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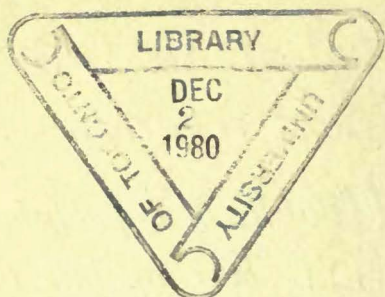
'Raymond': a Rejoinder

*Questioning the validity of cer-
tain evidence and of Sir Oliver
Lodge's conclusions regarding it*

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RAYMOND: A REJOINDER

THE personal note which, in the nature of the case, dominates *Raymond or Life and Death* may seem to render the critic's task an invidious one and to place adverse comment under a certain disadvantage. But it is not so. In so far as the inquiry, of which this volume is the simple and daring vehicle, is a philosophical one there need, from the point of view of criticism, be no personal feeling of any kind; in so far as it is not, nothing can exceed the sincerity and depth of feeling with which all sympathetic and patriotic souls must condole with the Author, Sir Oliver Lodge, on the loss of his hero son. For in these days of Armageddon we on the side of the righteous Powers are brought into nearer and more intimate relations than has hitherto been conceivable. In this struggle all our volunteers are heroes.

But as, from the inherent character of the book, some reference to the Author in his private capacities seems to be inevitably called for, let us clear off this account at the outset,



before proceeding with a discussion which, to bear any fruit in the dry light of reason, must be entirely impersonal. Let us say at once that it is conducted in the most amiable spirit imaginable. There is much tenderness in the abstention from all sentiment that does not spring directly from the heart; there is at times great eloquence in the mere avoidance of rhetoric; there is something that reminds one strongly of genius in the simplicity with which every subject, small or great, approaches a great and candid mind. 'It is truly from a sense of duty,' says the Author, 'that in so personal a matter I lay myself open to harsh and perhaps cynical criticism.' The fear is rather in an opposite direction: lest the public should be biassed in their acceptance of what he evidently considers 'a scientific demonstration of human survival' by the fact of his pre-eminence as an authority in what are accounted the more legitimate regions of science. He means for the best; but there is something almost cruel in the idea that on such a momentous question, and in view of the anguish which must attract so many to a study of this kind, they should find an unjustified solace upon the prestige of one who has so good a right to speak *ex cathedrâ* on so many other problems. In any case he has no reason to anticipate harsh or cynical criticism from any

who are capable of understanding his moral or his mental attitude. In regard to the latter, as illustrating phases of the intellect which is directing this investigation, perhaps I may be allowed to quote the following: 'I have learned to regard the universe as a concrete and full-bodied reality, with parts accessible and intelligible to us, *all of it capable of being understood and investigated by the human mind*, not as an abstraction or dream-like entity whose appearances are deceptive.' A little further on he says: 'We must admit that the whole truth about the simplest thing is assuredly beyond us; the Thing-in-itself is related to the whole universe, and *in its fullness is incomprehensible*.' And again, speaking of the Christian idea of God: 'The Christian revelation is clear enough and true enough if our eyes are open, and if we care to read and accept the simple record which, *whatever its historical value*, is all that has been handed down to us.' A legend, a story, a human phantasy without any historical value constitutes clear revelation. I am not ridiculing this view—there may be something of significance and importance in it—but it certainly is a surprising one. To finish with these personal aspects, I must say I think the chapter on the 'Resurrection of the Body' one of the most fanciful things I ever lighted upon. From a remark he makes

the Author evidently considers it a little fanciful. It is so much so—with such a strange assured air of truth—that it might almost be said to enter the domain of true poetry. To criticise would be to desecrate it. Yet it should be read seriously by all who would appreciate the gentle and kindly feeling that inspires this effort to reconcile science with theology.

It seems strange and somewhat deplorable that the Author should have to devote so much time to justifying the claims of mediumship and asserting the truth of the phenomena he is investigating. There is something ludicrous in the supposition that gifts attaching to a *savant* should be required to eliminate any fallacy, through fraud unconscious or otherwise, in the mere facts under consideration. Conceive how incomparably greater must have been the powers of analysis and truth-sifting adequate to the difficulties he has mastered as a physicist! But it is not, of course, the difficulty of the task which has embarrassed him; it lay in overcoming the evasiveness of those who will not see what is before their eyes. The prejudices of the learned, unless they happen to be philosophers, is a matter of psychology, or perhaps largely—if we could get at the whole truth—of physiology. It may be that a certain arrangement of brain cells is set up in the course of their studies which no extraneous idea can up-

set. There is apparently no room in their cerebral economy for keeping any tracts or spaces open for new impressions. At any rate the prejudice of orthodox science in this matter has been almost incredible. Evidently the readiest way of conquering it is the employment of new terms: the wise and prudent won't look at 'mesmerism,' for instance, but 'hypnotism' doesn't seem so bad. The word 'telepathy' has been a wonderful help. By such devices—originated as like as not by themselves—the majority of the scientific have been brought over to acknowledge, with a certain reserve and lurking distrust, the plain facts of the case. But there are still, we are told, many, scientific and otherwise, who insist on being blind. I can remember in the early days of what is called Spiritualism—a most objectionable and question-begging term—the peculiar form of sneer with which practically every representative of science greeted any approach to the subject. If by any chance one here and there could be induced to attend a *séance*, he did so in a most defensive and prohibitive frame of mind, and, from what we know now, must have been a great hindrance to its success. In those days a fraud discovered proved the case for good and all in the negative; absence of discovery inferred a deeper fraud. It was something like the trial of witches. The unfortunate creature

was thrown into deep water to see whether she would sink or swim. If she lost her life in the process she was found to be innocent; if she was found guilty she was put to death. For my part, after following the subject pretty closely for something like half a century, I believe the inference of fraud has been grossly exaggerated. It was from the first the natural, not to say vulgar, evasion by which self-satisfied bigotry cut the knot it would not even attempt to untie. It was such an easy explanation, and threw such well deserved contempt on people who pretended to demand impartial inquiry! Things are better now, but not so well as they might be—the Author, who has reason to know, makes this clear enough. But I fancy he over-rates his difficulties. In addressing the public he ought to regard that portion of it which cannot, or will not, look facts in the face, with supreme indifference. In any case we have in the Author a guarantee sufficient to satisfy all reasonable demands that no imposture whatever has crept into the scope of his experiments.

In reviewing the evidences by which the Author has proved to himself the survival after death of his son Raymond, we should never lose sight of the strange tricks which the human mind has played on itself and others according to the observation of recent times. We have to remember ‘double consciousness,’ ‘double

personality,' whereby the individual finds himself successively in two intellectual and moral hemispheres, with what underlying springs of communication, the one with the other, we have no means of ascertaining. Then there is 'telepathy,' the mental alliance between two or, for what we know, many persons, to an extent absolutely unknown. And we have 'subliminal consciousness,' a knowledge, raised to a quite indefinite power, of things which our ordinary faculties are impotent to teach us. In fact, I think M. Bergson would go so far as to say that we are potentially omniscient; the brain acting, not as an enlightening agent, but as an occluding obstruction, a physical screen through which, ordinarily, only such rays of informing consciousness are able to pierce as fit us for physical life. These considerations, I say, should lend their weight to our mental attitude in approaching this subject.

And what is the Author's own mental attitude? He thinks that 'a scientific demonstration of human survival' may emerge from his experiments. And what does this demonstration amount to? No more nor less than 'a hypothesis [of continued existence] which has been gradually forced upon the author—as upon many other persons—by the stringent coercion of definite experience.' 'I wish,' he says, 'to use the term "Life" to signify the

vivifying principle which animates matter.' Life, therefore, as indeed he afterwards declares, 'is to us an abstraction.' But when, in the usual sense, a man dies, he *takes it for granted* that this life, this *abstraction*, goes on animating the man's surviving personality under *conditions* which can be but a matter of speculation. For see what follows: 'We change our state at death and enter a region of—what? Of Ether, I *think*, [my own italics] and still more myriad existence; a region in which communion is more akin to what we here call telepathy, and where intercourse is not conducted by the accustomed indirect physical processes; but a region in which beauty and knowledge are as vivid as they are here: a region in which progress is possible, and in which "admiration, hope, and love" are even more real and dominant.' All this he *thinks*. But how dangerous (may I say, though it is anticipating?) are such speculations when they are made to fit in with phenomena of the nature of which we are quite ignorant, as a demonstration of survival! And a little later he is even more explicit. He asserts: 'There is no extinction, and the change called death is the entrance to a new condition of existence—what may be called a new life.' Meaning the new life of the surviving personality. He goes on: 'Yet life [to us an abstraction] itself is con-

tinuous, and the conditions of the whole of existence remain precisely as before. Circumstances have changed for the individual, but only in the sense that he is now aware of a different group of facts.' This, I say, is taking human survival for granted; and if it is legitimate to do so one scarcely sees the necessity for demonstration. But this will be appraised on its own merits in the course of our review.

Throughout the long detail of 'evidential' occurrence and cumulative corroboration dealt with in the second part of the book there is one feature that weighs upon me with ever increasing insistence. Judging from the Author's personality—and it is very ingenuously revealed—one feels that the future life, as demonstrated, is exactly what he would expect and have it to be. The whole thing seems to be a working out of his own conception. The case is far too well proved to himself to leave no doubt in the minds of others. To the philosophical attitude nothing is easily convincing. For example: Suppose a spirit, or whatever you like to call it—the exact bodily similitude of a dead person—were to appear before a living one, say a son before a father, and were to say in effect: 'It is all as you believed and hoped; there is no death in the conventional sense; what is called death is merely "a passing over" to other conditions between which and your conditions



intelligible relations can be established. I am permitted to come to you in plain earthly form and tell you this.' Suppose, alternatively, the same kind of phantom to appear to another father and say: 'It is quite different from what you imagine; there are many things in the future life that would shock your conceptions because you cannot understand them. Between you and me is a great gulf fixed which can never be traversed; I am not justified in giving you any comfort; I am not justified in saying anything to dishearten you; the simple truth is that we are on different planes of being, between which, so far as I know, there can be no communication of understanding or of feeling. All I can say is that my true personality is not dead; but I cannot prove this to you in terms of earthly life. I ask you to believe it. So far as earth is concerned I *am* dead, but so far as another plane that is distinct from the physical is concerned I am living.' Assuming the two fathers to be equally philosophical, which of these two statements would be the more convincing? In the first, would not the father think that the appearance was only too like the reflection of his own mind? While in the second the father might justly feel that though the apparition could not constitute the foundation of any scientific proof, it did at least come from some

extraneous source of information, and that the uncompromising mystery in which this information was shrouded might with some likelihood afford presumption, even if it were no proof, of its truth.

As regards the series of sittings with a medium, table sittings, and instances of automatic writing, I do not think it is necessary to particularise, except in two cases, for the following reasons. So far as the facts go they are so scientifically arranged and so admirably presented to the reader that there is little or nothing to criticise. Also, taken altogether, they form a complete and invariable proof of what I maintain to be the sole practical outcome of this inquiry—the unexplored, unknown and limitless faculties of the human mind. It is shown again and again that mind communicates, certainly with mind and possibly with matter, in a way which is incomprehensible to our normal senses and capacity of reasoning. My contention is that in the presence of this unknown extension of mental faculties any test of human survival by the display of knowledge and identity on the part of a dead person is impossible. The knowledge and characteristics may come from powers exerted by the medium to which, as they are to us in any case incomprehensible, we have no justification in setting any limit. The Author's contention,

on the other hand, has the double defect of an *à priori* reasoning. He postulates a condition the nature of which is unknown, and in building up evidence to adjust itself to the postulate he relies on factors the nature of which is unknown and, in all human probability (since they are psychological factors), never can be known. I for one, therefore, disagree entirely with this theory of accumulative evidence as proof of human survival. Accumulation of evidence may convince a jury; but it is precisely because actual proof is impossible that there is any necessity for juries. The whole thing, in the one case as in the other, resolves itself into matter of opinion. And *that*, in the case of survival, there always was.

There is another point suggested by this revelation of the illimitable potentialities apparently resident in the human mind. How about the desires and imaginations? May not they too be illimitable in their activities and effects? What right have we, in view of sheer incomprehensibilities where the mind is in question, to place any boundaries to the illusions into which our wish-fathered thoughts may carry us? We are, when sitting at one of these medium-conducted functions, in the presence of an abnormal person who sets the ordinary restrictions of knowledge at defiance and is immune at least in some degree from

the restraints of time and space. How do we know that we too are not under the spell of, and furthering, the subtle agency that is at work? May we not unconsciously help to give form to the image of our desires, and clothe them with the characteristics which we ourselves have initiated? Both medium and inquirers, for aught we know, may be, subliminally, in a conspiracy to present what has been suggested by them in their normal condition in a shape moulded by their desires. This is mere conjecture which we are not in a position to substantiate. But so, I maintain, is the Author's interpretation of the supposed personality that figures in the presentment.

Returning to the detail of experiments, it may be suitable at this point to describe—or recapitulate—the manner in which these sittings are conducted. The medium goes into a state of trance. Then she (for it is more generally a lady) speaks, in another voice and in a style quite foreign to her normal character, through what is called her 'control' or, as some consider it, her 'secondary personality.' Be this as it may, the entity answers questions and describes events, sometimes speaking of the individual who has 'passed over' and is being inquired after in the third person ('He says this—he tells me that,' &c.), sometimes speaking in the first person as if the words

actually came from the deceased. There are usually two or more inquirers present, and someone devotes himself to taking notes. Let us take—what is perhaps the most astonishing incident as a presentment of incontrovertible fact—the case of the group photograph. The medium states particulars of a photograph of Raymond taken at the Front shortly before his death—particulars which never could have been known to her by any ordinary normal means, nor to the Author's family, nor to anyone concerned in the inquiry. The photograph is afterwards seen by the Author and others, and is in all its details exactly what the medium (through her 'control') pronounced it to be. And what greatly adds to the value of the evidence from the Author's point of view, another medium has referred unmistakably to this photograph at a sitting which took place when it had not been developed from the negative and when the negative had not been sent to England. 'To base so momentous a conclusion as a scientific demonstration of human survival on any single instance, if it were not sustained on all sides by a great consensus of similar evidence, would doubtless be unwise.' So says the Author. But this is one of the best instances he can produce, and, sustained as he believes it to be by a great consensus of evidence, he bases his conclusion upon it. He

places, as I consider unjustifiably, a limit to the supranormal knowledge of the medium. He would, I gather, admit that, were all the particulars of the photograph within the knowledge of those sitting with the medium, her statement of them would not be 'evidential.' But when it comes to the relation of circumstances so far removed from the ordinary channels of human perception, he cannot escape the conclusion that it is Raymond himself who is, as he purports to be through the spoken words of the 'control,' the informing agent, and that therefore Raymond is in a state of continued existence. This, I think, is a fair way of putting the Author's case. The rejoinder is that if the medium can do one apparently miraculous thing she can, so far as we can judge, do another; that if she can read one mind we have no reason for denying that she can read others; that if she can read the minds of people in contiguity to her and known to her we are not in a position to say that she cannot read minds at a distance and unknown; that the burden of proof as to survival lies upon him who would prove it; that as we are confronted in any case with inexplicable phenomena we cannot logically assert that any one of them, or series of them, is explicable in any particular way; that everything which the medium reveals, how astonishing soever,

emanates, for anything we know positively to the contrary, from herself and not from an independent agent.

I do not think that the 'Faunus' message, startling as it appears at first view, is quite so wonderful as that relating to the group photograph. But as it is a more complicated affair it seems necessary to examine it with some precision. On 8th August, 1915, thirty-seven days before Raymond's death, a Miss Robbins has a sitting with Mrs. Piper (who is intimately known to the Author) in America. An entity, writing through the medium's hand and styling himself 'Richard Hodgson,' having dealt with matters of personal interest to the former lady, speaks, or rather writes, abruptly thus :

R.H. : Now Lodge, while we are not here as of old, *i.e.* not quite, we are here enough to take and give messages.

Myers says you take the part of the poet, and he will act as Faunus. FAUNUS.

Miss R. : Faunus?

R.H. : Yes. Myers. *Protect.* He will understand. What have you to say, Lodge? Good work. Ask Verrall, she will also understand Arthur says so. [Arthur is taken to mean Dr. Arthur W. Verrall (deceased).]

Miss R. : Do you mean Arthur Tennyson? [An absurd mistake and confusion on the part of Miss R.]

R.H. : No. Myers knows. So does You get mixed (to Miss R.), but Myers is straight about Poet and Faunus.

The record of this sitting is sent to the Author. He applies to Mrs. Verrall for elucidation. She replies (8th September, 1915) referring to and explaining the allusion to Faunus in Horace's Ode (II, xvii, 27-30):

' Me truncus illapsus cerebro
Sustulerat, nisi *Faunus* ictum
Dextra levasset, Mercurialium
Custos virorum.'

Scholars appear to be agreed that 'levasset' means 'lightened' or 'weakened' (the blow), not 'warded it off.' Here then we have a clear intimation of the blow to the Author which is impending, of the weakening of the blow, and of the protection of an entity purporting to be his old friend Myers. The news of Raymond's death reached the Author on 17th September, 1915. On 27th September the Author has a sitting with the medium, Mrs. Leonard, in London. He gets, as he believes, some information as to the condition of his son under changed surroundings after his earthly death, and, as a part of this, a reference to the 'Faunus' message. In subsequent sittings we find reference to 'Myers' and his friendliness towards the Author and his son. And there is, I imagine, ample justification for the Author's summarising comment on the whole episode: 'It will be understood, I hope, that the above extracts from sittings have been re-

produced here in order to show that, if we take the incidents on their face value, Myers had redeemed his "Faunus" promise, and had lightened the blow by looking after and helping my son "on the other side." That is certainly the interpretation on face value and from the Author's standpoint. But now let us consider one or two circumstances. Mrs. Piper is an extraordinary person, with extraordinary powers even as a medium among mediums. She has been for years on intimate terms with the Author. Their minds have been in close communion. Mrs. Piper when not in her trance condition does not recognise the allusion to Horace's Ode. Neither does the Author. But the lady in her trance condition has frequent communications with an entity purporting to be 'Myers'; and the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, the well-known author and expert in Psychical Research, was both friend and colleague of the Author. And it is the general wish of Mrs. Piper and the Author that this entity should supply 'tests' of identity with the deceased Mr. Myers.

If the mind of some living person is essential as a vehicle of communication with the medium there would be any number of minds (some, it may be, as I gather was Mrs. Verrall's, in living relationship with Mrs. Piper's) to which the 'Faunus' allusion would be apparent, and

with which Mrs. Piper, in her trance condition, might be in communication. She might indeed in this condition, for all we know, see through the whole thing, and be initiating the device of what would, to her normal faculties, appear as a 'test.' Perhaps it would look more plausible if the 'test' message did not come through 'Myers' himself, and therefore it is made to come through another entity—'Richard Hodgson.' But it is not necessary to presuppose some other informing mind. Clairvoyants have discovered a knowledge of whole languages unknown to them in their normal state; and to Mrs. Piper, with very remarkable powers even for a clairvoyant, a passage in Horace with its full significance and applicability might be conceived, without any stretch of imagination, to be easily accessible. And though it looks like it at first sight, the 'Faunus' message is not necessarily prophetic of Raymond's death. It would have had a true and rather profound significance if he had not been killed; though the intervention of Faunus would in that case have to be interpreted rather differently—as that of the protector in general of poets and their belongings, not as the protector of Horace on the occasion alluded to in the Ode. In any case he was, at the time of the delivery of the message, in great danger amidst the deadly fighting that

was going on at Ypres. Mrs. Piper had for many years entered into close communication with the Author's mind. The sitting took place when the Author was in a state of anxiety, as parents of all soldiers at Ypres were, about the fate of his son.

In this account of the 'Faunus' message reference has been made to the thread of a correspondence between the living and dead through the agency of one medium being taken up by another at a subsequent and disconnected sitting; the messages given at the first being corroborated and extended at the second. This, the Author tells us, is a 'cross-correspondence,' and he attaches great importance to it as evidence that the message comes from the dead person through two distinct channels. One would think that if the world of mind is open to the medium (as it certainly is, though to what extent it is impossible to say) intercommunication between medium and medium would be more easy than between any other persons. But taking the view, as I do, that the whole thing proceeds from the medium, I do not think it is even necessary to suppose this intercommunication. Such sources of subliminal information as were open to the trance state of the one would be open to that of the other.

There is nothing in the whole series of sit-

tings which the Author records as evidence of his son's survival that is not covered by one general *fact*: the powers of a medium are indefinitely limitless, so far as we can take note of them; in any estimate we make of their supposed revelation we cannot logically hold them to be other than illimitable. At the point at which we say, 'This message comes from a particular person and proves his identity,' we draw a line of limitation upon the medium's powers; and this we have no right to do, as we are profoundly ignorant of their nature. It is the same with the voluminous record of cases to prove identity, and therefore survival, in the late Mr. Myers's *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. The truth, as I see it, is that not only do they not afford a test, but that there can be no test of survival that will satisfy our normal faculties of reasoning. All those who attempt to prove it by such a method are inferring the unconditioned from the conditioned. For future existence is (to the normal intellect) a conjecture; the most outrageously fanciful view of it is just as legitimate as the most consistent and beautifully balanced. It is only opinion, to which everyone has an equal right. While, as to the conditions of the medium's power, although we are totally ignorant of them, we must, as human beings living in a conditional state, believe

them to exist.

This, then, is my case against the plea, in so far as it bases itself on scientific method, for human survival.

But man believes many things which inductive philosophy cannot teach him. He believed at one time that the earth was fixed and that the sun went round it; and the belief sufficed him for many useful purposes in the daily round of life. He could regulate time by it; he could depend upon all the advantages of light by day, and provide against darkness by night, just as surely as if the sun really travelled from this to that side of our planet. The belief had also its æsthetic values; he could appreciate the beauties of *sunrise* and *sunset* as well as if they were literal facts. To this day we speak of them as such. The pragmatist would say, and justly as far as that goes, that his belief was founded upon a workable postulate, and inasmuch as it served the practicableness of life was founded on a truth. It might be upset, no doubt; then some other postulate would have to be made, which might grow into a belief—in its turn the creator of a truth, held to be so as long as it should answer his expectations and desires. Practically, or let us say pragmatically, there is more to be said for the earth being flat than for it being round—it is certain that on all ordinary occa-

sions we act on the assumption of its flatness. And indeed for the multitude who know nothing of astronomy or navigation the earth's flatness and the motion of the sun round it must be deemed truths if the pragmatist is held to strict account. I don't see how he can get out of it. At all events, we are content to believe many things which we cannot prove and, consciously or not, to act on that belief. It seems probable, and has always seemed probable, that a future state of existence is one of them.

In this connection, and without any reference to scientific authority or logical proof, we might do worse than consider what the world-wide and world-old teaching called Occultist has to say about such phenomena as are recounted in *Raymond*. This teaching frankly bases itself on revelation—utterances of Personages more advanced than the rank and file of humanity and speaking from planes of life higher than this earthly one of gross physical matter. These, in their highest degree, are the Masters, Founders of all religions, which religions have certain essential and invariable principles in common. And they have told the same story, under various forms and symbols, in all times and places. Once granted their leading axioms—Development, the Illusion of Matter, undeviating Law of Karma or

Cause and Effect, Progress of human life through a series of Incarnations—and they explain everything; everything, that is, pertaining to secondary causes. They are perfectly acquainted with the matters which have so impressed the Author and are beginning to impress the Western world. Mediumship is a phase of perverted development; it is acquired through the individual having, in some previous incarnation, dabbled in Black Magic, in Left-handed Development, in some form of rebellion against the Good Law of True Development. The 'persons' that speak through the mediums are not real personalities at all; they are 'passion shells' surrounding personalities, forces generated from earthly longings and affections which are on their appointed though unwilling way to extinction. They will take advantage of any earthly desire, from the most trivial to the most exalted, to associate themselves with it, and by that means keep themselves alive at any price, if they can find a medium through which to prolong their activities. By encouraging them we are retarding the progress of some personality from whom they are destined to die out before he can take another upward step. And the Masters know and teach clearly what happens at 'death.' The person, the true Self, who has left this physical plane with the perishing of

the body has, for the present, nothing more to do with earthly life. He is in a kind of spiritual Purgatory, and must get rid of all earthly passions and affinities in order to make further progress. So far from communicating with earthly life he is freeing himself from the memories and kinships connected with it. The final goal towards which he is tending, through repeated incarnations, is a sphere of perfectly altruistic Love—Love itself—Love disentangled from Love's partialities. Till at long last, after æons quite unthinkable by mortals, Self itself is lost and merges into the universal Spirit which directs All to ultimate Good. But while the true Self is on the Purgatorial plane its old passion life, though doomed, struggles fiercely to live on. It is ever on the watch for some medium (in the simple sense of the word) on our plane by means of which it can hinder its disintegration and carry on the simulacrum of living. The passions thus clinging to existence are not necessarily base; they may even verge on the sublime. Love—that part of it which is abstract and impersonal, which will leave father and mother and wife and child for the sake of Progress—is part of the true Self, is undying, and is so much clear gain. That part of it which is an inherent quality of our life here must go. In the Purgatorial state, and indeed on all other planes

through which the developing Self passes, there is no punishment, no reward, no merit or demerit—only necessary experience and education leading along an inevitable Path upward. But though there is no retribution in the sense of retaliation, there is no shadow of turning from the Law by which every cause is linked to an indefeasible effect in the moral as in the physical world. Evil in the course of our experience is followed by experience of evil. Each one's position in this life is determined by his Karmic credit and debit account. Mediums are a most deplorable and pitiable class—happily a rare one. They have sinned at some stage of their development, not through the weakness natural to physical life, but through an unnatural strength which they have acquired in rebellion against the Law. They have power, but it is not a power for good. Some portion of the veil imposed by physical life has been lifted in their case: it does not serve for the admission of higher spiritual influences; it serves only to throw open a vehicle for gross forces sprung from desire which true Development is dispersing. Happily the more monstrous passions are seldom or never able to work through them; but they are at the mercy of every commonplace desire, however idle, frivolous and mildly mischievous, that is dying, that knows it must die,

that longs to live on. Or, roughly speaking, it is something like this. The great business of the Astral (or Purgatorial) plane is to disengage the Self from all earthly interests and ties; these clamour for persistence and satisfaction; but no satisfaction being possible on that plane they finally exhaust themselves and die. Their only chance of prolonging themselves is by becoming united to kindred interests on the physical plane where satisfaction *can* be attained. Hence this scheme, this propaganda, to make people on earth think that they can know all about their departed friends and even communicate with them. They forge the simulacra of personalities which are not personalities at all—only spurious forms moulded upon earthly desires and aspirations. Yet there is such a thing as Right-handed Development here below which can pierce the physical veil—a mode of moral study and education by which Adepts of various grades can learn about the future life and tell us of it. These have grasped something in Love that does not attach to individual love—something in hatred of evil that has nothing to do with personal resentment—something in pleasure that is free from material obligations. These can go upon occasion on the Astral and on higher planes; they can tell us, though vaguely and by the necessary use of physical metaphor, something

of the condition of those planes and of the real personalities that inhabit them. They can tell us something of the Progress that is going on.

Such is the view of futurity, and of psychical phenomena so far as they relate to it, according to the Occultist teaching.

I am not at present asking whether this doctrine—which has been enunciated under various phases in all recorded time and known regions, which has had its share under various symbolic forms in all religions, which does as a matter of fact seem to have embodied an ideal to which all human ethics have tended and all human hopes aspired—I am not asking whether it is worth any study or worthy of any credence. But I do ask the impartial thinker unbiassed by predilection, which has the juster and more plausible, and, for that matter, the more dignified appearance: this faith, through revelation pronounced by Masters and Adepts, in a perfectly consistent and eminently sublime picture of the soul's immortality; or the 'scientific demonstration' (no need or room for faith at all—a matter for congratulation to the Author) of *human* survival. On the one hand we are presented with a grand and solemn scheme of Progress which by the vastness of its chain of Cause and Effect seems to cover and reconcile all the injustices and perplexities and agonies of our present life; on the other

with a simple continuity of that life, its ennobling pain eliminated, its heroic struggle over. The drama ends; the curtain falls; but the actor is all right. We find him behind the scenes in a complacent frame of mind; only he longs to get back to the mimic life of this world's stage—to renew his association with the other actors there—to continue, in a chatty way, the dialogue, limiting his performance to such episodes of the Play as are free from tragedy.

There is another side, and a very sad one, to the kind of inquiry that the Author has been instituting and to such conclusions as he has arrived at. The majority of people who have lost friends or relations in the war, unhappily a large class, have neither the means, the time nor the capacity to read such a volume as *Raymond*. But they have heard of persons who for a very modest sum will tell them of their loved ones. These professors, whom the law rather irrelevantly prosecutes as 'fortune-tellers,' have, at least in many cases, real powers. Both the profession and its *clientèle* have enormously increased very recently. Prosecutions are frequent. And it is grimly amusing to anyone who understands the subject to read the remarks of the magistrate and counsel and the *naïve* protestations of the accused. 'I don't tell fortunes,' said Mrs. Almira Brockway, accused of fortune-telling,

at the West London Police Court. 'I simply get into communication with spirits—that is, if I can get into touch with them. In some I don't succeed, as I can't pick up the spirit.' 'Spiritualism,' she observed on her way to the police-court, 'will be the universal religion. What are you going to do to those who come to us? If you prosecute them you will have to prosecute more than half London.' Really, this sounds just as ingenuous as the statements of professional mediums in *Raymond*, and it has very much the same tone. The poor medium at handgrips with the law is at a great disadvantage; she could understand being punished for exercising powers which it is unlawful to exercise, but she feels that she is wrongfully accused of being a fortune-teller in the sense of a charlatan. The difficulties of defending such a case as Mrs. Brockway's may be judged from the following extracts as reported in the newspapers :—

MR. WILD, K.C. : This fact of unconsciousness is one of the first elements of psychic work. I am afraid, Sir (to the Magistrate), that you do not know the first elements; therefore you should not try this case.

Mr. Wild mentioned the work of Sir Oliver Lodge, and made reference to that gentleman's book *Raymond*. The magistrate said he had heard Sir Oliver Lodge's name introduced in the case. He had not read the book, and he was very sorry.

Mr. Wild considered he was not capable of trying the case.

MR. WILD: Are these lying spirits?

MR. BARKER (for Prosecution): What is the use of asking Mr. McKenzie or anyone else such a question?

THE MAGISTRATE: I call it a ridiculous question.

MR. WILD: I feel it is impossible to have the case tried in anything like the atmosphere in which it ought to be tried, and I cannot carry it any further.

Counsel then picked up his papers and left the court.

Mrs. Brockway does not appear to have done anything that the Author has not upheld other mediums in doing. The Magistrate, who fined her £50 with thirty guineas costs, ought certainly to read *Raymond*. Indeed, there is something rather remarkable in the attitude of the typical magistrate towards this class of offenders. He feels the instinctive repulsion natural to normal minds on their first approach to psychism. He feels that there is something attaching to the accused that he dislikes far more than the downright deception of fortune-telling, and this feeling seems to pervert his trained impartiality and open-mindedness. There is a touch of the vindictive and the bully in his handling of these cases. It is as if he would revenge himself for a vague perplexity he cannot account for. But the whole proceeding of these 'fortune-telling' cases is strangely sad. The poor, simple relatives of heroes coming for comfort—and getting it; the medium, conscious of real power but, being human after

all, and business being business, eking it out maybe with a little guess-work; then the arrest, the trial, the just sense of injustice on the one hand and the bewildered miscomprehension on the other: it all goes to form a weird tragic-comedy—a story in which there is the hint of laughter mingled with tears. The Author of *Raymond* would do well to ponder over it. For he could not avoid the reflection that he is following up, in an aristocratic and refined manner, a process of search into the mysteries beyond death which has become quite a democratic institution and is under certain conditions, however mistakenly, punishable by law.