffer already? They were after all three of the most famous Spiritualists in the country. Findlay had already published a best seller. MB and HS had lectured all over. Edwin Butler, then working at the Friendship Centre, Bayswater, London, recalls MB and HS coming in with a mock-up of the proposed new paper, and Findlay arriving separately to join them.

There is no published biography of Maurice Barbanell, and no autobiography, and until one is written, much remains unclear about this outstanding figure. (Additional research by Paul Gaunt.)



Further, in Pioneer, October 2007, then under my editorship, the matter was again addressed. In the August Newsletter, 'The SNU and History', Leslie Price looked at the redesigned SNU website under the "Important Dates" web page:

"1932 Psychic News founded by Arthur Findlay under the editorship of Maurice Barbanell."

Psypioneer published an article written by its editor, Maurice Barbanell, on the front and second page of Psychic News, May 20th, 1939, albeit it repeats some of Leslie's research two years earlier as published above. Barbanell clearly shows how Psychic News came into being and survived its first seven years as published below:

Three "Dead" Men Began Psychic News

By The Editor

POLICY OF *PSYCHIC NEWS* WAS LAID DOWN IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

BECAUSE of three "dead" men you are reading these words. Two of them belong to that much misunderstood race, the North American Indians. The other is Lord Northcliffe, the creator of the "Daily Mail" and the founder of modern, popular journalism.

These three men were responsible for the advent of *Psychic News* seven years ago. Behind the founding of this paper there is a remarkable story of spirit planning and guidance. It came into existence as part of a campaign which originated in the spirit world.

Even the name *Psychic News* was chosen by the Other Side. After I decided to use it I was told of a seance at which W. T. Stead spoke in the direct voice, informing the sitters that a new paper called *Psychic News* was shortly to be launched. That was months before the first issue.



Alfred Harmsworth, better known under his later title Lord Northcliffe

I had been chosen to be the Editor, though when *Psychic News* began I had no practical knowledge of journalism. Theoretically I knew from Hannen Swaffer something about how newspapers are produced. Our friendship began shortly after his inquiry into Spiritualism when he set out to prove Northcliffe's survival.

For three years Swaffer and I conducted a propaganda tour and addressed a quarter of a million people – a record that has never been equalled. We spoke in nearly every large town in this country.

Once we addressed three meetings on one Sunday. We spoke at Maesteg in the morning, Merthyr Tydfil in the afternoon and Cardiff in the evening. Then we motored back to London, arriving home after four in the morning. And I had motored down to South Wales on the Saturday afternoon and spoke at a meeting at Caerau that night.

In those three years, sitting up half the night talking, in conversations on trains, in cars and hotels, I learned a great deal about journalism from Swaffer.

My days, however, were spent in the world of commerce. I held some directorships, had my own business and owned some properties. I was fairly prosperous for many years. Then came a series of misfortunes, culminating in the slump of 1931, when things were very black. I was compelled to sell nearly everything I possessed.

I had to wind up my own business and my income came from one directorship, but as that meant attendance at a board meeting for a few hours once a month I was virtually unemployed.

Just about that time Swaffer and I were approached to give editorial assistance to a proposed psychic weekly. Nothing, however, came of it. The scheme petered out.

One day, to my surprise, Swaffer's business manager, J. M. Rubens, a non-Spiritualist who was winding up one of my companies, suggested I should start a psychic paper.

He is well-known in Fleet Street and he thought there was a need for a Spiritualist paper on modern journalistic lines. He even offered to put up some capital though he was not convinced of our truths.

When he made this startling suggestion I recalled a seance with Alfred Vout Peters at which his guide said – and I am quoting from my notes made at the time—“*W. T. Stead is interested in you. You have a journalistic urge in your fingers. Cultivate your writing powers. Later on you are going to do writing work. I see association with Hannen Swaffer. You will contribute to the newspapers. Try to make your writing short and crisp.*”

TWO SEANCES PROPHECIES



That was more than eight years ago, at a time when I could see no possibility of the prediction being fulfilled.

I remembered, too, that Red Cloud, speaking through Estelle Roberts a month before Rubens threw out the suggestion, had said to me when discussing my troubles, “*We have plenty for you to do. Our plans are already made. They only have to materialise in your world. You are going forward to do a bigger work.*”

On the day that I saw Rubens I had later on a private sitting with Red Cloud. He surprised me by referring to Rubens's proposal. This was the work I had been chosen to do, he said, and if I would start the new paper, he and others in the spirit world would give it their whole-hearted support. I argued with Red Cloud, but it was all in vain.

I pointed out that I was a business man, not a journalist. Surely I was not the person for the job. In any case it was a vital decision to make—to abandon my idea of a commercial career for psychic journalism at the age of 30. I wanted time to consider it.

My commercial and financial troubles, this guide insisted, were all part of the plan. I was to sever my business ties and learn to be dependent on spirit guidance.

I knew I was being asked to make the biggest decision of my life. Though I had confidence in Red Cloud, a guide who had proved his ability and had earned my respect, I decided that on so important a matter I required confirmation.

THE RIGHT MEDIUM

I searched for a medium to whom I was unknown. I had been a public speaker for Spiritualism for twelve years and knew most of them. At last I found the medium I wanted—Kathleen Barkel. We had never met and at that time she had done hardly any public work, confining her mediumship to giving private seances.

Usually you had to wait months to get a sitting with her, but when I inquired, someone had just cancelled an appointment, and she was able to see me within a few days. I went anonymously and it was obvious she did not know me.

I waited eagerly for her guide, White Hawk, to control, wondering if I would obtain the confirmation I desired. The ground was already prepared for my work, he said, which was connected with Spiritualism. I would start these activities in two months. His prophecy was accurate, for *Psychic News* made its appearance two months later.

CO-OPERATION IN THE BEYOND

Then came a remark which proved how closely associated are these spirit guides. *“You know Red Cloud,” he said. Then he added that the proposal in which I was interested had already been outlined to me by Red Cloud. “Everything is prepared,” he said. “All is arranged as far as we are concerned. It has only to work out in the material world. You must accept that proposal.”*

Now this was almost word for word what Red Cloud had said. To obtain closer contact the guide then asked me to hand him any article that belonged to me. I gave him my fountain-pen. As I placed it in the medium’s hands it began to leak, something it had never done before.

“That is Northcliffe’s fault,” declared the spirit. “He is here and says he always upsets pens”—an ingenious reference to the famous newspaper proprietor’s vigorous journalistic activities. “He comes in connection with the newspaper,” added the guide, “and he says, ‘Go ahead with it.’ ”

Then he told me that Northcliffe was dissatisfied with psychic journalism as then presented. Northcliffe’s words, as relayed by Mrs. Barkel’s guide, were, “It’s about time something was done with common sense—too much sickly sentiment—there is opportunity for great growth and much spread of knowledge—he is amazed at the lack of guts. Get it on a strong basis and it will be of world-wide consequence.”

Well, I had obtained the confirmation I wanted. The medium could not have known what I was after. I made the fateful decision to become the editor of a Spiritualist newspaper. The sequel was extraordinary.

A few days later I went down to Estelle Roberts’s home to talk to Red Cloud. I said nothing about my visit to Kathleen Barkel. The first words spoken by Red Cloud, when he entranced his medium, were, *“Are you satisfied now that you have been to my brother White Hawk?”* Red Cloud knew.

I asked him whether he objected to my going, but he said he understood how I felt. There and then Red Cloud, speaking on behalf of others whom he said were present—and he referred to Northcliffe and Stead among others—outlined the policy of *Psychic News*.

It had to be bright. I was told. It had to be fearless. It had to “Stand for the truth and fear no man.” The one thing impressed upon me was to print the evidence for Survival. And Red Cloud promised to provide these proofs.

I would like to place on record that for seven years he has kept his promise and has been responsible for enabling us to print accounts of the spirit return of famous men and women that have aroused world-wide interest.

GUIDE KEEPS HIS PROMISE



Well, *Psychic News* was launched. Actually, its first number was issued a week earlier than originally planned because of the Meurig Morris—“Daily Mail” lawsuit, which was the subject of comment in newspapers all over the land. It gave us an opportunity for an outstanding front page.

“I CHALLENGE THE “DAILY MAIL,” it was headed, and it was written by Hannen Swaffer. Yes, the very first issue of *Psychic News* began with a challenging note on its front page!

I must tell you how *Psychic News* was financed. Actually the paper was started on the ridiculously small capital of just over £600—half subscribed by Rubens and the other half by myself, which I borrowed from a friend. And Rubens, the non-Spiritualist, guaranteed the bank and other accounts and gave personal references where necessary!

OTHER-SIDE GUIDANCE

When I pointed out to Red Cloud, “It is all very well to talk about a new paper, but where is the money coming from?” he replied, “Do not worry; we will attend to that.” And they did!

When planning the first issue I had an idea for an article. It was to get Arthur Findlay, author of “On The Edge Of The Etheric,” Spiritualism's best-seller, to say in *Psychic News* why he wrote the book. Findlay called in to see me and we discussed the article, which he agreed to write.

That night I had another seance with Red Cloud. To my surprise the spirit guide volunteered, “The man who is to finance ‘Psychic News’ has called to see you today. His name is Findlay. Approach him on the subject.”

I discussed this question with Arthur Findlay and he readily agreed. Again I should like to put on record that in seven years of close co-operation there has never been an angry word between us; neither has there been any disagreement on policy.

We agreed from the start that *Psychic News* had to be run on commercial lines, and its success, or failure, judged by commercial standards.



J. Arthur Findlay

For three years the paper lost money; but Findlay never complained. Indeed, he found whatever sum was necessary. The corner was turned with the fourth year,¹⁹ and ever since *Psychic News* has paid its way.

The two libel actions we had to defend this year may break our record, but they are only chapters in the history of a newspaper.

I shall not tell of my troubles in producing the first number. I did not leave the printers on press night until three in the morning. It was a nightmare.

The first issue was received with fixed feelings. A few weeks before the paper appeared it was the subject of violent comment, some declaring, "Another Spiritualist weekly is not necessary," others being eager to see what we would produce.

ONE EDITOR'S COMMENT

One Spiritualist editor, whom I shall not name, wrote me a most discouraging letter. He had heard of my proposed journalistic ventures, he said, and added, "Frankly I am sorry that you find it necessary to change from business to journalism."

The reception given to *Psychic News*, on the whole, was very enthusiastic. There were, of course, those who exclaimed "It is too sensational," "It cannot last a week." But they were in the minority.

From the first number we had the largest circulation of any Spiritualist newspaper in the world, a position we have since proudly maintained. Today, our net paid circulation, which is approaching 25,000, exceeds the combined circulation of all English Spiritualist journals.

Psychic News broke new ground. Though it was not subsidised it was, and still is, the only English Spiritualist weekly to pay its way – and to make a profit.

NEW PUBLIC FOUND

It reached the man-in-the-street. Here was a modern newspaper, with news on the front page, boldly proclaiming the facts of Spiritualism. It was independent, for it belonged to no section, group or Spiritualist society.

Soon, our familiar green and white posters were to be seen in many of London's main thoroughfares.

Our Spiritualist contemporaries paid us the compliment of imitation. They changed their make-up and modelled themselves, more or less, on the format of *Psychic News*.

From the first number *Psychic News* adopted a bold policy. Because it was independent, it could criticise Spiritualists and the weaknesses of the movement.

¹⁹ In the December 5th issue of P.N., 1936, Barbanell dropped a libel suit against the Rev. J.W. Potter. It does not directly concern this article but an interesting remark by Barbanell was made:—

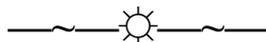
Psychic News was started against Swaffer's advice. He refused to have any financial interest in it, arguing that, if he put money into it, he would have to accept a dividend, and then he would be accused of making money out of Spiritualism. He has never received one penny from *Psychic News*. His only financial connection with the paper is that, once, he lent it £500, refusing to take interest. This amount, of course, was repaid.

It helped to change the Press attitude towards our truths and forced newspapers to realise that the evidences for Survival were as newsworthy as any other events recorded in their pages.

We are proud of the part we have played in giving comfort, hope and knowledge to thousands.

Looking back on our seven years of history, there is nothing that we regret.

Still, trusting to that spirit guidance which conceived this newspaper, we face the future unafraid, knowing that *Psychic News* can help to give the vital blow to the materialism which is the cancer of our modern civilisation.





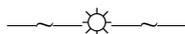
PIONEER

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.



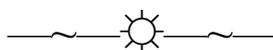
The AGM this year, 2021

Marking the journal's eighth birthday

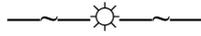
**Pioneer is pleased to announce
it has reached:**

**TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED
individual subscribers!**

Additionally, there are SNUi & on-line readers



What the Pioneers Actually Said



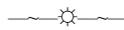
The article below was published in *The Two Worlds*, June 1st, 1934, at that time looking back over the last forty-seven years of its editors' viewpoints during their editorship. It's interesting now, a further eighty-seven years later, to look back and see whether or not we would now agree with their comments.

As a good example, some will say these early years were the heyday of Modern Spiritualism—when physical mediumship was prevalent, with the introduction of partial and full-form mediumship, i.e. materialisations, in the early 1870s.

Many of the early mediums started in various forms of physical mediumship, like Emma Hardinge Britten and James Morse, who are featured in the article below, but they were soon to be developed into what was looked upon as a higher mediumship—passive mental development, mainly trance orientation; this was considered the best way forward to bring the new Spiritualism to public attention.

Dark séances were considered problematic in their development and with public presentation due to their nature, with the use of psychic fluids—its sensitivity and reaction causing numerous claims of fraud, e.g. impersonation, within the Spiritualist movement and outside. However, the problem was in some cases more probably a lack of understanding with such a complex form of mediumship—these avenues, examples and problems are discussed in the Pioneer three-part series: “A Question of Fraud”.¹

The Two Worlds has always had a very close association with National Spiritualism from the birth of the Union, with free space given in the then weekly journal, the publication of its AGMs, etc., which can be found referenced within the pages of Pioneer.



Forty-Seven Years of Propaganda !

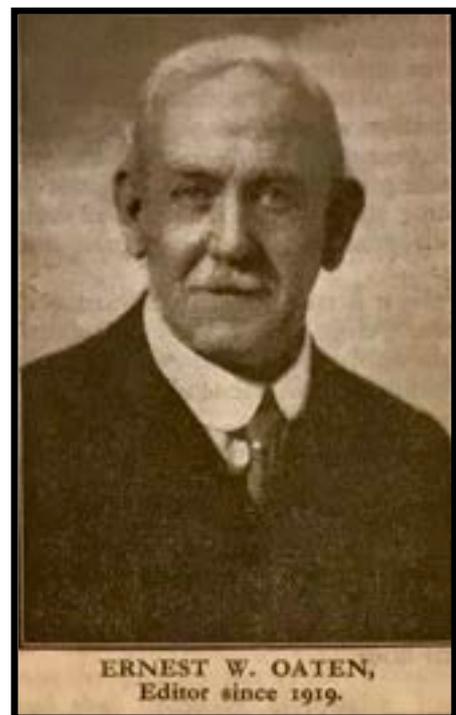
What the Pioneers Actually Said

By JAMES LEIGH

WHAT *did* the pioneers say?

One overhears frequently in Spiritualist circles expressions of admiration for the vision which inspired the early missionaries of Spiritualism. Less frequent are the expositions of what those pioneers actually taught; and there is the possibility that in the case of Spiritualism, just as has happened in other religious movements, men will forget the *message* of the enlightened one in idolising the exalted nature of his personality.

It is not an accident that *The Two Worlds* has numbered among its contributors nearly every figure of note in Spiritualistic records; nor that its Editors have included some of the most brilliant

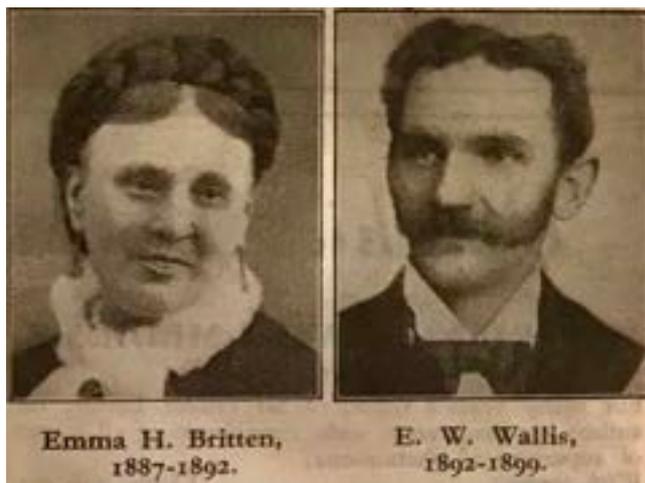


¹ Available in a free Pioneer pdf booklet: see “New SNU Pioneer Page”, as advertised elsewhere in this issue.

minds that the Movement has known. Emma Hardinge Britten, who founded the journal in 1887,² was undoubtedly the greatest woman propagandist, and the most prolific writer, we have ever possessed. E. W. Wallis, J. J. Morse, and E. W. Oaten had enviable reputations as trance orators.

Browsing through past volumes of this adventurous organ, one reads leading articles which display such freshness, and singular adaptability to the conditions of the moment, that they might have been written for present-day publication. It becomes increasingly evident that although there have been changes of heart and mind during the last fifty years, yet the Spiritualist Movement is substantially the same. The changes have been superficial only: they do not apply to fundamentals.

Writing in 1889 on the attitude of inquirers, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten said :—



There are three classes of believers inimical to the association of Spiritualists in the form of union. The first of these are the selfish and apathetic, who, having obtained all the information they desire for themselves, care nothing for what becomes of the matter in relation to others. The second class are those who fear that their particular form of sectarian belief may be in danger if Spiritualism becomes strong. The third class are the few who have assumed leadership, set themselves up as “the hub” around which all the spokes of the human wheel must

revolve or stop—in a word, the arrogant and selfish who are determined to “rule or ruin.” With all or either of these classes the true and rational Spiritualist has nothing to do.

Platform Inefficiency

She had definite views on the question of professional mediumship—to-day a topic of considerable controversy—and always advocated that those who gave their time and “their very life, to say nothing of the anxiety, fatigue, and persecution attending such an unpopular work,” should be adequately rewarded. But her voice was ever raised in condemnation of the illiterate exponent. . . . “The idea of placing the illiterate on a platform to teach the educated, or expect the cultured minds of a higher world than man’s to do justice to noble and exalted themes through ignoble or imperfect instruments, is an absurdity.”

Spiritualist Principles

Her successor, Mr. E. W. Wallis,³ spoke often and clearly in defence of a broad and comprehensive Spiritualism :—

Spiritualists (he said) look towards the dawn. They are no longer slaves to tradition, nor do they bow in idolatrous worship of a fetish. Their Church is the world. Their Bibles are the books of books: the human spirit and Nature’s wondrous pages. Their

² It should be noted that The Two Worlds was co-founded by Emma Hardinge Britten and Edward Wallis; for further information please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 9, No. 5: “After Forty Years – An Outline of the History of “The Two Worlds” ”.

³ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 5: “Edward Walter Wallis (1855–1914)”, “Forming of a National Spiritualism”, “A National Memorial Tribute to the Life and Work of Edward Walter Wallis”.

worship is work for humanity. Their prayers are pure thoughts, loving sympathies, and kindly services. Their altar is truth. Their aim is to be true to the light within. “Onward” is their motto. Their salvation is by knowledge and love, from ignorance and wrong. Their atonement is at-one-ment with God. Their heaven is harmony, here and hereafter.

What a fine set of affirmations !

Mr. Will Phillips, a writer with almost a pugilistic style, was another who never minced words. In these days of dark circles, it is noteworthy that a former Editor should have written in strong and unqualified denunciation of darkness as the arch-enemy of spiritual progress. “If the dark seance is necessary, then it is no place for the man in the street,” said Mr. Phillips. “It is fit for laboratory research alone. What can people expect of the hysterical man or woman who, worked up to a high pitch of excitement by music and expectation of the marvellous and uncanny, loses grip of his reason and acts in the most foolish fashion in face of a phenomenon which demands all the resources of reason and judgment ?.”

Those words have their significance for today. Indeed, darkness was said by Mr. Phillips—and with abundant testimony of fact—to constitute the “curse on materialisation.”

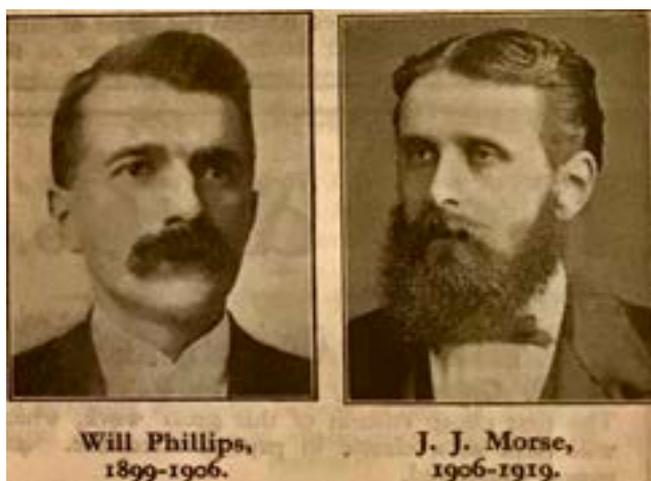
College for Mediums

He was another who worked for the founding of a training college for psychics. . . .

Mrs. Britten, who occupied the Editorial chair of *The Two Worlds* at its inception, constantly advocated the founding of a modern “School of the Prophets.”⁴ We have done our best to faithfully second her efforts, feeling convinced that in the principle of education, especially of a psychic nature, lies the greatest hope for the future of Spiritualism. Mediumship is the backbone of Spiritualism, but if the vertebra be weak and ill-developed, how can the body be held in a position both healthy and dignified ?

A pertinent question, and one that recalls Mrs. Britten’s attitude to undeveloped speakers, exponents and mediums.

Mr. J. J. Morse more than once sounded a note of warning in reference to “royal roads” of psychic unfoldment. “Mystery, he said, “is always to be avoided. The safest road, not the royal road, to the development of mediumship is not a promiscuous public developing circle; not the secrecy of meetings said to be guarded by signs, symbols, perfumes, incantations or mysterious Mahatmas. No! the safest road is that which sensible Spiritualists have followed these sixty-odd years—the private home circle—where the spirits whom we know may come to us and aid us in the unfoldment of those faculties which they use for communication.”



⁴ See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5: “Wanted: A College For Mediums – Emma Hardinge Britten” – “A Spiritualist’s College – Lorraine Haig”.

A Silver-Tongued Orator

Mr. Morse spent many years on the public platform, and his trance orations are among the best in Spiritualistic literature. His articles were also said to be written under the influence, though not control, of his inspirer, "Tien Sein Tie," whom another pioneer once described as "wise as Plato."⁵

"Tien" was familiarly known to Spiritualists as the silver-tongued Chinese orator. The work in which Morse and this personality were engaged became very dear to them, and they were always concerned for its welfare. An editorial article written in 1906 reveals this concern :—

"Is our Cause in danger of drifting from the principles for which our early workers fought so hard, and suffered so much to establish ?" he asked; and he contended, "The boast and pride of the early Spiritualists were that Spiritualism stood for facts and not beliefs, for progress and new ideas, for liberation from the thralldom of opinions no matter how ancient or sacrosanct, if they were demonstrably founded upon inaccuracies. The Cause in those early days stood for reform in religion, science, morals, and advance in our social and industrial conditions. Has it lost its grip upon the radical thought and utterances of the past? Have we surrendered to others the work which we at one time appeared destined to undertake ? Have we missed our opportunity ? Has the putting aside the philosophy deducible from our facts, in favour of sensational and emotional methods, flooded our Movement with those who care for nothing more serious than a public seance ?"

Spiritualism or Psychism ?

During the period Mr. E. W. Oaten has occupied the position of Editor, he has insisted on maintaining standards of his predecessors. "We need to realise that mediumship is something more than the exercise of psychic faculties," he says. "There is a growing tendency to concentrate upon psychic phenomena rather than upon the sound mediumship which gives evidence of spirit activity. Mediumship implies co-operation with the Spirit World in such a certain fashion that the evidences of spirit activity can be determined behind all psychic phenomena."

Elsewhere he declared :—

The main fact which emerges from Spiritualistic investigation is that it is possible to commune with humans who have passed through the gateway of death. They might well have attained more knowledge concerning the spirit world since their residence in their new abode, but it must not be forgotten that they are still human beings with human failings. The wisest souls on the spirit side of life are those who have long passed beyond the shade of earth. While they are interested in the development of the human family as a whole, they have very largely lost their close and detailed touch with the everyday events which form our lives. Let us not be mistaken ! They cannot, and will not, put the bit in our mouths, and by pulling the reins guide us wherever we desire to go. Nor is any message infallible which comes from human minds.

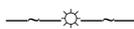
Inspiration for To-day

These sane words, and bid us be cautious in assessing the value of messages from the Beyond. There is nothing in Mr. Oaten's Spiritualism which is not practical—a statement which is amply borne out by his frequent expression belief that "the most

⁵ The name 'James Morse' frequents many issues of Pioneer, for example see Vol. 6, No. 3: "Emma Hardinge Britten & James Johnson Morse – Full Script".

important thing about life is living it” in such a way as will promote general happiness and wellbeing.

These, it is true, are insignificant quotations—mere “chips from the workshop”—but they do display the matter-of-fact nature of the inspiration which attended the early instruments of Spiritualism. That inspiration is as necessary and important to-day as ever it was. Incidentally, the New *Two Worlds* aims at maintaining the high idealism of its founders. Every week we shall print some pregnant quotation from a pioneer medium—some message which, though perhaps an early record, has nevertheless a significance for the needs of the present hour.



Editors of the “Two Worlds”

Emma Hardinge Britten 1887-1892

Edward Walter Wallis 1892-1899

Peter Lee (acting editor) 1898-1899

Will Phillips 1899-1906

James Johnson Morse 1906-1919

Ernest Walter Oaten 1919-1945

Ernest Thompson 1945-1952

J. W. Herries (acting editor)

Crestern Roskelly 1952-1957

Maurice Barbanell 1957-1981

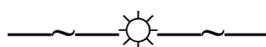
Tony Ortzen 1981-1985

Kay Hunter 1985-1988

Ray F. Taylor 1988-1993

Tony Ortzen 1993-⁶

In 2016 the directors of the “Two Worlds” had decided to offer the Union all their volumes from 1887 to present on permanent loan. The Editor, Tony Ortzen, contacted President David Bruton to see if the Union would accept this offer; of course there was little to consider and the offer was met with an overwhelming “Yes, please!”⁷



⁶ Italic denotes circa: Possibly another editor between Roskelly and Barbanell, Taylor and Ortzen.

⁷ Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: “The “Two Worlds” and the Spiritualists’ National Union – “Again Unite!”

AM I DEAD OR ALIVE ?

There are various accounts of passing generally under extreme conditions like wartime, tragic accidents, etc., where the spirit is said to be totally unaware of its transition. This is evident in some of the Leslie Flint direct voice recordings, where the *dead* person seems totally unaware of what has happened. Another example is Carl Wickland; see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: “Story of Dr and Mrs Carl A. Wickland”.⁸

“Often these spirits were ignorant of the fact that they were “dead,” and did not realise they had attached themselves to people on earth.

“The task of Dr. Wickland and his helpers was to convince them, once they controlled the medium, that they could release themselves from their earthbound state. The investigators interrogated these spirits, obtained proofs of their identities and then showed them how to progress. It often took more than one seance to convince the obsessor that he had passed from earth.”

As a public demonstrator Estelle Roberts aired this question during WWII.⁹

Estelle Roberts Proves—

War “Dead” Are Not Always Aware Of Their Passing On



WAR brings its own difficulties to spirit communication, as Estelle Roberts has discovered. The famous medium refers to these problems by asking three questions:

“Do our boys always realise that they have passed on?

“Why is it that loved ones on the Other Side and also the guides occasionally say that they have not come into contact with a certain person who has recently left the earth, and state further that they know nothing of his whereabouts ?

“Is there an intermediate state of life between the earth and the spirit world, where such souls sometimes temporarily dwell, eventually to be reached by the guides who make them realise that they have gone through the experience called death ?”

The Missing Airman

These questions arise because of this medium’s own experiences. She cites some examples. The authorities reported a young airman as missing. His parents have been Spiritualists for many years. They approached Estelle Roberts with a view to getting definite evidence of his whereabouts.

Their spirit daughter, a good communicator, and others members of the family who had passed on, all declared that they had not seen the missing boy. They knew that his

⁸ Dr. Wickland’s book, “Thirty Years Among the Dead”, originally published in 1924.

⁹ Psychic News, February 7th, 1942.

aeroplane had crashed into the water, but they could supply no further evidence. One spirit relative volunteered the information that the boy was badly knocked about.

Between Two Worlds

These communications were regarded by Estelle Roberts as inconclusive. Later in the day, she herself got into touch with Red Cloud and asked him why further information had not been forthcoming. Red Cloud explained that in all probability this young airman was somewhere in a state between the two worlds of life and that the guide would “lower his vibrations” in order to try to reach him.

The medium then arranged for another seance to take place with the parents. When they arrived, Red Cloud told her that he wished to place her in trance—most of her sittings are given normally these days—as he had found the boy, who was now settling down in the spirit world. The guide had promised the airman that he would speak to his parents.

Then, through his entranced medium, Red Cloud explained what happened after the crash. The young airman, not realising that he was “dead,” had returned to his aerodrome to carry on with his duties. When Red Cloud got into touch with him, the airman would not at first listen, but after much persuasion he consented to accompany the guide, on the distinct understanding that he could personally speak to his parents.

Red Cloud got the airman to take control of the medium. The evidence that the boy gave his parents startled them in its conclusiveness, especially when he referred to certain documents which he had on earth, and his knowledge of how his parents had dealt with them since his passing. Definite proof was given that this young man had been killed. The body has since been recovered.

When the medium came out of trance and learned from the parents all that had happened, she said it seemed strange that a member of a family so interested in Spiritualism should find himself earthbound. The parents replied that he was the only member of the family who refused to interest himself in Spiritualism !

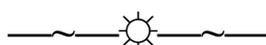
Estelle Roberts quotes another example. The mother and wife of an airman reported missing, both complete strangers to the medium, came for a sitting. The sitters received proofs of spirit identity from members of their family. Then one who was not a relative communicated and gave his name. From his many statements they were able to confirm that he was the only other person in the aeroplane.

“I Have Not Seen Him”

This is what he said, ‘We were on night patrol and were shot down over the water. I remember seeing K— (the name of the missing man), just as we went down. I have not seen him over here.’”

Arising from this spirit communication, Estelle Roberts asks, “Where is this missing man? Red Cloud has not yet found him on the Other Side. Is he between the two worlds, or still alive somewhere on earth? Why did the other occupant of the aeroplane communicate ?” In the light of these experiences, Estelle Roberts comments:

“These examples go to prove how necessary it is for mediums to be absolutely certain before they state definitely whether a soul is still upon the earth or has passed on to the Other Side. They should be very careful not to jump to the conclusion that, because they cannot get into contact with a soul, this means he must still be on the earth.”



MAURICE BARBANELL

Before he was famous

Maurice Barbanell was asked to read his paper, “The God Idea”, at the third Annual S.N.U. Summer School at Matlock Modern School, Derby, August 3rd to 24th, 1929, inclusive. Information on the SNU Summer Schools (“What we did before Stansted”) is published in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5. Other speakers over the three weeks were: John McIndoe, Aaron Wilkinson, Ernest Oaten, George Berry, Ernest Keeling (all former Union Presidents), and Alfred Kitson.

Barbanell was well-known within the SNU in the 1920s

In October 1926, the AGM minutes were published in the Union’s monthly journal, “The National Spiritualist”,¹⁶ and Barbanell was recommended for a Diploma as a result of the Exponents and Education assessment; his marking was Class B (Honours). In a further report of the 1926 examinations published in May 1927 Barbanell achieved Class A (Honours). At this time education was under the “National Spiritualist College and National Joint Education Scheme” (Union/Lyceum), which entailed a three-year course of study with yearly examinations – for details see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: “Early S.N.U Education History”. By April 1928 it can be noted that he was M. Barbanell, Dipl. S.N.U.

It can be further noted in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6: “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”:

At the 1927 SNU Annual Consultative Conference held on Sunday July 3rd at the Art Workers’ Guild Rooms, Queen Square, London under the presidency of Robert Owen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hon. President, moved the following:

“That a new principle be added to the Seven Principles of Spiritualism, declaring that while admitting that every Creed has its own message from on high, however by human frailty, we in the Western World acknowledge the original teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth and look upon them as an ideal model for our own conduct.”

Barbanell opposed the resolution, stating:

If this new principle were added to the seven it would mean that any who felt themselves unable to subscribe to this principle would not be eligible as members of the organisation. He objected also to the term “original” (“the original teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth”) in the resolution. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, one of the greatest pioneers, claimed that Jesus did not originate a single ethic. He read a passage from her works as follows:—

“But even if he (Jesus) were a man there is no evidence of such a personality save the four Gospels, the authorship of which has conclusively been denied by the best authority to have belonged to any disciple of Jesus. No contemporary historian makes any mention of such a personage. The events stated to have occurred at his trial and death are neither found in Roman nor Jewish records, neither in the writings of the officials nor the historians of the time. Yet Philo, the learned historian of the Essenes, wrote of his period without ever alluding to him. Josephus, the voluminous historian of Herod and his times, makes no mention of him.”

¹⁶ See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2013: “The First SNU Journal”.

If Spiritualism wanted a leader, let it go to the highest and best it knew—a God who was all perfect... (See the *Pioneer* issue for further information.)

In 1928 Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Spiritualist, Richard Boddington (brother of Harry), as London's Area Representative, a position he would hold for many years. In 1930 Barbanell stood for SNU President and Vice-President but was pipped at the post by John Brown McIndoe and Alexander George Newton respectively.

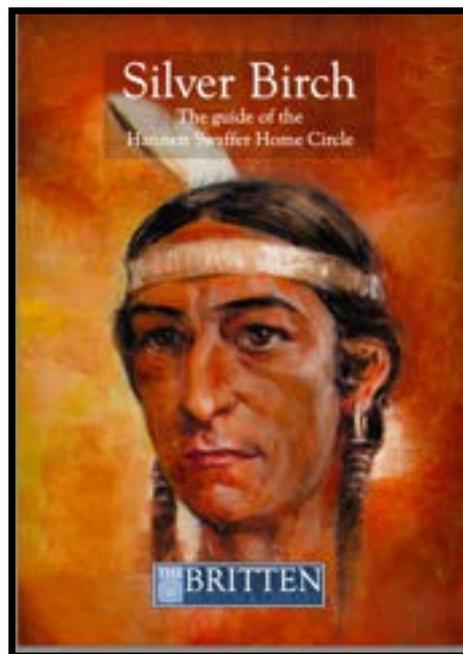
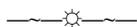
The early 1930s would bring Barbanell to wide public attention with his extensive propaganda work, for example in the above-mentioned *Pioneer* issue: "On Tour with Hannen Swaffer We Continue Our Crusade". In 1932 Barbanell would become a household name as founder editor of *Psychic News*; the last issue outlines in detail the founding of this *then* weekly newspaper: "Psychic News was Founded by Maurice Barbanell and Jack Rubens".

After the founding of *Psychic News*, the name "Silver Birch" was brought about for the main reason to find an appropriate name for the publication of the guide's teachings from the "Hannen Swaffer Home Circle". Maurice Barbanell was first entranced in or around 1920; after about four years he met Hannen Swaffer and a friendship and working relationship were formed which would last for almost forty years. The "Hannen Swaffer Home Circle" was formed, with Barbanell as the medium; this would remain a highly-guarded secret, in fact not revealed until 1957 by Barbanell himself. See *Pioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 6: "An extraordinary secret was held in the Spiritualist movement for over three decades: who is Silver Birch's medium?"

The circle's guide was called "Big Jump," a fact which would remain within the circle until the medium's death in 1981; the name "Silver Birch" was used solely as a public name to bring about the guide's teachings.

Quoted from "Silver Birch – The guide of the Hannen Swaffer Home Circle":

... when The Teachings were printed it was thought a more suitable name should be used. Barbie¹⁷ has said that the name 'Silver Birch' was decided one evening at a sitting and the next morning in his office he received a post card with a picture of a silver birch tree on the front. It had come from a member of the public he did not know.¹⁸



¹⁷ Used by Barbanell's friends.

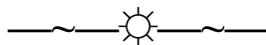
¹⁸ Booklet available at: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/silver-birch>

Below is taken from the S.N.U. "National Spiritualist" over several issues: October, November and December 1929.

The God Idea

A Paper read to the Summer School Students,

BY M. BARBANELL, Dipl., S.N.U.



When I was originally approached and asked whether I would speak at the Summer School, it was suggested that the subject be one which lent itself to controversy, and also one on which we could ask questions. This explains the title of my address; for surely of all questions that have puzzled thinking minds throughout the ages and is still unsolved, it is the great mystery we call God.

One of the difficulties in approaching this subject is due to the fact that man's idea of God has been subject to evolution, and the ideas that were accepted generations ago have become considerably modified, as undoubtedly will current conceptions in a generation hence, and it is still true to say that no matter how much ideas and conceptions may alter, God must of necessity remain the same, and unalterable.

In order to gain some idea of this constant evolution, one has only to take the Bible, and compare the conception of God depicted in the very early pages of the Old Testament, where we have delineated a very jealous and personal God, who takes sides, who is war-like, who sends pestilences and diseases, who exterminates lives, who incites wars, and blood-shed, and who is tyrannical.

Then we turn to the picture of God as revealed by Jesus in the New Testament, and the conception has become completely changed, and we have a God who is depicted as the loving Father of justice and mercy. One would be inclined to say that the two conceptions referred to two different Gods, yet they were both depicting the self-same idea.

Similarly we find that the modern conception of God has evolved, and so startling is the evolution, that were a modern preacher to have stood in a pulpit seventy years ago, and expressed ideas which modern Christianity now accepts, he would without doubt have been denounced as a heretic. Bearing this in mind, one approaches the subject with great difficulty, realising this constant modification of ideas.

The first questions we have to ask ourselves are, Does God exist, and if so, what is God?

The answers are far more difficult than the questions. For the essence of the God idea is that God shall be greater than any definition, and so it must be realised that any definition of God could only be a crude attempt to express in language an idea greater than any language is capable of expressing.

Does God exist? Let us see. It is true to say that the last generation has witnessed a tremendous number of discoveries in all phases of scientific research, and as a result we have learnt a great deal concerning the universe which was hitherto considered mysterious and unknown. We have measured the stars, and the planets, and have even calculated their movements. We have delved into the earth, and wrested from her, secrets which have been buried for countless ages, which have enabled us to reconstruct pages of past history. We have discovered how to manipulate many of the vibrations of light and sound, and have invented apparatus to harness them for our requirements.

Yet in all fields of research, no matter what discovery has been made, behind every fact, new or old, is the question of law. Whatever happens does so because its happening

is regulated by law, and this is true not only of the mightiest things in the universe, like tides and planets, but even of the humbler and lesser kingdom of microbes and insects.

Let us pause and consider. The movements of the tides are regulated by law, the stars and planets wheel in their courses, all by law. The sun rises and sets by law. The seasons follow each other by law. All growth, be it inanimate or animate, is subject to unalterable law, and so perfect are these laws, that they have been in operation now apparently for millions of years, working without a single mistake. Further, these laws never have to be modified or withdrawn or altered in any shape or form. Now the existence of law must postulate intelligence which creates the law, and sets the law in operation. Laws do not and cannot create themselves. If you throw a handful of type into the air a million times, it will never fall so as to make intelligent sentences. Not until you apply your own intelligence, which is external to the type, will you have sentences.

We too have laws, and in England we have laws which are considered to be the finest in the world. So much so that year by year Law students and lawyers visit our country in order to learn from us something of the standard of our laws. Yet we are always making fresh laws, we are always altering past laws, we are always repealing old laws that are now defunct and bad, and making new laws to meet new conditions. Although our laws are supposed to be the finest in the world, they are full of errors, and so liable to misinterpretation, that we have to have courts of law and barristers, solicitors, magistrates and lawyers, all of whom are employed day by day to see that the law is properly interpreted and carried out. No one would ever say our laws are perfect.

We ask ourselves the question. Why the necessity for repealing old laws? and the answer is that the minds who made those laws were imperfect minds and so the result was imperfect laws, the imperfections of which the sequence of time has discovered. Yet on the other hand there are laws made centuries ago which are still in operation to-day because the minds which made those laws were greater minds. So we are forced to conclude that the greater the laws the greater the minds which conceived them, and the poorer the laws, the poorer the minds which conceived them.

If we compare man-made laws with natural laws and follow the same lines of reasoning, we are forced to admit that because the laws of the universe are perfect both in their operation and their administration that the mind which created and set them in operation must be equally as perfect. Hence in this somewhat round-about fashion we get some conception, however faint and obscure, of a perfect mind which exists behind the laws of the universe. Beyond that it is almost impossible to get definitions and ideas. We are in the habit of referring to God as "He" and "Him," yet the term is a bad one, although I shall be forced to use it. Obviously perfection cannot be human and have a gender which is either masculine or feminine. This, of course, eliminates the idea of a personal God, unless one is willing to make personality so elastic as to include the whole universe as the personality of God.

Having said all this, however, I must also say that there are many problems to be faced: problems to which it is impossible to give an immediate answer, and which are at present right beyond the range of human thought. It might be asked if God created the universe and the laws in it, what was there before the Creation, and if the universe is the effect of which God is the cause, what is the cause of which God is the effect? Or who created God? Or whether there was a series of Gods who created one another; I do not know. Whether there was anything in existence before the Universe, I do not know. We human beings are forced to conclude that we know nothing at all about first causers whatsoever.

There are some, however, who will not conceive the idea of a perfect God at all, because they say that God essentially is a part of the Universe, and if this is so, and it be

admitted that the Universe is subject to evolution, they say that God must be subject to evolution too. An evolving God cannot possibly be a perfect God, as perfection surely would be the summit of evolution. Then, too, there are others who are puzzled and at a loss to understand the relation of God to Man, for, say they, "If God made man, and man is imperfect, then surely God must be imperfect too, otherwise we would have to admit that perfection produces imperfection, whereas one would have thought that the natural results of perfection would be perfect."

Were we created by God? Is it true that God is spirit and we are spirit too, and that in a lesser degree we are all potential gods, and that a stream of divinity, be it small, flows throughout all our natures? Is it true that we are parts of God, and that God is composed of the totality of all our parts, and that apart from us, God has no existence? Then, too, how are we to understand so much which seems illogical and unjust to us as being the supposed action of a perfect God who is perfect in wisdom and in love?

There are the great twin mysteries of Pain and Evil for which there has never been any satisfactory explanation. Perhaps you may believe that there is no explanation that we would understand at present, but if so, I must reply that we must strive to understand, however difficult and elusive the problem. The reason for our existence on earth is only justified in an attempt to unravel the mysteries of nature. Can we honestly say that all pain exists merely as a chastening effect from which the soul emerges more purified than it was before?

Are we satisfied to believe that Pain provides the comparative experience to happiness, and without experiencing it there could be no happiness. If so, how do we explain the fact that so many seem to receive a measure of pain that seems unjust in comparison with other lives? Then too, the apparent suffering of innocent and good living men and women who are subject to some of the worst diseases of humanity, sometimes inherited with their birth. It does not seem just that an innocent child should be forced to go through life suffering the results of its parents' wrong living. Of course I know I shall be told the answer is that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, that is the Law, but surely if we made the Law and if we had the power that apparently God had would we make unjust laws? The only other explanation is the belief that in the larger life after death, compensation can be offered and an adjustment made, but this still leaves unanswered the great question—Why is it necessary for suffering to be inherited through the misdeeds of parents?

Then, too, there are some who say that all the suffering in the Universe is not the action of God or natural law, but due to human beings. Here again one has to pause and remember that this does not explain earthquakes, tempests, tornadoes, whirlpools, icebergs, etc. all of which certainly are not man-made. I have heard this objection met with an answer that the suffering of a thousand people is no greater than the suffering of one, but this seems to me to be a very callous outlook, for surely we know as Spiritualists the effect that a sudden exit from life produces in the individual.

Then let us turn again to this question of suffering that is produced by human action, and let us see whether the responsibility altogether rests on human shoulders. We say God made us. If we are brutal, tyrannous, bullying with evil in our hearts, God made us so. Just as easily he could have made us sweet natured, amiable and full of love, but rightly or wrongly he chose to make us as we are. We were not consulted, we were not given a choice, and the responsibility for our organised being rests not upon us but upon God. And equally also surely the responsibility for our actions which are the results of our being, too, so that one could fasten all suffering and evil upon God as the intelligence who created us.

In passing, I have always wanted to know the opinion of Mr. Blatchford,¹⁹ who so very cogently advances this Determinist argument, since his acceptance of Spiritualism. There are some who are quite satisfied to believe the only answer is that one day we shall know all, and that at present we are merely trying to form hasty judgments from incomplete portions, but we must refuse to be placated with this argument, and press on and investigate until our reason is satisfied.

It is advanced in some quarters that we only have pain, evil and suffering because of the fact that we have been given free wills, but certainly it is true to say that our free will is far from free. It is so restricted and limited by laws and circumstances over which we have no control, that its freedom is in a measure almost, but not wholly, insignificant. One wonders sometimes, if it is not too blasphemous a thought, whether, if we were god, with the powers divinity possesses, we would create a race of beings such as we are to-day, or whether we would produce far different results.

Let us turn to the question of Prayer, and here we see also much of the illogicality of the human mind. Recently we had a drought, and the water supplies of our country were threatened. Immediately the suggestion was thrown out by the Church that we should have prayers for rain. Why? Is it suggested that a perfect God was unaware of the fact that there was a drought, and needed to be reminded of it by our supplication? If so, this is a very curious state of perfection; and further, could our prayers influence or change the natural laws which determine rain and sunshine? Then again, we praise God for the Sun, but no-one blames God for the rain. We praise God for the flowers, but no-one blames God for the weeds. We praise God for all the beautiful things in life, but no-one blames God for the ugly, yet if God made one surely He is responsible for the other?

Have prayers any value at all apart from the spiritual exercise, and is there any point in reminding God of all the things, which, as God, He should know; and further, since 90% of prayer is generally personal request, is it not really a waste of breath? One could enlarge on this a great deal, particularly by making reference to the invocations offered by Speakers on public platforms at Services, which would certainly be far better were no attempt made at prayer whatsoever. This reminds me that there is a tendency both in the Spiritualist movement and in religious movements generally, to assume that it is only possible to make this contact with God in some place called a "Church," whereas, the idea is obviously contrary to the whole spirit of the nature of God.

God is Love we are told, but God is Law, and often it is difficult to reconcile the two, but one thing remains steadfastly certain, no matter what our desires or requests may be, unalterable and immutable law control and reign the universe.

Sunday after Sunday we have repeated what is supposed to be the Model Prayer for all human beings, namely the Lord's Prayer, which when examined in the light of reason is illogical. God in order to be God must be something more than a Father, and must exist not only in Heaven. Why should God's name require hallowing? The will of God is law and it is already "done on earth" for no man or woman has the power to interfere with the will of God.

It is useless praying to God for daily bread. It can only be obtained by our own efforts. It is vain asking God to forgive us our trespasses. We know that our trespasses cannot be forgiven until we have put right that which we have made wrong. Forgiveness can never cancel out sin. Asking God not to lead us into temptation is surely absurd, for it is suggesting that a God who loves us would lead us into temptation. From evil we can only deliver ourselves. So I am afraid that the whole conception of the Lord's Prayer requires considerable modification in the light of our modern knowledge.

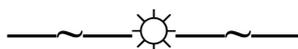
¹⁹ Robert Blatchford; see *Psypioneer*, Vol, 7, No. 3: "More Things about Robert Blatchford ... – Leslie Price".

It might be true that we never shall understand God, because the lesser cannot understand the greater, but we must persist in the attempt. Mere worship and praise are insufficient. One would imagine that God required nothing more than a constant reiteration of His praises day by day and a repetition of hymns and texts that have been uttered for hundreds of years, that surely by now He must be completely weary of them. For myself, I can only say that the question of God bristles with many problems, some of which we cannot understand, but nevertheless, which I hope some day will be understood.

Do not, however, let us be hypnotised into the acceptance of ideas because they have been dinned into our minds week after week, month after month, and year after year, and have now become woven into the subconscious fabric of our beings.

If there is any portion of us which is divine, it is our mind, and unless we are constantly stimulating our minds into action and persist in asking how, why, where and what, we might just as well revert to animal lives, and be content with mere sleep and work, and eat and drink.

The human race can only progress as long as it refuses to be baffled by the so-called mysteries of life, and civilisation can only be advanced as long as we are determined that the generation which comes after us shall know more about God and the universe, and nature through our efforts. We must hand on the flaming torch of knowledge, and add something to its lustre and brightness, for if we have not contributed any fresh illumination and helped to dispel some of the gloom in the universe, then indeed our lives have been in vain.



Maurice Barbanell (note Helen Hughes sitting behind him) at Edinburgh 1942

SPIRITUALISM IN NORWICH

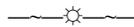
By HORACE LEAF

Once upon a time many of our pioneers and churches / societies were associated in some way or another with the Spiritualist Lyceum movement, which history shows was so important in the early growth of the Spiritualist movement. Here Horace Leaf, in his article published below by the Two Worlds on April 5th, 1952, gives an overview of his views on his experience with the Lyceum. The article further leads the reader into Christian Spiritualism and the leadership of a religious head, in which Leaf outlines his views and that of the SNU and its Seven Principles.

From the start of the Spiritualists' National Federation in 1891 to its re-constitution as the Spiritualists' National Union in 1902, the adoption of the Seven Principles, which many members did not want, was legally required in the new constitution, so there was little choice.

For some decades, the Principles were changed and used to suit the various societies. Church requirements resulted in bringing Christian Spiritualists into Union churches—however, these changes of the wording and the additions to the Seven Principles were not changed within the constitution. The then wide interpretation of the Union's Principles would in time cause problems with National Churches, as some churches were being run by declared Christians on Christian lines.

They stated that their 'liberty of interpretation' gave them the freedom to include Christian belief and practices while following SNU Spiritualism.⁴ Gordon Higginson put the feelings of the majority of members into a few words at Conference in the 1970s: "I have nothing against Christian Spiritualism, but if the church was National Spiritualist, then it must remain National Spiritualist. If they did not want this, then they should find their own buildings and not pinch ours!"⁵



Many years ago I was invited to lecture and demonstrate in a Y.M.C.A. hall in Norwich, and formed the opinion that the organisers of the meeting aimed at "downing" Spiritualism. Nevertheless, from my point of view, the entire effort was a success.

All the questions, that were asked after the clairvoyance, were intended to expose the fallacy of Spiritualism; but as a matter of fact presented no difficulty from our angle. Indeed, they enabled me to make clear beliefs which are uncertain and confusing from the Christian standpoint, but not from the Spiritualist.

A few years later I delivered an illustrated lantern lecture on "Materialisations" in one of the principal public halls of Norwich, which was filled to capacity; and I was informed that the Bishop of Norwich was present with about a dozen clergymen. My chairman

⁴ Charles Coulston, SNU Consultant, notes: "Liberty of interpretation issue: the Council of the Union, which was at that time the policy-making body of the Union, agreed to accept this [legal] advice from the Union's solicitors and the Council's acceptance of it was relayed to members at the Union's 1988 Annual General Meeting. The reference to liberty of interpretation was accordingly deleted from the Union's Articles of Association and elsewhere from that point in time."

⁵ For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"

was a leading surgeon of the city. It was great pleasure for me to deliver a similar lecture last Saturday with the same doctor in the chair.

Since that first meeting Spiritualism in Norwich has progressed tremendously, having a splendid church of its own and enjoying the support of large congregations.

The Norwich Christian Spiritualist Church, to give it its full title, fortunately aims at presenting a complete case for Spiritualism and exploits in the interests of the Cause every factor capable of appealing to the public from a practical religious standpoint.

Nowhere, as far as my knowledge goes, is there a better equipped clinic for magnetic and spiritual healing; and few churches can be more patronised by the sick. Needless to say there are many remarkable cures to the credit of the healers who so unselfishly give their services.

My interest was particularly aroused by the Lyceum, which I was invited to address in full session as well as in class, The principal aim of the Lyceum is to encourage the development of the personality of the children an objective which other religions seem largely to have overlooked.

Doubtless the reason for this is that they must appeal more to the faith of the children than to their critical faculties; and at Christian Sunday Schools any questions encouraged necessarily bear on elucidating Christian interpretations of the scriptures, than adverse criticism.

It would perhaps be misleading to say that children who attend Lyceums are asked to adversely criticise the proceedings but if any ever venture to do so, it may be taken for granted that, instead of being silenced, they would be listened to with respect and answered with courtesy.

I have put it this way because I well remember that in my Christian – church – going days I ventured to ask the teacher a debatable question and as a result was ostracised by teacher and pupils ! This did more to shake my confidence in the church than perhaps anything else.

It was quite amusing as well as pleasing to see at Lyceums with what zest the children undertook any task imposed on them by their leader, such as calling the roll and marking the register, taking up the collection, and other little services.

It was not merely the little person doing this work who was delighted and perhaps flattered, but the other children also. No doubt they in turn would be called upon sooner or later to perform similar functions.

It was impressed on me by the Leader, when he requested me to talk to the pupils, not to emphasise Spiritualism as much as to work it in with entertaining and illustrative remarks.

The aim of the Lyceum was not to force beliefs on children, but to encourage them to be interested in religion in such a way as to be able later on to make a reasonable decision on the subject. This is an excellent method.

Spiritualists are fortunately, unlike Christians, under no moral compulsion to persuade children to believe the same as they do, lest they became unbelievers and end up in perdition.

Perhaps Spiritualism has done the world no greater service than to inform them that it is not beliefs which determine mankind's well-being in the hereafter, but motives with their consequent conduct.

This means that although we hope the children will become Spiritualists, we shall not be too worried if they do not since universal justice will in the end bring all to rights.

The class that I later addressed, or rather, whose questions I answered, were for the most part teen-agers, and I was impressed by the fact that most of the queries bore on social services, in which the nature and cure of diseases played a principal part.

Of course, their questions vary from week to week and as only a brief period is devoted to class work, practically only one line of thought can be developed at each class meeting.

A unique feature of Lyceum work is of calisthenics. NO other church seems to realise the importance of this feature at Sunday School, although good many churches and chapels do devote some time, out of Sunday School, to physical training.

One of my recollections of Sunday School was the lack of variety, and I have no doubt that had I been permitted to rise from my chair and parade to a cheerful tune around the hall, I should have attended class much more willingly.

Whoever has attended these calisthenics at Lyceum meetings will have noticed the teachers, invariable adults, join in them with as much enthusiasm as the pupils, and this must be a great source of enjoyment to the youngsters.

If physical exercises of so simple but healthful a nature can please the grown-ups, then why should it not please them !

It is a long time, I regret to say, since I previously attended a Lyceum meeting. Circumstances do not often permit it, chiefly because Spiritualist Churches fail too often to realise their importance; but I can assure those who have not yet attended any that they have missed a very good thing.

The reaction of many Spiritualists in opposition to the new “Spiritualist Revival” Society acclaiming the leadership of Jesus Christ, has made me glad to know that there are still many who intend to protest against any form of sectarianism in our ranks.

Is it not strange how individuals within our religious organisations—for it has a religious purpose — bemoan the fact that some of us will not tolerate the idea of setting up, within the S.N.U., any particular Spiritual leader, whether he be Jesus, Moses, Buddha, or Mahomet.

We, who adhere to the principle of man being his own Saviour and finding his own way to the kingdom of God, happiness, or call it what you like, without necessary prayer of intercession on our behalf by any, or through any, leader in spirit are not anti-Christian or narrow-minded intolerant fanatics.

We recognise the right of the Christian Spiritualists and kindred organisations to live in peace and promote goodwill in the world, as *separate organisations*, which can surely, in my opinion, exist side by side with all the S.N.U. churches which urge the adoption of the Seven Principles *without any additional clauses*, but which cannot allow, without protest, the propagation of gospels of “different truths” from a common S.N.U. platform.

Surely the S.N.U. religious platform has to be preserved for a direct advocacy of definite truths in an organisation which flies a particular religious banner, which is clearly enough defined to tell the whole world what is our religious gospel.

Co-operation between “kindred bodies” is possible and desirable when dealing, for example, with legal matters and the clearing out from all our ranks of racketeers and undesirable infiltrations, but complete *unity*, in a religious sense, can never become

possible until, officially at least, we all see eye to eye upon the fundamental principles of Spiritualism, which generations ago, knit our pioneer workers together.

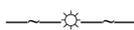
Without this complete religious harmony, we will become a disintegrated group of isolated survivalist churches, sheltering for administrative purposes, under an S.N.U. umbrella, but ready to split up and go our separate ways, with no combined force of religious objective, once the disapproval of outside orthodox bodies has ceased and we have become conventionally “respectable.”

Surely the Seven Principles are comprehensive enough to embrace, and be embraced by the whole God-conscious world, and if individuals wish to acclaim the guidance of a particular spirit, be he Jesus or some other great reformer, cannot he do so in the privacy of his heart without outlawing, as an organisation, the great body of world religionists, who for obvious reasons cannot be identified with any “Christian” or other sectarian Spiritualist body?

It has always been my belief that all people, of all shades of religious thought, should be admitted to our Spiritualist churches, but that our official speakers should be agreed in common purpose to mould the thoughts of our congregants towards an understanding and acceptance of what the Seven Principles really mean.

When this is done, we will find mere tolerance of each other becomes real union.

Then—and only then—will this Spiritualist Movement of ours step outside its present bounds and embrace the whole world.



Editor's Note:



The contribution to Spiritualism of Horace Leaf F.R.G.S. (c1886-1971) spanned decades. As a medium, lecturer, teacher and author, he became acquainted with Spiritualism in 1903 but then as a critic; in 1904 he discovered he had psychic ability and began to sit promiscuously for development until 1907, when he decided to take his development seriously, giving his first address as a medium the following year. However, he had by then already started to contribute to the British Spiritualist press, becoming a regular contributor to the *Two Worlds* and, later, for the American press, including *The Progressive Thinker*, *Banner of Light*.

In the *Two Worlds* Leaf serialised circa 1912 ‘Historical Records’, the histories of societies and churches, and in the July 2014 issue of the ‘SNU Pioneer’ his account of the early introduction of Spiritualism and of the formation of the first society at Keighley is republished.⁶ Leaf contributed another series in the *Two Worlds*, “Notable National and International Personalities in Our Cause: Interviews with Prominent Workers for our Movement at Home and Abroad”; many of these articles can be found in the pages of *Psypioneer* and *Pioneer*.

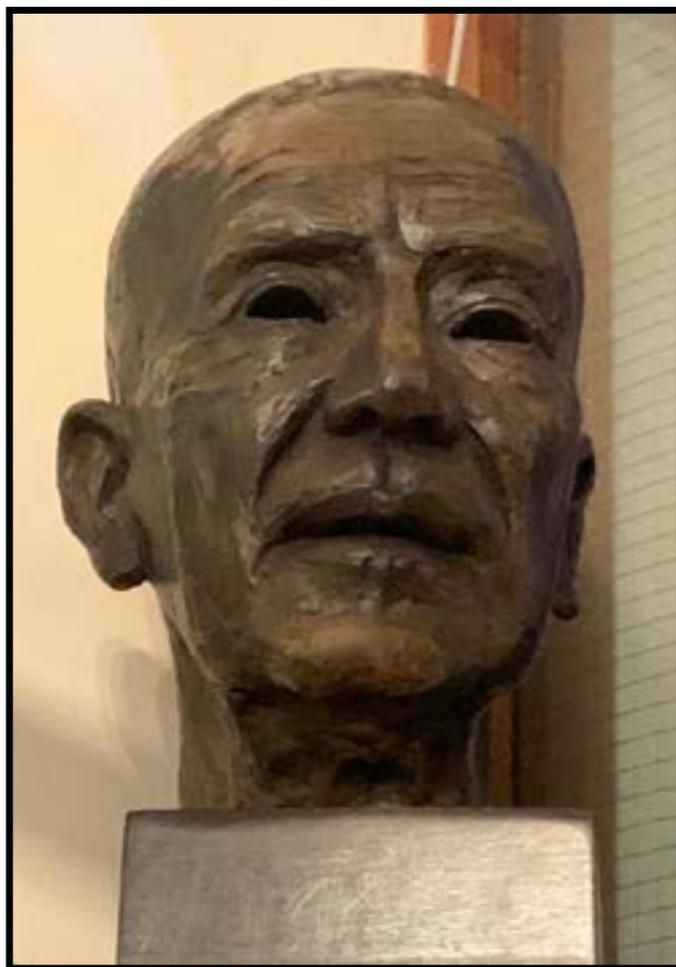
⁶ *Pioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 4: “Richmond & Weatherhead – An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley”.

Leaf authored several popular books, including ‘What is this Spiritualism?’ (1918), ‘Under the Southern Cross’ (1923) and ‘The Psychology and Development of Mediumship’ (c1926). He lectured widely at home and abroad as a normal speaker as well as inspirational speaking; he demonstrated clairvoyance and psychometry, as well as practising healing and physical mediumship.

He was closely associated with the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, his name first appearing in an Association programme in October 1915; in 1960 the M.S.A. changed its name to the ‘Spiritualist Association of Great Britain’ (SAGB).⁷ Soon after James Hewat McKenzie inaugurated the British College of Psychic Science at 59, Holland Park in April 1920,⁸ Leaf became staff lecturer on the psychology and development of mediumship. From this work he developed his book, ‘The Psychology and Development of Mediumship’, with McKenzie writing the foreword.⁹

In the early 1950s Horace Leaf was awarded honorary membership and the Diploma of the Spiritualists’ National Union.

Also displayed in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College is a large bust of Horace Leaf and his typewriter.



⁷ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 1: “Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain”.

⁸ See Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: “A Knight Errant of Psychic Science James Hewat McKenzie”.

⁹ Psypioneer published two interviews with Horace Leaf forty years apart, in 1915 and 1955; both appear in Vol. 10, No. 7, July 2014.

Psychic News Dinner Dance 1957

Hannen Swaffer – Arthur Findlay – Former SNU President Percy Wilson

Throughout our history from the early days of Emma Hardinge Britten, pioneers have continually advocated the importance, strength and necessity of the Home Circle—Hannen Swaffer was a staunch reminder of this; over many years he was supportive of the “Link Association of Home Circles,” founded in 1931, which developed into an international association, albeit for physical development.¹⁷ We need only to search “Home Circles” in the pages of Pioneer to note the underlying benefits of many of our famed mediums. Arthur Findlay talks on survival; Percy Wilson followed Findlay as Psychic Press Chairman.

Below in a report from Psychic News, October 5th, 1957:



The real future of Spiritualism is in the home circles

– says Swaffer at Psychic News
Dinner

Two men who by their pens have done more for the cause of Spiritualism than any other living writers were the guests of honour at the Psychic News 25th anniversary dinner at the Park Lane hotel last Saturday.

They were Hannen Swaffer, doyen of journalists and public champion of Spiritualism in press

and on platform for more than thirty years, and Arthur Findlay, whose books on Spiritualism and comparative religion are already classics that have exposed the errors of orthodoxy and probably influenced more people towards truth than any other psychic writings.

It was an occasion all present will remember. Swaffer reminisced inimitably—and also spoke of the future of Spiritualism as he saw it. Findlay reviewed the foundations of history on which Spiritualism firmly stood — and stressed the importance of the psychic press in the future.

And in reply to their toast to “Psychic News” the chairman of this newspaper, Percy Wilson, quoted words of guidance from a famous pioneer.

Here are the reports of the speeches:

“We don’t want to convince the learned and the wise, we only want to comfort and heal.”

So said Hannen Swaffer, still one of England’s few great orators, when he spoke as a guest-of-honour at the Psychic News 25th anniversary dinner.

Swaffer told his audience that in his early days he said to himself, “Within a year or so we shall convince England.

¹⁷ Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3: “A Question of Fraud! – Editor’s Note”.

“Then I saw the snags. I came to the conclusion that it was in the home that Spiritualism counts. I realised, and many guides told me, that Spiritualism was not meant to be a world movement.

“It is meant to be like the Fabian Society: a permeating, educative, and all-pervading thing—in the end.”

He spoke of his own home circle with the guide Silver Birch, whose medium is Maurice Barbanell. To Swaffer’s mind the words of Silver Birch are “the most eloquently simple and beautifully inspired of all the spirit messages that have brought truth to this world today”.

“Spiritualism should consist of the development of the home circle. The future of Spiritualism will be in the home circle.”

Pointed

Swaffer then started to tell how Psychic News was founded by a tin-tack. It was during the days when he and Maurice Barbanell toured the country lecturing on Spiritualism, to 250,000 people.

“We went on the platform at Leicester, and someone—either a Catholic or an actor—put on my chair a drawing-pin. My guides were working well that night, but Barbanell’s were not. We changed places. He sat on it!”

But how that gave birth to Psychic News Swaffer never got round to telling, except to say that during those week-end tours he learned a lot about Spiritualism, and Barbanell learned a lot about journalism.

Swaffer confessed that he was a strange Spiritualist, because he had no personal desire to survive. “Complete annihilation would suit me.

“I don’t want to talk to dead friends. I want to meet them in the flesh. But through this wonderful truth I have been able to comfort the broken-hearted.”

Speaking of his own recent bereavement, when death released his wife after loss of memory and weeks of unconsciousness, he said:

“I did not want her to come back, in case she reproached me.”

When, finally, the message from her reached him, with elaborate precautions, these were her words:

“I was to regret nothing,” said Swaff. “Mrs. Swaffer would not have had it any other way and was happy to serve me now as she had done before.

“ ‘Love waits unchanging throughout the changing years, dark though the streams of living memory. Love laughs at death, for death is but a dream, from which we wake to immortality.’ ”

Swaffer still cannot resist a good story or a telling quip.

He told how his wife had said she was delighted to know that at last she would be able to hear her voice in her own home—“even if it was only a squeak.”

Swaffer had quipped, “She being dead, yet squeaketh.”

He ended by referring to his own favourite Spiritualist hymn, “Open my eyes”.

“If all of us tried to do this—I try, but I can’t—I’m human,” he said.

“But if it spread afar it would transcend the flaws. And I fully believe that by association it would make all men friends and usher in the dawn of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.”

* * * *

THE origin of every world religion was a psychic experience. The whole history of the human race revealed that each new turn of events directly resulted from some inspirational or phenomenal upsurge.

“With history behind us—why do we need to worry about what the psychic researchers have to say?” asked J. Arthur Findlay, until recently chairman of Psychic News.

Forty years ago he had a remarkable psychic experience. It came about without any effort on his part. Since then he had discovered that every world religion had a psychic cause which produced it.

“To have revealed the origin of the world’s religions is one of the greatest contributions Spiritualism has made to mankind, and as religion has been the cause of nearly half the events in history the importance of this contribution is not difficult to realise.

“When we accept the phenomena of Spiritualism we are not accepting something that has recently come before the world of thought, but a revelation that has prevailed for thousands of years.

“Spiritualism explains history and enlarges our view of the past, besides giving comfort and satisfaction. In the broad sense, what Spiritualism stands for can be accepted as true, as present and past history testify its reality.

“Some psychic phenomena may be attributed to telepathy or something else, but not all, and the broad conclusion can be drawn that what Spiritualism stands for can be accepted by the intelligent man and woman as something real and factual.

“The pages of a psychic newspaper, such as Psychic News, are of immense value to all Spiritualists, because they give a world-wide view of the subject, instead of just pegging it down to the few isolated cases which are dealt with by the psychical researcher.

“The psychic newspaper is a comparatively recent appearance, but it has come to stay.

“I think the psychic Press has a wonderful opportunity of putting before the public the whole of Spiritualism—its history and philosophy. Only through a psychic Press can people get a full view of what’s behind the Spiritualist movement.

“In years to come they will become more and more honoured and respected.”

* * * *

“If ever Spiritualism becomes bound then it will surely die,” said Percy Wilson, chairman of Psychic News, responding to the toast to this newspaper.

“Let us not be narrow. Let us be as broad as we can be, so that the whole of our philosophy will sweep into every other philosophy and every other Church, whatever its beliefs may be.”

He quoted Abraham Lincoln’s famous words:

“I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right—stand with him when he is right and part with him when he is wrong.”

When Hannen Swaffer quoted this in his weekly column in the World’s Press News, he recommended it as a motto for every honest journalist, whatever his politics.

Mr. Wilson recommended it as a motto for the psychic Press.

He quoted a passage from the well-known Spiritualist William Howitt:

“Can you give fresh wings to the wind? Fresh impulse to the tides of the ocean? Add fresh speed and brilliancy to the light?

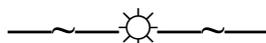
“But Spiritualism is light, the light of the universe. It is the wind of God’s spirit; it is the ocean of God’s power.

“It is as clear as the sun that it is one of those sublime elements that no hand but that of the Creator can wield: that needs no conductors or associations of men to advance its ends.

“Its alimnt, its strength, its glory, have been the sneers and the malice of the wise and religious, the learned and scientific. Like Mithridates, it has lived on poisons.

“In vain have the churches banned it as demoniac; in vain has science pretended to dissect and expose it; in vain has the Press a thousand times announced that it was detected as a base fraud and annihilated.

“Today it stands up before the face of its enemies, more robust, more ethereal, more gigantic, and ubiquitous than ever ! Like the Angel of the Apocalypse, its feet are on the land and the seas; its outstretched wings overshadow the poles !”



Pioneer ends its eighth volume

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates. Starting as a quarterly electronic journal, from January 2015 it went bi-monthly and continues as such today.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

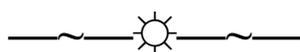
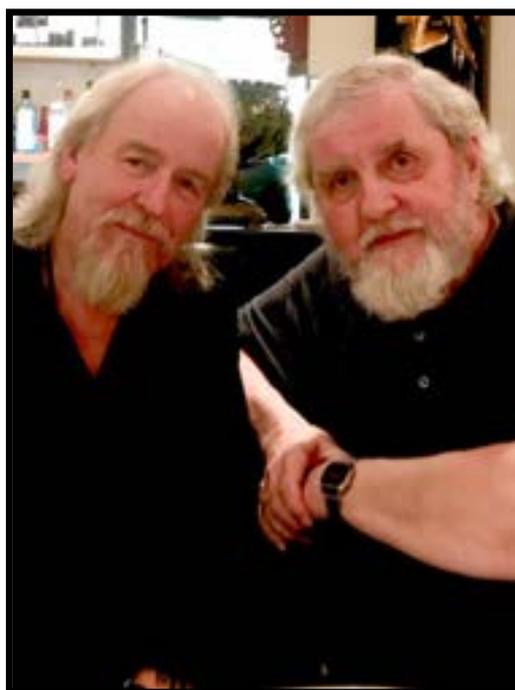
This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.

To date it has published 1,691 pages of researched materials; it is read in various societies, such as the Society for Psychical Research. It is recommended reading for the SNU education courses; it is also used by universities and has attracted numerous students and on occasion their professors to attend the Britten Museum and Library Research – Study Weeks, as noted elsewhere in this issue.

In the last year individual subscribers have substantially increased, rising to 2,500; in addition, it is sent out to SNUi members and is available on the SNU website.

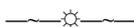
Extended thanks are due to David Hopkins and Leslie Price, who sub-edited the early issues of the journal.

**Editor Paul J. Gaunt and sub-editor,
former SNU General Secretary,
Charles Coulston**



PUBLIC DEBATES:

Spiritualism – Christianity



Throughout the history of the Spiritualist movement the relationship between Spiritualism and the Christian religions was publicly debated, often in heated discussion. In the “Medium and Daybreak” of April 20th, 1883, Emma Hardinge Britten publicly replied to an attack on Spiritualism by a Reverend Skewes. The full interesting debate is available online; ¹² below is published Emma’s introduction:

SPIRITUALISM VINDICATED !

CLERICAL SLANDERS REFUTED

BY

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN

EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION.



By information received from my Spiritualistic Friends in Liverpool, I learn that the Faith they profess, and of which I am one of the public exponents, has been repeatedly attacked by certain members of the clergy of that city, in sermons denunciatory of Spiritualism, and by the openly avowed “moral support” rendered to those travelling conjurers who profess by the exhibition of a few clumsy tricks to imitate and explain the modus operandi of Spiritual Phenomena. The last, and, as I understand, the most pertinacious of the clerical assailants above named, is a “Rev. J. H. Skewes.”

Within the last few weeks, two Sermons have been delivered by this gentleman, reported in a paper called the “Protestant Standard,” under the several (Editorial) titles of “Death-Blow to Spiritualism,” and “Spiritualism in its Coffin !—Nailing Down the Lid ! !” It being the desire of my Committee in Liverpool that I should answer these discourses, I

¹² http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/medium_and_daybreak/medium_and_daybreak_v14_n681_apr_20_1883.pdf

proceeded to do so in two Lectures, given at Rodney Hall, on the Sunday evenings of Feb. 18th and March 4th.

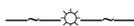
As Mr. Skewes stated in his second Sermon that there were still many points in Spiritualism that he had not noticed, my Committee followed up my Lectures by challenging him to debate the subject with me on a public platform, on conditions honourable to him and beneficial to the Charities of Liverpool. In answer to the repeated invitations to accept this challenge, addressed to Mr. Skewes both by public and private correspondence, the rev. gentleman declines, on the ground that he has had no fair report of my Answers to his Sermons.

As the only report that has been given of my Lectures is a series of paragraphs, headed "Howlings from the Pit," put forth by the "Protestant Standard," a report which is not only interpolated by rude and unworthy personal remarks, but is most imperfect, and scarcely touches on half the matter contained in my first Lectures, my Committee have urged Mr. Skewes to debate the subject of Spiritualism either from the stand-points assumed in his Sermons, or any fresh ones he might be able to allege against the Spiritual Movement. As Mr. Skewes continues to base his refusal upon the absence of any authentic report of my Answer to his Sermons, I deem it my duty to the Cause I represent, to place my Answer to Mr. Skewes's attack on record, and in such a form as cannot be mistaken. It is with this view that I put the annexed statements before the tribunal of public opinion.

Before entering upon my task, I wish it distinctly understood that I make no profession to repeat, except in general terms, the Lectures given by me at Rodney Hall, in answer to Mr. Skewes's Sermons. I am not ashamed to avow that I speak in public under the inspiration of those whom I deem to be good spirits, whose wisdom supplies me with the ideas most appropriate to the occasion, and whose power far transcends my own to meet the demands which the spiritual rostrum makes upon me. Under these conditions I find it impossible to recall my Lectures by memory, or to transcribe them, as they were originally delivered.

The following Answer will, however, embody the sum of the arguments before used, and I have only to add, that, for any further elucidation of the question at issue, I still hold myself ready to meet Mr. Skewes in public discussion, under such conditions as may be agreed upon between him and my Liverpool Committee of Spiritualists.

Emma Hardinge Britten.



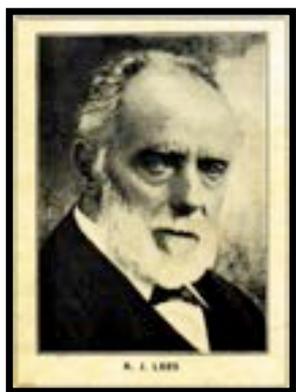
A similar earlier debate by Emma Hardinge Britten was given on July 8th, 1879:

NOTE BY THE REPORTER.

On the evening of July 8th, 1879, Mrs Emma Hardinge. Britten delivered the above address to an immense meeting, which completely packed every seat and corner of the Garrison Hall. The Hon. Robert Stout, late Attorney-General and M.P. for Dunedin, occupied the chair. Mrs Britten was frequently interrupted by hooting and hissings from the followers and friends of her Christian opponent, and vociferous and long-continued cheering from her own supporters.

Mrs Britten bore the storm with unflinching fortitude, deliberately and firmly repeating the sentences which called forth the hootings of the Christian minister's allies, whilst Mr Stout, with indomitable good humour and serenity, quelled the tumult, and insisted upon fair play and justice to both sides. At the close of the address Mr Green [opponent] asked some questions and made some remarks, which the reporter failed to understand; their gist, however, appeared to be an attempt to reiterate the assertions of his previous lectures. Mrs Britten's lecture occupied over two hours in delivery, during which, and despite the prevailing excitement, she was listened to with never-flagging interest and attention.

This is available as a free download, “Spiritualism Vindicated, and Clerical Slanders Refuted”; the same title is given in the “Medium and Daybreak” article above to save any confusion.¹³



Another Victorian medium, Robert James Lees,¹⁴ was well known for his public debates, interestingly *for* and *against* Spiritualism. Please see “Robert James Lees and The Revd Thomas Ashcroft” by Stephen Butt.¹⁵ At the Britten Museum and Library several of his large public debate posters are displayed.

Former SNU President Ernest Oaten has been featured many times in *Pioneer*;¹⁶ below, Oaten puts forward his views to a large audience on the relationship of Spiritualism in the Bible:

“Spiritualism affirms the central doctrine of Christianity, and in fact, of all religions; viz., immortality—or at least life beyond the tomb; but a great deal of confusion exists as to the exact relationship which ought to exist between modern Spiritualism and Christianity.”

“No one could even begin to understand the Bible until he was conversant with spirit communion, for the book was largely a record of psychological phenomena.”



The “Two Worlds” 1924 publication published below was kindly sent to *Pioneer* by historian Marc Demarest, who runs “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals” (IAPSOP):¹⁷

¹³ http://www.ehbritten.org/texts/primary/ehb_spiritualism_vindicated_1879.pdf

¹⁴ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, Nos. 5/6: “Robert James Lees: Did he really sit for Queen Victoria as a young boy? Lees’ involvement with the 1888 Jack the Ripper case”.

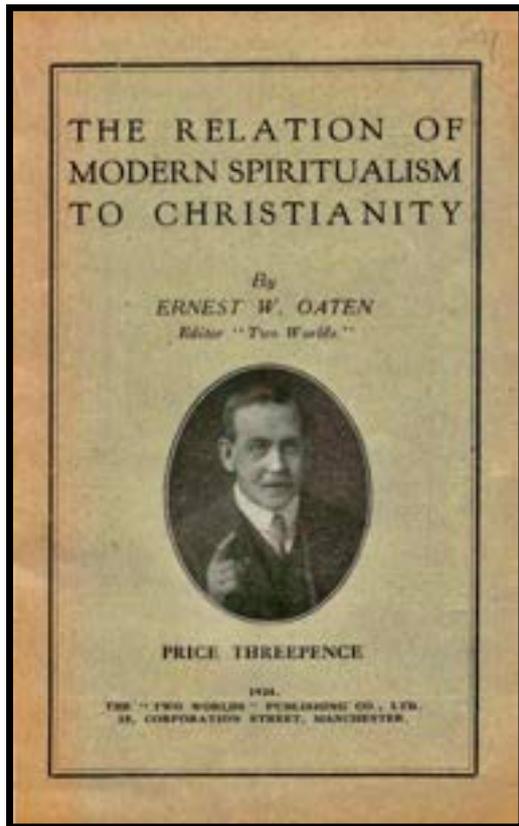
¹⁵ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 12: “Robert James Lees and the Revd Thomas Ashcroft – Stephen Butt”.

¹⁶ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 2: “Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years’ service”.

¹⁷ “The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: <http://iapsop.com>”.

The site also archives the now defunct issues of *Psypioneer* (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the *Pioneer* issues.

The Relation of Modern Spiritualism to Christianity.



An address delivered at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, Manchester, on Sunday, February 4th, 1923, by Ernest W. Oaten (Editor *Two Worlds*).

J. Cuming Walters, M.A., in the Chair.

Mr. Walters, in introducing the speaker, said rumour had it that when editors meet there must be heated differences. That would not be so tonight, for the speaker and he were in perfect accord. They were both there to bear testimony to the same great fact, and even if their points of view might differ in minor detail, they were united upon the conclusion that Spiritualism was the living factor in the religion of to-day and to-morrow. He could not understand the opposition levelled at Spiritualism by Christians; the two systems were complementary, and such opposition was inconsistent. He could understand the Roman Catholic position, since they refused to allow freedom of opinion, but Protestantism stood for a larger view, and the foundations of set creeds and dogmas were fetters they could do without.

Men were beginning to do their own thinking on religious matters. As the result of independent thinking and investigation Spiritualists were able to give a logical and decided reason for the faith that was in them. And why should they not investigate? Knowledge was growing in all departments of life as the result of search, and to forego investigation of natural phenomena was to place a premium on ignorance. He himself had been intended for the Church, but foolish creedal restrictions cast him out, and altered his whole life. There were religious mysteries, but no good purpose was served by refusing inquiry into them. He would rejoice if the churches would examine our case, and give a fair verdict,¹⁸ for we could supply the very elements which were causing them to wither. One thing is sure: they will need us long before we need them. He wanted the ideals of Christianity to prevail. We seek reconciliation, co-operation, and he believed it would come, for we ought to go forward together. He believed Christianity and Spiritualism were natural partners, and had a common mission to bring the power of the spirit world into the lives of men.

Mr. Oaten said:—

Such a fine audience as I see before me (about 1,600) is an evidence of the interest which is to-day being taken in the subject of Spiritualism. The subject I have to deal with is an important one, for Spiritualism is assailed from two points—that of the materialist on the one hand, and that of the religionist on the other. The former complains that the study of Spiritualism and of the evidence for human survival is mere dabbling with forms of superstition, whilst the latter grumbles because Spiritualism apparently falls foul of his long cherished creeds and dogmas.

¹⁸ In 1937 a Committee was appointed by Dr. Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, to investigate Spiritualism. It carefully studied the subject for two years – but the report was suppressed. See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No.6: "Maurice Barbanell – My greatest journalistic "Scoop"".

SURVIVAL THE PRELUDE TO IMMORTALITY.

Now Spiritualism affirms the central doctrine of Christianity, and in fact, of all religions; viz., immortality—or at least life beyond the tomb; but a great deal of confusion exists as to the exact relationship which ought to exist between modern Spiritualism and Christianity. I am dealing with this subject to-night because I have been asked to do so. I hope to show that the Christianity of 1900 years ago was almost identical with the practice of Spiritualism to-day, but the original foundations laid by Jesus and his immediate successors has been so overlaid with traditional heathen symbology and theological priestly incrustations that it is in my opinion quite as easy to rebuild the whole structure as to attempt to clear it of the accumulated rubbish of the last sixteen hundred years or so.

Modern Spiritualism is a recognition of the fact that systematic communication has been established between this life and the life hereafter. The continuity of life beyond the grave has been definitely proven to hundreds of thousands of people—it is not a mere act of faith or article of belief, but a demonstrated fact. This lays the basis for the idea of immortality, by bringing us into personal contact with those who have survived death. Communication having been established with them, information as to the next state of life is available. Such information brings the knowledge that there exists, plane above plane, higher and ever higher degrees of spiritual beings, reaching even to the throne of the Infinite, and that spiritual revelation is and ever has been handed down to us stage by stage, according to the respective capacities of the messenger and the recipient.

We Spiritualists have opened up a contact with the spiritual worlds, where all knowledge abounds, and the measure of revelation receivable is apportioned according to our fitness and capacity.

SPIRITUALISM'S INDEPENDENCE.

That being so, we are not dependent at all upon past tradition. Spiritualism is a movement which is in present day touch with the spiritual worlds—whence all revelations have come—and having a true contact with such source, it can well be independent of all past systems. It is dependent on none of them. The spiritual world which directed them in past times, directs us. If, therefore, all the religious systems of the world, and all the Bibles of the world, were by some calamity destroyed and forgotten, we should still be able to reconstruct on present day facts all that had been lost, since behind us is the inexhaustible supplies of the eternal spheres. That is, the strength and independence of our position, and I want to make it clear. Spiritualism is based upon present day facts, and not upon past records, and in any case of disagreement, appeal must be made to the present day provable facts, rather than to past traditional beliefs. Having said that much, however, I believe that such independence is quite unnecessary. History is one of the most valuable of studies, if only because it contains the experience of others equally as sincere as ourselves. History teaches us the important lesson of what to avoid, and the history of religion contains valuable hints. My studies have led me to the conclusion that there is only one religion in the world—there never had been more. The quarrels which had arisen between sectarians was due to the fact that each had a piece of it, and each imagined that its piece was the whole. That was a type of ignorant egotism. There never had been a volume of Scripture or a phase of thought large enough to contain the whole of God's truth. In the world's great religions there were clear indications of a progressive revelation. Each religious system had concentrated on one central truth, which others had relegated to a secondary place. Even the last (Islam) had its message: "There is One God," which had been the rallying cry of the East. Spiritualism is but a younger and stronger brother of all past systems, and probably will not be the last revelation which the bounty of God will give us.

Having stated the basis of Spiritualism, I must claim that Christianity (with the exception of Romanism, perhaps) was based upon the Bible. Spiritualists knew it, for they were continually bombarded with texts. These did not perturb them, since they could find just as many to hurl back. All religious controversialists seemed to find their weapons in the same armoury. Texts were there to suit everyone, which was what might be expected from a compilation gathered from many writers over centuries of time. The book embodied the spiritual and material experiences of hundreds of men in many centuries, living under many varied conditions, and therefore, it reflects very divergent opinions.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Deuteronomical and Levitical texts were often used against Spiritualists, but they were of little value. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." "A consulter with familiar spirits is an abomination to the Lord." Injunctions to take such people outside the city and stone them were often quoted, but the fact that the people who used these texts would not for the life of them obey the commands, somewhat negated their value. It was indeed strange that Exodus gave us the command, "Thou shalt not kill," whilst Deuteronomy and Leviticus were largely concerned with devising methods of putting to death those who offended against priestly law. It was notable, however, that not until after the Levitical priesthood had been set up were these injunctions given. The priesthood were appointed as the mouthpiece of "the Gods," and then through the lips of that priesthood prohibitions were uttered that all others should "keep off the grass." It was a mere attempt to corner spirit communication and to reserve all the power to the priests who promulgated these laws for their own protection and glory. Yet, Old Testament history bore witness to the fact that all the greatest blessings which ancient Israel enjoyed came—not from the priests—but from the prophets. The man who cornered wheat and starved the people was an enemy of the race, but the man who attempted to corner the truths of God was an unmitigated scoundrel.

THE SACRED ARK.

A historical study of the Old Testament is very illuminating. The chief object of reverence was the Ark of the Covenant which became so holy that only the chosen of God could approach it. It was the instrument of revelation and the repository of the sacred records. It accompanied the Israelites in all their wanderings. It went with them into the Babylonian captivity; it was the holy of holies in which the presence of Jehovah was centred and through which God made His revelations. As a lad he had tried to make a model of the ark and found that it was but a wooden table with the sides boxed in, and with fitments at the sides through which two poles were slipped in order that it might be carried by bearers. Many Christians to-day scoffed at a tilting table as a means of communication with the spirit world. They had forgotten "the pit out of which they were digged." The ark had a movable back like a cheffionier, elaborately carved, which could be unshipped for convenience of transport.

Aye, it was just a wooden table through which the communications of the "Lord" were received and transferred to the people. The boxed-in sides formed a receptacle for the sacred records and was supposed to contain the tables of stone and the tablets of the law. So holy was this sacred instrument that it was unapproachable by any but the high priest, and only under exceptional circumstances was even he allowed to open it. The mass of the people were expected to know the law, and the devout Jew prided himself upon his ability to recite it perfectly.

After the return from the Babylonian captivity there came a time when divergent renderings of the law were found amongst the people, and the sacred ark was opened in order to check oral tradition by the records themselves. The box was found to be empty ! Whether the records had been stolen, or whether the bearers had jettisoned the tables of

stone in order to lighten their burden is a question on which no evidence exists, but the apocraphal books of the Old Testament show that the law had to be re-written, and this was probably done by Ezra—the most erudite of the priests of ancient Israel.

It is quite possible—nay, even probable—that many of the commands for the protection of the priestly monopoly did not creep in until the re-writing of the law, for by this time the priesthood had become a powerful autocracy.

A similar condition exists with many other of the Old Testament books. Biblical scholars go so far as to say that most of the Psalms (attributed to David) could not have been written until long after David's death, and in these ancient times it was not an uncommon thing for writers and singers to apply some famous name to their own productions.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We have the same thing happening with the New Testament. Biblical criticism shows clearly that the Books of Matthew, Mark, and John were not written by the Apostles of that name. The gospel *according* to (not necessarily by) Mark is probably the oldest, and dates 30 to 35 years after the crucifixion. The gospel according to Matthew followed shortly afterwards, but was certainly not written by Matthew. The writers of the Gospel of Luke and John in all probability never saw Jesus. Luke frankly tells us that he gathered the information as the result of enquiry amongst the followers of Jesus, and this gospel probably dates about 50 years after the crucifixion. The Gospel of John is even later than this, and the writer is referred to by scholars as "John the Alexandrian," to distinguish him from the apostle of that name. The writer was evidently trained in the Egyptian school and familiar with the occult lore of the Nile delta, and his gospel is a mixture of his own preconceptions with the traditions of the Nazarene. It was probably written A.D. 100 or thereabouts.

There was no reason why the Apostles should record the facts, since they all expected Jesus to come back in physical form and establish his kingdom on earth very shortly. The second advent was daily expected. For a time the Apostles stuck together in a little community, "having all things in common." That community soon broke up. It is the essential weakness of communism that though one thousand honest persons establish communism, one dishonest, selfish person can effectually destroy it, just as one discordant note can destroy a piece of harmonised music. Ananias and Sapphira quickly destroyed the early communists. The Apostles then drifted apart, and each aggregated round himself some few followers, to whom he conveyed the message and teaching of his Lord. They went their several ways to spread abroad the teachings dear to them.

Presently the original Apostles went the way of all flesh, and variations probably sprung up amongst the faithful in reciting the story of the Lord's life and teaching. Then would come the necessity of making records and choosing between varied versions.

WHY NOT BE HONEST ?

These appear to be the rough facts, and every parson who has had a modern theological training knows them; but, he asked, is there a single person present who has ever been told those facts from the pulpit ? He paused for an answer. Then why this policy of suppression? Some folk imagined that God would suffer unless they protected Him. The theologian feared that the truth would destroy their faith, but dishonesty destroyed it still more. The people can be trusted with the truth. We heard a lot about the gospel according to Matthew and Mark, but there was an inference that we had the gospel according to JESUS. He wished we had; unfortunately we have only the edited and revised oral traditions. Some of the Epistles were several years older than any of the Gospels.

WHERE DO WE STAND ?

So far he had been critical, but criticism was of little value unless it paved the way to reconstruction. Despite the blemishes which destroyed the literal text of the Testament, we must not forget that the oral tradition from which the records were collated must have had a foundation. Beneath the superficial mists there was an ocean of truth, if only we could disperse the haze. He believed it would be the province of Spiritualism to re-establish the basic facts of the life of Jesus. No one could even begin to understand the Bible until he was conversant with spirit communion, for the book was largely a record of psychical phenomena. Men did not in those days understand the modern theories of spirit communion, and yet strangely enough the records of the New Testament phenomena embody details which modern research show to be only explicable by psychic power exerted in the presence of a powerful medium. He wanted them to see Jesus with his eyes, and then to ask themselves whether he had displaced Him, or whether on the other hand he had found a higher place for Jesus in the economy of God's purpose than Christianity had ever given Him. Let them examine the records in the light of Spiritualistic research.

HIS BIRTH

Dismissing the vexed question of antecedent genealogy, we come to his birth. I do not accept the story of the Immaculate conception. Such stories were prevalent long before the birth of Jesus, both in India and Egypt. The idea commonly held that children were born in sin and that the act of procreation was a result of disobedience made it essential for these ancient peoples to postulate an alternative for their sacred avatars. The Hebrew conception that the children of men were born under the curse of God made it essential that the "Divine Being," or "Sinless One" should have a sinless birth, but such theories were not put forward till long after the crucifixion. The laws which govern human birth are part of the orderly course of nature, and are therefore the laws of God. They may be abused and thereby entail suffering, but to say that obedience to such laws constitutes sin is equal to saying that Eternal Wisdom is not wise. All laws of life must be used with reason and discretion—without license and without lust. When children are forthcoming as the result of true and honest affection between men and women of honour and responsibility they are born as divinely and as spiritually as God or nature makes possible. If Deity broke His own laws He would have no sense of justice if He punished lesser beings for doing so.

I think it is more honourable to God and more in accordance with the constancy of natural law to accept the natural laws of procreation as the cause of his birth. In my opinion if his birth was superhuman and miraculous no credit attaches to him for his wonderful life. Deity cannot sin ! And again, the theory of the miraculous conception would make Him different from us in his innate nature—in which case he is no example to us. A rose is not an "example" to a cabbage. Jesus was, I believe, the child of God's own laws even as you and I are. Much has been made of the fact of his nativity in a stable. Humility is a useful virtue, but it would appear that the only reason for the event happening in a stable was that "there was no room in the inn." Hence there was no choice on the part of the parents. There is no virtue in the place of one's birth, such events have taken place in tramcars and fields. We have two stories of visitors (1) the shepherds watching their flocks by night (not on December 25th, he hoped), who heard the herald angels. A very pretty story, which might well have a solid foundation, since the "angel's song" has been the same throughout the ages. "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." He called them all to witness that the Christian world had not heard that song as yet. (2) The "magi" or wise men from the East—students of the occult—who came to worship the new life promised by the star.

FOUR DREAMS.

The birth of Jesus had been smoothed by a dream which came to Joseph, without which he might have disclaimed the paternity of the child. The “magi” called upon Herod the King, and promised to report on the finding of the child, but being warned of God in a dream, they returned home by another way. The slaughter of the innocents was resolved on by Herod, and Joseph was again warned in a dream, and fled to Egypt, returning after Herod’s death had been similarly communicated to him. The whole birth story rests on four dreams, without which the child might never have lived. The modern Christian laughs at dreams and talks of heavy suppers and indigestion. He would confess that his own dreams were useless and chaotic wanderings, with little sense or meaning, but there were dreamers of different types—he had known several such, and related a case within his knowledge of an accurate forecast of unforeseen events being foretold in a dream. Joseph was probably a dreamer of the psychic type.

We then lose sight of the child, and later find a boy of twelve arguing with doctors in the Temple, and apparently holding his own. He had known young mediums who could do the same. What would happen if a boy of twelve were taken to the University today, and could hold his own in argument with the professors. They would be the first to recognise his ability, and would probably say, “This youngster has the makings of a clever man. We must take him in hand, and train him to bring his powers to their fulness.” They would see that he had a proper training, and we need have no surprise that Jesus disappeared at twelve years of age, and was no more seen until he was about thirty, when he returned in the fulness of his power. Where had he been ?

THE BAPTISM.

Possibly, in the schools at Alexandria, the centre of educational culture in those days, for on his return he presents himself to John for baptism—a decidedly and definitely Egyptian ceremony. The annual rising of the Nile in a hot country where there was no sanitation, had a twofold effect—it carried the filth into a state of solution and deposited it in slime upon the land, thus manuring it. The Nile flood was both a purification and a preparation for future harvests, and thus the symbol of regeneration. Jesus came to John with the recognition of his Egyptian training, but John knew he was coming, and recognised him at once; had even announced his coming. This is not strange, if we recognise the Egyptian ceremony of John. Both were probably trained in the same school, and John finished his course first. On entering on his work John knew of the greater pupil who was coming, and was able to tell of one who would soon come “whose shoe latchet I am unworthy to unloose.” At the baptism there came a light from heaven, and a voice said, “This is my beloved son.” Whose was the voice ? Does God speak Greek or Hebrew ? It apparently was a human voice, and was understood by the hearers. It was a voice that spoke in the language of the times.

He could understand a poetic allusion to the voice of God in the winds—in the roll of the breakers on the shore, or the voice of God in nature—but what voice was this ? Well, we hear nothing of Joseph after the return from Egypt. We hear of the mother and brothers of Jesus, but not a word of the father. Further, Joseph was getting on in life at his marriage over thirty years before. It does no violence to common sense to suppose that Joseph had died, and this was his voice speaking commendation of his son’s work. He (the speaker) had heard his father’s voice in similar manner, and the phenomenon was quite in accordance with Spiritualistic experience. He knew of no person in the universe who had a better right to be proud of a son than he who had been responsible for his birth. He believed it was the voice of Joseph expressing proud approval.

CHOOSING THE APOSTLES.

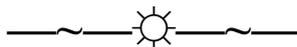
Then Jesus started on his mission, after a preparation lasting from twelve years of age until he was thirty—eighteen years. How many folks come to the Spiritualistic movement and grumble because they are not wonderful mediums in about twelve months ? Talking to a lady of this type recently, he elicited that she had been a Spiritualist eighteen months, and had developed no mediumship. He pointed her to the experience of the great Nazarene. Some folk did manifest psychic faculty in a few months, but when their phenomena was compared with past records, we could draw natural conclusions as to the value of a deep and lengthy development.

He believed, however, that a close study of the New Testament record in the light of modern psychic investigation would show that the mediumship of Jesus was not so great as had been imagined. That he was a medium may be true, but he was *considerably more than that*; he was the ADEPT WHO KNEW THE LAWS of psychic manifestation, and was able to use the psychic faculties of others as well as his own. He commenced by calling his Apostles. Matthew sat at the receipt of custom. He was a tax collector, a profession which is not admired to-day, but which in those days might well be called that of an extortioner. He paid a lump sum to the authorities, and extracted what he could (cent. per cent. if possible). A man with the money instinct. Yet at the bare words, "Matthew ! follow me," he left everything, and followed. This was a phenomenon in itself, and required explanation. Peter, too, busy with his fishing nets, obeyed the call without question, and the other ten, even to Judas, left everything at the call. What does it mean ? You may call it in modern terms "personality," "hypnotic suggestion," or what not. He believed that it was the power of the spirit world behind the caller. Modern mediums, too, have thrown up their positions to obey the call of the spirit world. But what guided Jesus in his wonderful choice ? It was not their education—they were a crude and ignorant crowd. It was not their social position, for that was negligible. Judging by the imaginary pictures which have been painted and drawn by artists, it would not appear that their personal beauty was a decisive factor, whilst their characters were very ordinary. One turned out to be a traitor, whilst the terminological inexactitudes of another were punctuated by the crowing of the cockerel. What was the reason for the choice of these men ? To his thinking, the deciding factor was their possession of certain psychic gifts.

A close reading of the New Testament in the light of present day psychic experience, convinces one that the Apostles constituted a well-balanced circle, containing many varied phases of mediumship, with those positive elements which are often the accompaniment of rough natures. The physical mediumship of Peter and the sympathetic, soft and mild nature of John are but two elements which stand out from the others.

To be continued in the next issue:

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF JESUS.

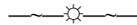


92nd Anniversary of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 7, July 2010, gave the first of several articles on Sir Arthur's 80th anniversary of his passing and, as we now approach July 2022, it brings us to the 92nd anniversary of the SNU's 'Honorary President-in-Spirit'; Pioneer republishes part of this tribute with some additional information.

My former colleague, Leslie Price, who is the founder editor of Psypioneer, noted:

On July 7th, 2010, it was 80 years since the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. To mark this occasion we are reprinting two tributes from the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) journal "Psychic Science".¹⁵ Interestingly, both tributes note ACD's Unitarian sympathies.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was "Promoted"—as *The Two Worlds* headline described it—around 8:30am on 7th July, 1930. He was, at his own request an hour earlier, helped out of bed and seated looking out of the windows of his home, 'Windlesham', with his immediate family around him: Jean and Adrian holding his hands and Lena Jean and Denis on either side of them. Unable to speak, he looked at each of them in turn, and then passed on to his next great adventure.

Four days later, he was buried in the Windlesham grounds close to the little garden hut where he had so often sat writing. It was a simple ceremony conducted by the Rev C Drayton Thomas, even though he had expressed a wish for there to be no "clerical interference". Some 300 were in attendance, the scene being more like a garden party than a funeral. A grave-board made of solid British oak bore his name, date of birth, and the epitaph: "Steel true, blade straight". Deliberately, significantly, and subtly, there was no date of death on the grave-board.

On Sunday 13th July, a Spiritualist memorial service was held at the Albert Hall with a reported attendance of 8,000—even though the seating capacity was only around 5,000, meaning standing room only for some 3,000. A chair had been left vacant for ACD on the stage; and the presiding medium, Estelle Roberts, said she saw his spirit form enter the auditorium and not only sit in the chair but provide her with a private message for Lady Conan Doyle.



Lady Conan Doyle passed on in 1940 and was buried next to ACD. But in 1955, the family sold Windlesham and their bodies were exhumed and taken for burial in the churchyard of the 13th century Norman church at Minstead, in the New Forest, not far

¹⁵ Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science – James Hewat McKenzie (founder of BCPS)".

from ACD's former country home, Bignell House.¹⁶ His headstone there bears the additional words "Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters".

A 'man of letters' indeed he was: not only a writer of fiction and a prolific writer on all manner and kinds of factual and spiritual matters but also he was a poet and song writer (he even finished an operetta – *Jane Annie: or The Good Conduct Prize*, 1893 – for James Barrie who had suffered a nervous breakdown). One of ACD's poems, *The Farewell*, seems particularly poignant here:

**The Poems of Arthur Conan Doyle
Collected Edition (1922)**

The Farewell

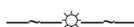
THE SOUL TO THE BODY:

SO SORRY, dear old friend, you have to die,
We've been such goodly partners, you and I,
Such comrades in our work, and mates at play,
We've lived together many a happy day.
It's only lately that you disappoint,
Sluggish in limb and clogged in every joint;
But that is not your fault, for grim old Time
Has blocked your tiny arteries with lime,
And cut your sap and left its withering trace
In every wrinkle of your dear old face.
No, faithful comrade, I have nought but praise;
If there were fault, 'twas mine. You walked the ways
On which I led you, be they low or high,
Thanks for all services! And so good-bye!

THE BODY TO THE SOUL:

GOOD-BYE, old friend! You've used me many a year,
And, as you say, I'm rather out of gear,
And quite disposed to rest. No doubt you'll find
Some other form congenial to your mind,
And moulded on this wreck you leave behind,
For that, they say, persists. May it be one
That serves you faithfully, as I have done.
Of course it's right our partnership to sever
Since I am old and you as young as ever.
I'll find some cancer cell or handy germ
To bring my waning forces to a term
And break the framework of the old machine.
Then down at Woking or at Golder's Green
They'll do the trick. And you, friend, from afar,
Will see the oaken chest or cinder jar,
And know that I have gone without a pang
Back to the elements from which I sprang.

Garth Willey.



¹⁶ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 8, No. 12: "Did Conan Doyle Haunt his Old Cottage? – Leslie Price".

A. C. D. AS I KNEW HIM

From *Psychic Science*:¹⁷



If brevity be the soul of wit, I can accord the palm to our friend and comrade, Arthur Conan Doyle, whose ability to put in a few words and in clear, choice language, the very essence of the situation, was both a pleasure and an instruction to those who were favoured to receive letters from him. I noticed this also at the College Council table during the years when he was Hon. President; he would listen carefully to a discussion, giving a guiding word now and again, and then by the time all had had their say, he had ready a clear, brief minute dealing with the situation, which seldom needed alteration. To be both brief and comprehensive was one of his many remarkable gifts.

Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle were two of the very earliest members of the College, and later became Life Members. I have a note dated February, 1920, three months before the opening of the College, in which he asks for membership, wishes the great venture success, and promises to interest others.

This he loyally did to the very end, for he found the College method of experiment particularly suited to the many who continually came to him for help.

I remember well, how delighted he was that he was able to introduce Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, now Research Officer of the S.P.R.,¹⁸ but at the time one of the editors of the "Scientific American," anonymously to the College as an "enquirer who may be useful." He saw him get more and more interested through sittings with John Sloan, Evan Powell, the Crewe Circle, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and others. The results then obtained made a case for investigation, such a case, that Mr. Bird, finding "Margery" on his return to the States, continued his quest to the present day with the most far-reaching effects to his nation.

On another occasion, a lady arrived with a letter from Sir Arthur, simply saying that if I could help the bearer it might be of service to the cause. A sitting was available with Mrs. Leonard, which bore unexpected fruits, for the bearer of the missive returned later to

¹⁷ *Psychic Science*—Quarterly Transactions, British College Psychic Science Vol. IX.—No. 3, October 1930, pages 214-16.

¹⁸ Re:—"Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, now Research Officer of the S.P.R.,..." Malcolm Bird was Research Officer of the American S.P.R. (ASPR), not the London-based S.P.R., as it may suggest. *Psypioneer Ed.*

tell me she was Miss Louise Owen, Lord Northcliffe's secretary, and through her came Hannen Swaffer, and all the help which has come to the movement through his association. Books might be written of the results of the unwearied efforts Sir Arthur made to introduce people to a reliable centre, so that they too might get first-hand evidence of the facts in which lay "the hope and future of the race."

But he had many sorrows as well as joys in his labours. No one strove harder than he for a just settlement in any dispute, and there were many in such a movement; he never provoked a storm, but no one was more prepared to fight to the bitter end if injustice was shown and had to be put right. Want of loyalty and gratitude among workers hit him hardly. "Most of the internal troubles come my way" he says in one note, "I love Spiritualism but I often loathe some spiritualists. "Well one can but slog on, but I wish sometimes I could avoid all personal intercourse save with a few chosen ones, and do my work with my pen from my study."

All engaged in public work can echo his words, and we honour him the more that to the very end he made himself available for everything good and bad that affected the Movement.

Was there ever a stouter champion of the "Margery" mediumship than he? In 1925, he felt while Dr. and Mrs. Crandon were in the throes of the contest with Houdini, the "renegade psychic," as he called the latter, that we ought to do something to show the brave couple in Boston that we were following and sympathising closely with their struggles. A few members of the College gladly collaborated with him in choosing and sending a silver loving cup "as a sign of sympathy with their long struggle for truth from a few friends in the British College of Psychic Science." But his was the quick sympathy to see the cheer that might come to them, as it did, from such a token.

I often had cause as Hon. Sec. to the College, to appreciate his direct friendship and loyalty. He was not one to listen to slanders without seeking to find the truth. He wrote on one occasion, "I am worried about something: came to see me and said that three mediums (mentioning their names) had all given as a reason for being no longer connected with the College, that they were turned down because they used the name of Christ or associated Christ with their powers."

"Of course, I am myself Unitarian, though with every reverence for the great Teacher, but I would naturally resent any penalising of a medium for his views or for his method of interpreting his own powers. But knowing your good sense, it is inconceivable to me that such a thing could occur. I am sure there has been some misunderstanding."

This is the letter of a real friend, and I had no difficulty in refuting the slanderous charge, two of the mediums involved sending me personal letters for Sir Arthur as to their respect for the College, and the help that had been given them; as to the other it was news to me that she had any particular religious views. He was fully satisfied, and replied that he had dealt severely with the person who had made the allegations. As I look over his many letters during the years I see many instances of the same noble loyalty, and realise that what I experienced was being shared out to hundreds of other leaders to assist them in their fight. "It is team work with all of us, and each has his place," he remarks again. Some of his critics, friendly and unfriendly, thought he was over loyal to the Cause, for he did not believe in bringing before the public every occasion for scandal, but that he was aware of it and deeply regretted it, was obvious. "I think our Movement needs a Sherlock Holmes quite as much as a propagandist at present," was his comment in discussing one incident.

His loyalty was accompanied by an open-handed generosity. He realised, more than most, that societies needed financial help, and the College shared liberally with other

centres out of the funds available from his lectures. "I send you a cheque for 50 guineas for the Fund. I wish it were more, but the need and poverty is great everywhere. For some years past I have never paid out less than £2,000 for the Cause, here or in America or abroad. The College will live in history, as will a good deal which is happening now." What might our work not be if more, out of their abundance, saw the need and offered such help ?

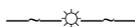
The influence of his two visits to the U.S.A. with Lady Doyle and his family was very deep. It is not too much to say that these gave a new standing to psychic study which is still felt. In my own visit, I met so many whose interest and effort had been notably quickened by a word from, or even by a look at, the great pioneers, as if a Pentecostal blessing had accompanied them.

A mass of correspondence from Sir Arthur to one who collaborated with him in preparing his two vol. "History of Spiritualism" came at one period into my hands, and bears witness again to an outstanding genius for friendship and loyalty and true comradeship, and is a witness also to the assiduity and labours he devoted to finding out the facts dealing with early Spiritualism in U.S.A. and in Britain. For two years the history was never out of his mind, in addition to his many other labours, public and private, for, as he says in notes embodied later in a letter to *The Times*:—

"Spiritualism has been the butt of the wits and the scorn of the highbrow, as its great prototype was before it, but even its warmest opponents must now admit after two generations of effort, that ridicule and misrepresentation are not going to put it down, and that it is destined not only to live but to grow. At present it is known to most men by its weaknesses, real or alleged, even as early Christianity was to the Romans, who saw nothing of the great realities behind, for man is always weaker than the truth which he may champion, but we who know what the effects of the facts have been upon our own minds and souls, know beyond all doubt that a very great thing has come into the world and that it is our duty, in season or out of season, to call the attention of our fellow mortals that they may share our knowledge."

Here is the key of the labours put into the "History of Spiritualism" as well as to all the gigantic efforts our leader, in conjunction with many others, put into a glorious ten years. 1920-30 will indeed live in the history of Spiritualism, and the names of Arthur and Jean Conan Doyle are emblazoned at the very head in the very heart of the Sacred Scroll which tells the story to those who will follow and bear the burden and heat of the coming days.

B. McK.
[Barbara McKenzie]



Further on page 217 is this valuable insight by Stanley De Brath:—¹⁹

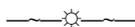
A.C.D., AS I KNEW HIM

As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's secretary in psychic matters, I know what an enormous mail he received from all over the world. A few of these letters were abusive and libellous, marked by him with a single note of exclamation (!), and not a few came from individuals who regarded their own trifling and commonplace experiences as heaven-sent mediumship, but there were, now and again, real human cries for help, or of gratitude for guidance received. They were passed on to me with perhaps a single word—"Help," "Foolish," "Yes," or "No." In every important case I sent him a copy of my answer, so that he might be fully conversant with my continued correspondence.

Personally we were excellent friends, and I greatly valued the trust he had in me not to let him down in any way. In face of his Unitarian views (which I myself fully share) it seemed to me a notable instance of his breadth of outlook that he should have perceived the supreme import to all human history of the three facts on which he laid stress (1) Hebrew Monotheism; (2) the Mission of Jesus; and (3) Modern Spiritualism. He rightly said that the rise and fall of Empires is nothing in comparison with these as causes of human history.

If anyone will consider calmly and without prejudice what the world must have been without the influence of the Bible and even the mutilated and institutional Christianity of Europe and America, he will see that the perception of facts so large that they mostly escape notice, is the chief characteristic of a really great mind. Most of us fasten on some little portion, such as the wars of the 16th century, or the character of some outstanding leader, and base our estimates on that. To see events in perspective and proportion is one of the elements of greatness.

STANLEY DE BRATH.



At the head of this article Leslie Price noted: "Interestingly, both tributes note ACD's Unitarian sympathies". Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5, published "Is Spiritualism Indebted to Christianity?" This article was published in "Psychic News", December 12th, 1936, page 9, by W.H. Evans. The paper's editor, Maurice Barbanell, noted:

Here is an article that will provoke controversy. The writer has given forty years of study to our philosophy. What do you think of his views?

A GREAT deal of the misunderstanding about what, I suppose, may be called plain Spiritualism and Christian Spiritualism arises from ignorance. As a matter of fact, what is called Spiritualism, "without affix, prefix, or suffix," as some proclaim it, is nothing more than Unitarian Christianity.

At the end of this article, it is continued with: "Sir Conan Doyle upon Spiritualism", where Doyle continues his view of Unitarianism.

¹⁹ De Brath was editor of *Psychic Science* from October 1926, until he resigned in April 1936.

The following issue of Psypioneer:

Addendum note by Garth Willey

In the introductory notes to last month's Psypioneer commemoration of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle I noted that the words "Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters" had been added to ACD's new headstone when he and Jean Conan Doyle's graves had been moved from the Windlesham grounds to the 13th century Norman church at Minstead.

Synchronistically, perhaps, by our 'friendly powers that be' except that it was a couple of weeks late albeit I had been offered it at least a month previously, I was lent a magazine containing what my helpful friend had termed "an interesting article about ACD."

The magazine was *This England*, Vol. 38, # 2, Summer 2005 and the article was titled *The Hampshire Home of Arthur Conan Doyle*, by Ann Priest. It provided an overview of Sir Arthur's early adulthood as a GP in Southsea, near Portsmouth, his return to Hampshire in 1925 when he bought his country retreat Bignell Wood on the outskirts of Minstead, the various locations in Hampshire which he utilised as scenes of action in *Sherlock Holmes* and various other short stories and novels,²⁰ and details of the eventual re-interment of ACD's body under a great oak tree in a quiet corner of a churchyard in Minstead in 1955.

The article records that the graveyard is at the Church of All Saints and the exact layout and the words on ACD's granite cross and tombstone are:

Steel True, Blade Straight
Arthur Conan Doyle
Knight
Patriot, Physician & Man of Letters.
22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930

Thus the date of death was also added as well as the extra words, and an ampersand was used rather than the word 'and' as I reported in the July edition of *Psypioneer*.

The *This England* article includes some lovely photos – but, rather than chase up permission to use them here, the name of the church soon revealed a website²¹ with photos and yet a little more information:

The re-interment took place in secrecy at 5:00a.m. on a July, 1955 morning, the name(s) of the occupant(s) of the grave only being revealed when an interim stone bearing the initials A.C.D. appeared. The Minstead Church website explains the reason for secrecy: All Saints Church is C of E and it had taken some negotiation to permit the burial; and then only on the proviso that it was on the far boundary of the church grounds.

The Minstead Church website also states that ACD was "buried in an upright position being a devoted spiritualist" in the garden of his Crowborough home; but that "The couple

²⁰ *The White Company*, 1891, and the *Sherlock Holmes* stories *Silver Blaze*, 1892, *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, 1892, and *His Last Bow*, 1917 – and the fact that *Sherlock Holmes* himself was described as 'a Hampshire man by birth' in *A Study in Scarlet*, 1887, and the character Dr John Watson was based on a Southsea acquaintance of ACD's and, indeed, Dr Watson was said to have spent time at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Netley whilst going through "the course prescribed for surgeons in the army".

²¹ This website appears to no longer exist but there is an array of various sites giving similar information, with various accounts of Sir Arthur being *buried in an upright position*. There are no indications of this being the case in the mainstream Spiritualist press of the day.

were laid, horizontally this time, to rest in a double grave early one morning in a double lead casket.”

Now, the Psypioneer team knows nothing of upright burial being common amongst “devoted spiritualists.” So it is probably a misinformed writer for the Minstead graveyard who glibly wrote of it. And irrespective of the proclivities of “devoted spiritualists,” whether it was even true of ACD’s Crowborough burial is open to conjecture. If any readers can shed any light on either of these matters then we’d be glad to hear from you.



And would you believe, an Addendum to this Addendum!

On August 1st, I bought via AbeBooks an ACD first edition from a UK bookseller, Arabella’s Beautiful Books in East Sussex. On learning that I was a Doylean, they said they had a few small bonus items that I might appreciate: “Yes, please!”

On receipt on 24th August imagine my pleasant surprise when one of the items was the appended photo of the Minstead gravestone! (Another was a beautiful copy of ACD’s handwritten Last Will; and a third was a copy of a 1924 cheque written by ACD payable to the LSA.) The gravestone is in relatively pristine condition – by contrast to the photo on the Minstead website – and the photo must have been taken soon after it was laid.

So called ‘inexplicable synchronicity’ indeed! I leave it to readers’ imagination and/or understanding of the power of those in the spirit world as to how firstly, the This England magazine and, secondly, these items came into my hands in such a timely – albeit a month late – manner!



A report from Maurice Barbanell, then editor of the “Two Worlds”, July 9th, 1955:

CONAN DOYLE EXHUMATION MAKES FRONT-PAGE NEWS

THE bodies of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his wife featured in a story that began almost as a Sherlock Holmes thriller last weekend. When, however, members of the family explained the reasons for the secret exhumation the mystery almost entirely fizzled out. The first account was front-page news in the “Daily Express” last Saturday, quickly followed by the London “Evening News,” which made the story the main feature on its front page.

Thereafter nearly every national and Sunday newspaper featured the happenings—a tribute to the magic of the Conan Doyle name.

“Dawn Mystery in Village” was one “Daily Express” headline. Its reporter said that the villagers of Crowborough, Sussex, were talking about “the last mystery of Sherlock Holmes” because of the secrecy surrounding the exhumation.

CLOAKED IN MYSTERY

With the headline, “Diggers Sworn to Secrecy,” the London “Evening News” said “No Sherlock Holmes adventure was ever cloaked in deeper mystery than that which wreathed the exhumation of his creator.” It added erroneously that the memorial garden with its two graves had become a shrine for Spiritualists.

This newspaper referred to Doyle’s Spiritualism and mentioned how throughout her long illness, which preceded her passing, Lady Doyle was comforted by spirit messages from her husband.

At the end of this account was given one of the reasons for the exhumation. The house, Windlesham, is to be sold. The family had decided that the bodies of Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle, together with the ashes of their son Denis, should be buried together in a new family grave.

The graves, however, do not form part of the ground which is to be sold. They are part of a cottage which was owned by Denis and is now the property of his widow, the former Princess Mdivani.

PERMANENT REST

Then the situation was complicated on Saturday night. A statement was issued by the senior partner of a firm of solicitors acting for the Conan Doyle estate.

“There is no mystery about it at all,” he said. “The bodies are being taken to a permanent resting place in the family vault.” As there is no family vault, his statement did not help to clarify matters. “I cannot say where the family vault is,” he added. Obviously he could not because it does not exist.

On Sunday, Jean, Sir Arthur’s daughter, a group-captain in the Women’s Royal Air Force, said that the bodies were exhumed because there were no grandchildren to take over the family house. It was her mother’s last wish that her grandchildren should live at Windlesham.

BODIES IN NEW FOREST

Adrian Conan Doyle who is living in Portugal, explained that he was having the bodies reinterred in Minstead churchyard in the heart of the New Forest. It was there that the Conan Doyles had a cottage. It was also there that Sir Arthur wrote "The White Company," which Adrian described as his father's most famous book, with the New Forest as a background.

The "Sunday Express" quoted him as saying that he was sure his father would like to rest there. Adrian, of course, must have been misreported. He knows the difference between his father and his father's earthly body.

In a later statement Jean Conan Doyle said that the family, for several years, had felt that it would be better to move their parents' bodies to some more permanent place. Eventually the garden where the bodies were buried would pass into other hands.

When I read the hullabaloo concerning the exhumation, my mind went back to the strange burial service of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his garden 25 years ago. This curiously enough, was conducted by a Church of England parson and was almost orthodox.

It was cold, formal, and contained no reference to the positive evidence of survival, the central propaganda to which Sir Arthur devoted so many years of his life.

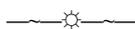
INSPIRED ORATION

When it was over and we were all leaving, feeling puzzled as to why Spiritualism's message had not been stressed, Lady Doyle stopped Ernest Oaten and asked if he would like to say a few words.

The famous Spiritualist closed his eyes for a few moments. The crowd gathered round him. Then, obviously inspired he delivered a panegyric of Conan Doyle which was a perfect epitome of his Spiritualist outlook and struck just the right note for a Spiritualist funeral.

The chagrin of the many Spiritualists who were present was transformed as a result of the inspired words that flowed from the semi-entranced Oaten.

M.B.



Given Barbanell's comments above "... my mind went back to the strange burial service of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his garden 25 years ago. This curiously enough, was conducted by a Church of England parson and was almost orthodox."

However, it should be noted:

The Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas, a Methodist minister, was a well-known psychical researcher. For example, in his capacity as a member of the Council of the S.P.R., he was involved in the testing of the direct-voice medium Leslie Flint, as published in *Pioneer*, Vol. 8, No. 6: "Leslie Flint Public Séances". Drayton Thomas was also an early sitter of Mrs Osbourne Leonard; he wrote many books and contributed to SPR's *Journal and Proceedings*. The Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas was not just a religious minister but championed survival through mediumship.



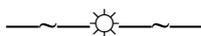
Many Spiritualists then and now would not necessarily agree with Barbanell's above comments about his funeral, i.e., "It was cold, formal, and contained no reference to the positive evidence of survival, the central propaganda to which Sir Arthur devoted so many years of his life."

Below is the coverage of the funeral under the editorship of Ernest Oaten as published in the Two Worlds, July 18th, 1930:

It was the happiest funeral we have ever attended.

A smiling company turned their eyes from earth to heaven, and offered their congratulations to a friend promoted to higher office.

THE FUNERAL



Glorious sunshine flooded the lawn at Windlesham on Friday when the mortal remains were laid in a flower-lined grave in the garden of his home. The scene was unique. We passed through an archway to the lawn, amidst a mass of rambler roses in the full glory of their summer gaiety. A well-mown lawn bordered by trees, in which the tinted copper beech, fir and birch mingled with the swaying roses whilst at the far end the quaint, many-gabled house, with its robe of greenery, made a pretty scene. The low level windows all open to the summer breeze, and the rustic porch looking over the Ashdown Forest, made a picture of pastoral loveliness. Some 300 people formed an irregular square, at one end of which were two trestles. Except that conversation was subdued, it might have been a home-coming or a garden party. There were few signs of mourning. A few of Sir Arthur's literary friends in the conventional frock suit and tall hat contrasted with the bulk of the company, who were in work-a-day garb, and the household servants in their working clothes.

Through the open window there faintly floated the strains of the piano, and there was a call for a few voices to lead the singing.

Then came the large polished oak coffin, which was reverently laid upon the trestles, surmounted by a massive wreath of red roses, and behind it Lady Doyle, smiling and self-contained. The gallant knight had taken another journey, but they would presently hear of his progress. Lady Doyle was quietly dressed in grey chiffon, and was accompanied by her son Malcolm in morning dress, and his sister Jean, also in grey, leading Sir Arthur's Airedale dog "Paddy." Behind them Miss Mary Doyle and Mr. Leckie (father-in-law), his daughter, and a few intimate friends including Major Wilson, private secretary to Sir Arthur who has been his intimate friend since 1885. Sir Arthur's eldest son, Dennis, was confined to bed with laryngitis, the result of a midnight motor rush for oxygen in the hours of difficulty. He listened to the service through an open window. The Rev. C. Drayton Thomas conducted a simple but impressive service.



It opened with the plaintive hymn, “Open My Eyes that I May See Glimpses of Truth.”

The Rev. C. C. Angel then read several passages of Scripture: Psalm 121; Ecc. Xii., 6 and 7; Mal. iii., 17; and I. Cor. xiii., 3 to 7.²²

The Rev. C. D. Thomas offered a prayer—a prayer of thankfulness for the gift of life, and for the opportunity of service, and for the consciousness that He who provided life here has provided life eternal; of thanks for angel guidance and guardianship, and for the comfort and strength received from on high.

The company joined in singing “God Be With You Till We meet Again.”

Mr. Thomas then read a statement from Lady Doyle: “We know that it is only the natural body that we are committing to the ground. The etheric body, or, as St. Paul said, the spiritual, is the exact duplicate, and lives on, and is able when the psychic conditions are attuned to the spiritual, even to show itself to earthly human eyes. The beloved one here will continue to keep in close touch with the family, although they may not have the power to see his presence. Only

²² **Light, July 10th, 1930:** “The service was simple. It was conducted by the Rev. Charles Drayton Thomas and the Rev. C. C. Angell, a relative of the family. The latter read passages from the Scriptures: Psalm CXXI (“I will lift up my eyes unto the hills”), Ecclesiastes XII (“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken”), Malachi III (“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels”), and I. Corinthians XIII (“Love suffereth long and is kind”), these being Sir Arthur’s favourite passages. Mr. Drayton Thomas offered an impressive impromptu prayer which he followed by reading a paper that was described as “an expression by Lady Conan Doyle and the whole family of their attitude towards death and the larger life,” it being also a heartfelt tribute to the splendid and unselfish life of Sir Arthur.

“The two well-known hymns, “Open my eyes” and “God be with you till we meet again,” were sung with fervour, and then, following the coffin, the great gathering reverently made its way to the grave beside the summer-house which Sir Arthur had used as an outdoor study.”

those who have that God given extra sight—clairvoyance—will be able actually to see his form, but he will, we are assured, find ways to make his presence known to them in their daily lives, and so hearten and guide them. Sir Arthur will continue to carry on the work of telling the world the truth.”

Mr. Thomas added a few impressive words: “He is not dead. God bless him for his beautiful and unselfish life; his courage, his championship of the cause of those suffering from injustice: his ready help to those in sorrow. He had no thought of self. Never did man more worthily follow in his Master’s footsteps.”

The company slowly followed the coffin through the garden, across a tennis court, over a rustic bridge, and through a tree-lined path to the little glade, a blaze of golden elder, where stood the hut in which he did so much literary work. The door of the hut was open, and within were visible the chair drawn up to the table, with pens, ink, pencil and pad, as though his work would be resumed next morning, and before the hut a flower-lined grave, with a few rugs spread to hide the bare earth. Around the glade wires been stretched from tree to tree, and over a hundred floral tributes hung therefrom. Amongst them was one from the Directors and readers of THE TWO WORLDS, bearing the inscription:

“With gratitude to a gallant knight, who lives to fight upon another field.”

It was a riot of colour—the sun shone, the birds sang, the hum of insects was borne on the air. The company stood smiling and triumphant; even the dog lay with his muzzle towards the open grave, as if expecting a caress.



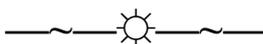
The Rev. C. D. Thomas, in a few pointed words, alluded to the fact that it was not usual to distinguish between body and soul. They were laying aside the worn-out garment which had been used by the soul of Sir Arthur. He will continue to be with us, with his intelligence and ability undimmed by death. “Sir Arthur, we are gathered here to show our respect and affection for you. To thank you for all you did for us, and when we remember your work in the world it

will encourage us to do what we can while it is yet day. God's blessing rest upon you, and go with you now and always." He concluded with a Benediction.

At Lady Doyle's request Mr. E. W. Oaten added a few words. They were there to do honour to a great man—the biggest man in mind and heart he had ever known. In the words of Marc Antony, "He was my friend." And now he has left us—but he is still ours. He will still labour for the cause he loved. God bless him for his work. A true gentleman, a faithful friend, an honest Spiritualist.

Lady Doyle kissed a red rose, and dropped it on the coffin, and the company slowly dispersed.

Never was a funeral like this one. Not a blind was drawn, not a tear was shed, not a voice choked. No one could doubt the sincerity of the family, and their confidence and conviction. An atmosphere of calm buoyancy pervaded the whole scene. One had the deep consciousness of the presence of a vast cloud of witnesses, and if (as we expect) Sir Arthur was present, he would know that the love and respect of the company was real and abundant. It was the happiest funeral we have ever attended. A smiling company turned their eyes from earth to heaven, and offered their congratulations to a friend promoted to higher office. The fervent wish in everyone's mind is that God will raise up as faithful a successor. Who will—who can—do his work as the ambassador of the angel world? ²³



²³ **At the end of the above article, it was noted:**

CROWDED CHURCHES—SPIRITUALIST churches throughout the country were crowded last Sunday evening, when large numbers attended to observe the one minute's silence in memory of Sir Arthur, which was observed everywhere. Speakers and demonstrators alike referred to Sir Arthur's great work for Spiritualism, and expressed their convictions that he would still influence the cause so dear to his heart from the Other side.

PUBLIC DEBATES:

Spiritualism – Christianity

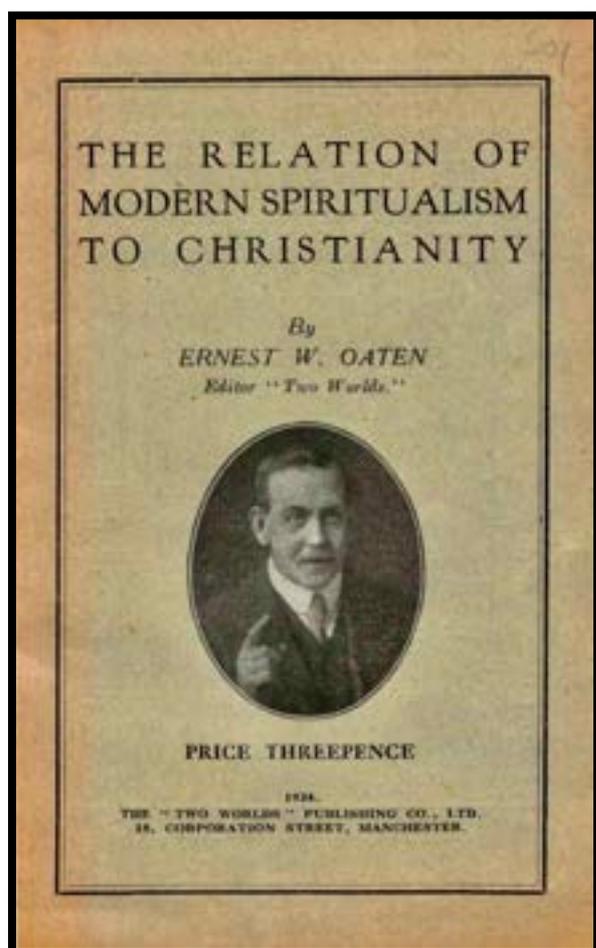
Concluded from the last issue:

The “Two Worlds” 1924 publication published below was kindly sent to Pioneer by historian Marc Demarest, who runs “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals” (IAPSOP): ²⁴

The Relation of Modern Spiritualism to Christianity.

An address delivered at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, Manchester, on Sunday, February 4th, 1923, by Ernest W. Oaten (Editor Two Worlds).

J. Cuming Walters, M.A., in the Chair.



THE MEDIUMSHIP OF JESUS.

He had often heard it stated that Jesus was the greatest medium who had ever lived, but such claim was, he feared, based upon the inference that he was super-excellent in every conceivable way. He (the speaker) did not agree that Jesus was the greatest of mediums—he was far more than that.

He was the master of psychic laws, who chose as his circle both those who had mediumship and those who provided the psychic elements for the best use of such gifts. He carried that circle of twelve with him, and he directed and used their powers as a great musician uses a grand organ. That he possessed mediumship is quite probable, but not all phases of mediumship. As a healer he appears to have been remarkable.

As a psychometrist his interview with the woman of Samaria shows that he was successful in some degree. He appears to have unearthed her past connections with four husbands and her loose alliance with her present choice. It is not an exceptional reading, but if Jesus returned to Manchester

and held a similar interview with a woman of that locality in the neighbouring park he would become liable to a fine or imprisonment for fortune-telling. (Laughter).

²⁴ “The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: <http://iapsop.com>”.

The site also archives the now defunct issues of *Psypioneer* (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the *Pioneer* issues.

No. No !! He did not want laughter. It was a grim fact that in a country supposedly Christian the very acts and practices of Jesus were condemned by law.²⁵ The great Nazarene had some clairvoyant power, as is evidenced by his ability to see the ass over against Bethany some seven miles away, and to even pronounce the words which would persuade the owner to release it. These gifts were good and useful, but when one comes to the recital of physical mediumship Peter occupies the centre of the picture. On the Mount of Transfiguration it was “Peter, and those that were with him were heavy with sleep.” How can the Christian explain that phenomenon ? Peter, James and John (not all the twelve, if you please) accompanied their Master to the Mount, and these were witnesses of the most astounding incident in their lives, the materialisation of Moses and Elias. One would think they would be all alive and intensely interested, but we are told “Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep.” None but a Spiritualist can understand it.

PETER—THE PHYSICAL MEDIUM.

Well ! he had been to materialising seances and had seen and handled the forms of men known to have died some years before, and in all those seances someone had been asleep (in trance or semi-trance). That person had been the medium, and the sleepiness of Peter, who is especially mentioned, is the indication of his mediumship, and that is corroborated by the fact that these physical phenomena accompanied Peter after the crucifixion. When there was levitation over water to be accomplished Peter was the one chosen, and after Calvary Peter was the central figure of the happenings at Pentecost. For Peter the prison gates were opened, etc.

They were sometimes told that the Old Testament was against the production of Spiritualistic phenomena. Moses had recorded certain prohibitions and penalties. The following is perhaps the strongest argument anent this point:—“And here I must . . . show that Christ broke the law of Moses regarding ‘seeking to spirits of the dead,’ so far as good spirits are concerned. This He did in a most emphatic manner. Let the reader especially note this, for it is the most remarkable case in the sacred history, because it demonstrates, and no doubt was planned by our Saviour to demonstrate, that express abrogation of the Mosaic law regarding the spirits of the dead. Christ abrogated this law by Himself seeking the spirit of Moses, the very promulgator of that law, and leading his disciples to do the same, Christ conducted his disciples, Peter, James and John, up into the Mount of Transfiguration, and introduced them to Moses and Elias.

Of Elias we need not speak, for having been translated, he might not strictly be called a spirit of the dead; but Moses, we are told, died in Mount Nebo, and that the Lord buried him in a valley there. Yet Christ went to seek this spirit, as if the case was studied literally. He might have commanded Moses to appear before Him in His own room, but no, as the law against seeking to the dead was to be abolished, He went to the Spirit of the great dead—to Moses, the very man who prohibited such an act by the law in question, and there, on the Mount, broke the law before his face; and by His example taught His disciples, the future proclaimers of His new law to the world, to do the same.” So says William Howitt in “History of the Supernatural.”

EVIDENCES OF MEDIUMSHIP.

To return to Jesus and the phases of mediumship shown by him. When he was questioned on one occasion he paused and wrote upon the ground, and then answered. Why did he write ? Because he had to get the answer before he gave it. Automatic writing was to-day very prevalent, and such men as Rev. Vale Owen and R. J. Lees got their messages from the spirit world by this means. Probably Jesus found it easier in the then conditions to get his answer by writing than by inspiration.

²⁵ Please see the Pioneer pdf booklet, “The Effect of the Vagrancy Act”, advertised elsewhere in this issue.

Or again, when on one occasion he was journeying to raise the sick, we are told “he groaned in spirit.” Why should a man groan when going to do an act of healing ? Your family doctor does not groan when he drives up to your house in his motor. Why the groaning ? None but a medium of great power knows the unbearable tension which supervenes when the power is concentrated on him before a powerful and successful seance. He (the speaker) had often experienced it—intense irritation as of carrying a great burden often makes one shiver and groan. He had heard such on many occasions. No one but a psychic understands the fulness of such an incident. It was the symbol and evidence of psychic power.

In the healing of the blind on one occasion “he spit upon the ground and made clay of the spittle” to anoint the eyes of a sufferer. This was an insanitary action which in the present day would make him liable to a fine of 40s. and costs. Would it not be easier to touch the eyes directly ? But probably Jesus knew his business best. Delayed and continuous action of the psychic force was probably necessary and the clay was loaded with this force so that the eyes could absorb it slowly. It was easier and quicker than holding the eyes for an hour, but it produced the same effect. Of course, the blind man found trouble. They had no newspaper reporters or psychical researchers in those days, but doubtless there were as many critics as to-day. We can imagine the man who was healed surrounded by them. “How did he do it ?” “What did it feel like ?” “Did he know you previously ?” “Will it be permanent ?” and a hundred other questions and innuendoes were voiced. Some of us might well imitate the erstwhile blind man who seemed to say, “a plague on you all.” “One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

THE MEANING OF GETHSEMANE.

But let us touch another side of the Master’s character. Come with me to Gethsemane and watch the psychometrist who has sensed the tragedy approaching him. Weak and exhausted by the work he had done, his psychic power was depleted, for it ebbs and flows from time to time. Sucked dry and left alone, the iron entered his great soul, and in agony of spirit the dread of impending events overwhelmed him. The psychic afflatus gone, the poor human soul found his weak and common humanity. Who can understand it ? The ship of his life had been carried on an ocean of psychic power directed by the winds of spirit presence and ministry, which were now for a time withdrawn, leaving him stranded on the sands of a common humanity. Pity, they say, is akin to love. It is here I love him best. To every soul comes its trial, to every medium his test. It had come to him. Ah ! the medium knows Gethsemane, it is the opposite pole to the Mount of Transfiguration, and you cannot have one without the other. The time when the psychic needs a friend is in the “dark garden.”

Stranded like a jelly-fish on the shore, the tide of psychic power having ebbed. Wearing by the stress of work done and “with coming events casting their shadows before,” he sees with psychic vision the tragic end of his earth labours. He realises the weakness of some of his closest followers. He knows how much remains to be done, and in agony of spirit with brow bedewed with perspiration, his weakness finds its outlet in the unheeded call: “Father ! if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me.” And then realising all he owes to those invisibles whose close presence has hitherto strengthened him, he adds: “Nevertheless not my will but thine be done.” It is the triumph of faith and confidence in the unseen as the result of past experiences. It is the triumph of the spirit over the body. What a breadth of vision came to Him in Gethsemane. With what exactness He divined it all. At the last supper he was able to indicate the coming of the end, and its horrible method ? “One of you shall betray me ?” “Who is it, Lord ?” “He that putteth his finger in the dish with me.” They all heard, and as he put his finger in the dish Judas’ hand followed. Doesn’t it sound silly ? They had just been warned. It is easy to avoid a movement of one’s hand. Why did Judas give himself away ? Because in the

presence of that powerful circle Judas had lost control of his hand, and was impelled to do so.

Lastly, at the crucifixion we are told that there came the sad words, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The ebbing tide of sensation had caused a cessation of all reaction to psychic stimulus. The bodily senses were too weak to record it, and he interpreted this as a withdrawal of the power of the higher world. It was merely the inability of a weakening physical body to respond to the spirit power.

THE GOLD BEHIND THE GILT.

Here is my sketch, abbreviated and incomplete, of the life of Jesus as I reconstruct it in the light of psychic investigation. Men tell me I despise Jesus of Nazareth. I will trust His judgment rather than theirs, but I think I know his life more intimately than any Christian can. There is no soul in history that I hold in higher esteem. I hate the false and misleading place in which he has been put by folks who are no more able to understand him than they are to read Egyptian hieroglyphics, but I love the man. I owe him much, and he has much to teach the world which the world can never learn until they take him from the pedestal of worship and idolatry, and walk with him in the garden.

It may be said that my reading of his life is "naturalistic." I am content that it should be so. There is nothing more divine than the laws which govern life. The God who laid down such laws made them sufficient for all His purposes and has no need to supersede them. The God who controls earthly processes is the same as He who controls the processes of spiritual life.

Despite the uncertainty of the text of Scripture, these ancients who knew nothing of psychic matters could never have made records so true to psychic laws and conditions. Hence, there must be some solidity behind it all, and the truth of his psychic life stands out beneath all the attempts to gild it beyond recognition.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA DID NOT END WITH CALVARY.

I want to carry you on a little farther, for there are vivid differences between the life of Jesus as I see it and the presentation of it by modern Christendom. I have alluded to the failure of the Apostles' attempt at communism, but for a time they clung together. I want you to note that the psychic phenomena continued after the crucifixion. It is the evidence that mediumship belonged to the Apostles. The transition of their Master did not cause the phenomena to cease. The physical mediumship of Peter was again in evidence at Pentecost, "the mighty rushing wind," typical of physical seances, and "cloven tongues as of fire which sat upon the heads of each of them." Similar spirit lights I have both seen and handled; I have held them when they have been as hard as glass to the touch, and they have gradually dissolved and melted through my fingers, still floating away as spirit lights (this was in the presence of the medium, Walter Jeune). "They began to speak in tongues." Another phenomenon I have witnessed. I have heard a working girl, who had no knowledge of any language but her own, maintain a sustained conversation in Italian with an Italian friend of mine. He was able to even locate the town to which the spirit belonged, by the provincial accent.

These phenomena have occurred in recent times as well as 2,000 years ago. And why not? "God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever," and His laws partake of His nature.

The story of Paul on the road to Damascus is a truly psychic story. He heard a voice and saw a light. There are two reports of the incident, and they are contradictory. One says that those who were with him saw the light but did not hear the voice; the other reverses the statement. I think both are probably true as relating to SOME of those

present. Those possessing incipient clairvoyance had that sense quickened by the mighty outpouring, and those who were inclined to clairaudience had their special function stimulated. The two recorders of the phenomenon probably got their facts from two different observers. The whole thing is easily understood by a Spiritualist.

EARLY CHRISTIAN SEANCES.

Then came the establishment of little companies of Christians in various centres bent on communion with their Lord. They met where they could, in one another's houses and, as persecution grew, in cellars, caves, groves, in fact wherever two or three could be gathered together. Paul's epistles throw much light on the conduct of circles. One shall speak at a time. The muttering gibberish which often characterises developing circles must be suppressed, and mediums must speak in understandable language. Such gibberish, often called a foreign language, is generally speaking no language at all, but a mass of meaningless sounds—an attempt to attain control of the medium's vocal organs. These are important sidelights on the procedure of the early Churches. These simple, earnest, faithful souls were familiar with the spirit circle—it was their form of meeting—and in the close bond thus established with the spirit world the cause grew strong. Gradually it spread: Greece, Rome and Northern Egypt, with the adjacent isles of the sea, were impregnated with its influence, and presently its strength enabled it to meet Greek philosophy and Egyptian symbology on equal terms. The testimony of history to the Christians of those early years is striking. Even those who opposed their ideas bear tribute to the honesty, morality, cleanliness, truthfulness, self-sacrifice and peacefulness of their lives. I would that so high a tribute to Christian believers could be written to-day. Alas ! it cannot.

CONSTANTINE—HYPOCRITE.

In the early part of the third century Constantine came to the Roman throne. He was a strong and determined character—a fine BRUTE. A cruel, vain, harsh, immoral brute, with all the frightfulness of the brute type, and with all its cunning. He found his empire torn asunder by religious disputations. Greeks and Egyptians, followers of Appolonius, and of the mythical gods, argued and strove with one another, whilst the humble piety of the early Christians caused them to take little part in the disputation. Constantine appears not to have had a thread of spirituality in the fabric of his nature. He, however, was a cunning and resolute statesman, and finding his empire torn into sections by opposing religious interests, so that its stability was threatened, he devised means to meet the case. He evidently noted the steady growth of the young Christian Church and the high character of its followers, and made a *profession* of conversion. Such conversion appears to have wrought no change in his character—he was as atrocious a fiend afterwards as he was before. His act was purely a diplomatic one in the interests of the peace of his realm.

From the moment of his professed conversion he moulded and manipulated the young church as clay in the hands of the potter. State recognition caused the early Christians to lose their heads. Their cause had become “popular.” The same danger threatens Spiritualism to-day—there are ever those who will sacrifice truth for popular favour.

By direction of Constantine a series of Counsels were called to codify and define what was meant by Christianity, and the chief reason for such counsels appears to have been a desire on the part of the king to establish a polyglot and eclectic system which should embrace *all* the forms of religious thought extant in his empire. The pure and simple PRACTICE of the early Christians was polluted and diluted with the myths, symbols and ceremonies of other systems, and a sacerdotal church set up which embraced all sects. The Egyptians and Greeks had their parthenon of Gods, and to meet them Jesus of Nazareth must not only be made a god, but “Very God of Very Gods.” No longer the simple peasant teacher, he must transcend all others in his divine nature (not merely in his teaching and practice).

THE TRINITY A HEATHEN MYTH.

The Trinity appears to have been incorporated to please the Egyptians who had their triad embodied in Osiris, Isis and Horus. This gave rise to what is known as the great Arian heresy. Bishop Arius refused to sell his principles for royal favour, and the Church split and has remained split into Greek and Roman ever since, The Trinity was no part of the faith of the early Christians. They had probably never heard of it except as one of the Egyptian follies. In order to support this doctrine the birth of Jesus had to become complicated with the myth of virgin birth and contradictory stories of “the magi” and the shepherds.

In his “Ancient Egypt” Gerald Massey, who regarded this as his finest work, tells us the outline of a story sculptured on the walls of an Egyptian Temple as follows:—

“The story of the Annunciation, the miraculous conception (or incarnation), the birth and the adoration of the Messianic infant had already been engraved in stone and represented in four consecutive scenes upon the innermost walls of the holy of holies (The Meshken) in the Temple of Luxor (which was built up by Amen-hotep III) about 1700 B.C., or some seventeen centuries before the events depicted are commonly supposed to have taken place. In these scenes the maiden queen, Mut-em-Ua, the mother of Amen-hotep, her child, impersonates the virgin-mother who conceived and brought forth without the fatherhood. The first scene on the left hand shows the God Taht as divine word or logos, in the act of hailing the virgin queen and announcing to her that she is to give birth to the coming son (that is, to bring forth the royal Repa in the character of Aten, the divine heir). In the second scene the ram-headed god Kneph, in conjunction with Hathor, gives life to her. This is the Holy Ghost or Spirit that causes conception, Kneph being the spirit by nature and by name. Impregnation and conception are apparent in the virgin’s fuller form. Next the mother is seated on the midwife’s stool, and the child is supported in the hands of one of the nurses. The fourth scene is that of the Adoration. Here the infant is enthroned, receiving homage from the gods and gifts from men. Behind the deity, who represents the holy spirit, on the right three men are kneeling offering gifts with the right hand and life with the left. The child thus announced, incarnated, born and worshipped was the Pharaonic representative of the Atensun or child-Christ of the Aten cult, the miraculous conception of the ever virgin mother imaged by. Mut-em-Ua.”

The story dates over 1,700 years before the birth of Jesus, and was evidently adopted to win Egyptian opinion. The devil was adopted from Persian beliefs, Ahriman, the opponent of Good.

TAMPERING WITH THE SCRIPTURES.

Times and seasons, Christmas, Easter, etc., were amalgamated into the scheme to win the adhesion of other faiths. The vestments, sacramental vessels, etc., of Egypt and Greece, were fully drawn on, whilst I believe it true that the life of Appolonius of Tyana was incorporated into that of Jesus, and the two lives made one. Appolonius was probably the greatest traveller of his time, and had roamed through the world’s seats of learning, and it is no surprise to find the “golden rule” of Confucius and many of the teachings and beliefs of India and Persia incorporated into those of the new Church.

Even the sacred records were tampered with, often we believe deliberately, in order to bolster up the new scheme. There is one text in the authorised version of the New Testament which reads: “There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.” It has been the sheet anchor of the Trinitarian, but it has been omitted from the Revised version. Why ? Because it had no right there. It was a late interpolation inserted to bolster up the doctrine of the Trinity. From the day of Constantine all Scripture is suspect. Pre-Constantinian records, if sometimes inaccurate owing to the oral tradition from which they were compiled, are at

least honest, but once the Church became a State institution statecraft and kingcraft supplanted truth, and “the faith” was a mere tool for the strengthening of both.

These remarks may startle a general audience, but there is nothing I have said that is not known to the student. Not a word of it is even new. Constantine became a Christian and the priest sold the pass. THE CHRISTIANITY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH DIED JUST THEN, AND THE WORLD HAS BEEN WITHOUT IT EVER SINCE. That’s the cause of all our troubles. The teaching of the spirit world was polluted for material ends.

BACK TO THE FOUNT OF ALL INSPIRATION.

Modern Spiritualism is an attempt at the call of the spirit world to get back to the simple faith and practice of the early Church. We can probably improve upon its methods. It would be hard to improve upon the lives of its early adherents, for their power lay in their close and conscious communion with spirit people. We want, I say, to get back to the first basis of Christianity before kingcraft prostituted it to further its own ends, if we would understand the spirit teaching of the time of Jesus.

I do not like the term Christian applied to me, only because by common custom it applies to the system of Constantine rather than to the system of Jesus. “He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he shall do, and greater works than these shall he do.” Is the Christian Church doing them ? Are these “signs that shall follow those who believe” characteristic of Modern Christianity ? No ! no ! It is a dumb pretence made in a sacred name. I believe that if the MSS of the Vatican could be opened to the world of modern scholarship the whole artificial structure would fall like a house of cards, for the priests know the the truth and suppress it.

Let Christianity get back to the simple saintly life of Jesus and the early Church. There is its true salvation. Christianity will then rest on the same foundations as Spiritualism, viz: spirit teaching reinforced by phenomena produced through mediumship. Cut the creeds, dogmas and sacerdotalism that have overlaid the simple truth. Exorcise the demons of interest and power which have been wielded by vested interests. Let it abolish the theatrical stage trappings which hide the real players and peer behind the scenes, and it will find that religion consists in a life rather than a profession. The function and purpose of Modern Spiritualism is to take Christianity back to its founder and enable it to forget its wanderings in the wilderness.

Modern Spiritualism has been called into being to do this, and with the mighty power of the spirit world behind it, neither priests nor prelates, principalities nor powers, can prevent its accomplishment as long as Spiritualists are true to the spirit world, for the spirit message is ever the same, and the spirit world is always true to itself.

It should be noted that at the time of the above debate Oaten was SNU President – the points made are in his own words and opinion.

