

The Church and Psychical Research

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

BY

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PREFACE

MUCH has been written dealing with the relations between Spiritualism and the Christian Faith. This book is not an attempt to traverse this well-worn ground. Nor is it an attempt to contribute to a controversy which must necessarily be unprofitable, since the Church, obviously, cannot make any accommodation with Spiritualism as a religious system.

There is, however, a need for a dispassionate review of the implications of Psychical Research on traditional Christian Beliefs, the more so as that research is so often confounded with Spiritualism.

Although psychical research includes in its activities the investigation of all so called, super-normal phenomena, there is, at present, only one department thereof which directly impinges on Religion, namely the experimental proof of communication with the dead. It is therefore, this subject alone that will, herein, be discussed.

A review, such as this, cannot obviously lay claim to originality in matter. The debt of gratitude which I, in common, with all students of the subject, owe to the investigators of the *Society for Psychical Research* is indeed great. Especially must acknowledgement be made of the immense help which the work of F. W. H. Myers gives to any one who enters upon a serious study of this subject. The influence of that work, especially of his great classic *Human Personality*, remarkable alike for depth of reasoning

and rare eloquence of expression, lies, and should lie, strongly upon all who attempt to write on these matters.

The most useful function which a little book, such as this can perform, is, indeed, to serve as a directory, so to say, to the larger sources of evidence and argument. The call to all thinking men and women to have a right judgment in these weighty matters is insistent. If this book shall serve to help any in their first steps thereto, it will have effected its purpose.

I have to express my special thanks to the Rt. Hon. G. W. Balfour for his kind permission to quote at length from his paper "The Ear of Dionysius" (Vol. XXIX., *Proc S.P.R.*)

G. E. WRIGHT.

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THE CHURCH AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PSYCHIC phenomena and their implications, have during the past few years, aroused considerable interest amongst churchmen both clerical and lay.

The whole subject is one in which much confusion of thought, and lack of judgment is manifest. The pronouncements of some leading clerics exhibit a very imperfect acquaintance with the facts which they attempt to review, and display a certain intolerance towards research, based rather on *a priori* dogmatism than on fundamental Christian principle.

It would, on all counts, be better if psychic research, like the physical sciences, could pursue its way without impinging on Religion at all. In the past certain departments of Natural Science have at times seemed to invade the groundwork of the Christian faith. Thus the doctrine of Evolution seemed, at first, to be a direct challenge to the inspiration of Scripture. The collision was rather apparent than real. It was magnified exceedingly, on the one side, by certain militant agnostics who felt that they had a powerful weapon with which to belabour orthodoxy, and on the other by a few ecclesiastics who defended non-essentials with more zeal than knowledge. But

the fog of controversy soon rolled away, and it was seen that the fullest acceptance of the theories of Evolution did not in the least involve any tampering with the Christian faith. To-day a "hard shell Darwinian" may be a Churchman, just as much as a chemist, a physicist, or an astronomer may be a Churchman. The two subjects really run in separate grooves. We can, however, anticipate no such satisfactory separation in the case of psychic research. Its most important department is concerned with the proof of communication with the disembodied. It therefore definitely invades religious territory. For the proof of communication with the disembodied has as its corollary the continued existence of the disembodied, and the whole Christian system is built around Christ's resurrection, the pledge of everlasting life for all mankind. "In Christ shall all be made alive."

At first sight it might seem that this invasion is one, not by a foe, but by a powerful ally, who comes to help and strengthen the defence of a territory engaged in age-long war with materialism. Suppose for example some archæologist were to find in Palestine a MS. of one of the Gospels earlier than any at present known yet, agreeing substantially with the present originals, would it not be valuable evidence for the authenticity of that Gospel?

We find however, that Orthodox Christianity does not, on the whole, welcome psychic research as a friend, but rather repels it as a foe. Why is this? There are several reasons.

Firstly.—There is the belief among some excellent, if somewhat narrow-minded, Christians that the subject is one forbidden to man, that it is wrong to pry into God's mysteries, that Revelation has told us

all that is necessary in regard to the future of the departed.

Secondly.—That if these communications are, in truth, extra-terrene, yet they are originated by spirit intelligences of a very low, even of a malevolent order. That in the case of apparently evidential messages, these may be produced by such intelligences personating the ostensible deceased communicators. That, in other words, it is all “the work of the Devil” and therefore to be renounced by all Christian people.

Thirdly.—That if communication with the dead were lawful or veridical, it would be possible for anyone to effect it, directly, without the intermediary of a sensitive.

Fourthly.—There is the belief, wide spread though erroneous, that the evidence for communication with the dead rests on communications received through very dubious channels; that it is largely associated with “paid mediumship” and the dubious manifestations of the darkened seance room. It is an unfortunate fact that in the past some of those who have claimed to be channels of communication have been detected in deliberate fraud, while others have been exhibitors of “physical” phenomena of a frivolous, even repellant, nature. There is, for the reverent and religious mind, a very real difficulty in believing that a sensitive by, or through, whom are produced such unspiritual phenomena as levitations, apports, table movements, and the like, can be a channel for the transmission of veridical message from beyond the veil. “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?”

Fifthly.—There is a feeling of repugnance against the application of the methods of scientific research, and, especially the employment of “mediumship,” in

a subject so sacred as the state of our beloved departed.

Sixthly.—That the state of the departed, as described in, or inferred from, the communications received, is at variance with that described in Scripture, and generally held by the Church.

Seventhly.—That the alleged communications are of no moral or spiritual value, and are of such a nature that it is not possible to conceive that spiritual beings can be the authors of them.

Eighthly.—There is a most unfortunate confusion between Psychological Research and Spiritualism, and a belief, common though groundless, that the latter, as a religious system, is the outcome of the former.

Lastly.—There is a belief that the whole subject is fraught with dangers, spiritual, moral, and physical ; and that psychical research encourages people to resort to dangerous practices.

It will be the writer's endeavour, in the following pages, to discuss the value of these objections, to enquire how far they are supported by Holy Scripture or by the teaching of the Church, and, it is hoped, to remove some common misconceptions as to the nature of the evidence for communication with the dead and its implications, which have arisen from superficial, rather than instructed, discussion.

It is abundantly clear that in the great majority of cases, the objections of churchmen, both clerical and lay, are due to very imperfect acquaintance with the records and methods of psychical research, and the published conclusions of the most experienced investigators. I have therefore thought it necessary to devote the greater part of this book to a description of the nature of the evidence for communication with the disembodied.

Let it here be said that the charge of obscurantism

in this matter, which some have made against the Church of England, is far from just.

Our Church is, very properly, extremely cautious in admitting additions to, or modifications of, the body of doctrine founded on "The Faith once committed to the Saints," yet, unlike the Roman Communion, which (with an intolerance of which history has furnished many examples) has passed a root and branch condemnation on spiritualism, and has forbidden to its members any traffic therewith, or any investigation therein, the Church of England has made no attempt to impede inquiry or stifle discussion. If some ecclesiastics intemperately condemn psychic research, there are at least as many others who give it respectful attention, and some, indeed, who accept its implications as being not discordant, but concordant, with the Faith. Such for example was the Rev. Robert Chambers, such are the Rev. M. A. Bayfield, Vale Owen, Henslow, and others of the clergy.

Indeed it may be said that, with some exceptions, the attitude of our ecclesiastics has been characterised by a greater breadth of view, a larger tolerance, than that of scientific, or pseudo-scientific, materialism.

In regard to the attitude of the latter, Mr. Podmore, a sceptic in regard to the reality of most psychic phenomena, wrote :

Not the least instructive feature is the sharp contrast between the tone and temper of those men of science who after examination accepted, and those who, with or without examination, rejected the evidence for the alleged phenomena. Those who held themselves justified in believing, showed in their writings a modesty, candour, and

freedom from prepossession which shine the more conspicuously by comparison with the blustering arrogance of some of the champions of scientific orthodoxy.

Having set forth the objections which are generally entertained by Churchmen, both to psychic research in itself, and also to its results as far as communication with the dead is concerned, I will proceed in the following chapters to describe the evidence for that communication, and thereafter to discuss the above-stated objections in the light of that evidence.

It may be desirable to explain, for the benefit of any readers new to the subject, the few special terms which are used therein.

The terms *subliminal* and *supraliminal* are used to describe those sensations, thoughts, emotions, or memories which lie, respectively, below, and above the threshold (*limen*) of ordinary consciousness. The supraliminal is, in effect, our normal consciousness.

The term *sensitive* is used to describe any person possessing the power of being a vehicle for alleged communications.

The term *automatist* is herein confined to those persons who produce such communications either in writing, or by use of some simple apparatus called an *autoscope*.

The *control*, in a trance sitting, is the disincarnate intelligence who purports to operate the organism of the sensitive, and generally to serve as an intermediary for :

The *communicator*, who is the ostensible originator of the communication received.

A convenient abbreviation is used to describe a particular personality communicating through a particular sensitive, *e.g.*,

Myers P. means, "The personality which claims to be Myers in Mrs. Piper's communications."

Gurney H. means the ostensible Gurney communicator in Mrs. Holland's script; and similarly for other communicators and sensitives.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

IT will be agreed that the first thing which we have to do is to consider the value of the evidence for communication with the departed as an experimental fact. Speculation in this matter, based on metaphysical considerations, is, no doubt, interesting. It is useless, however, to present to the Churchman a case based on abstract reasoning alone. He demands, and properly demands, concrete evidence before he will contemplate a revision of his traditional conceptions in this matter.

Such conceptions are entitled to serious and respectful consideration. I, for one, would not presume to impute partiality to any who may say that they attach far more weight to Christian traditions than to the speculations of philosophers. Partiality is only to be imputed when there is a refusal to examine and consider evidence.

I will endeavour, therefore, to put before the reader a description of the evidence for communication with the disembodied as it stands to-day. Space admits of but little quotation. Furthermore, the best evidence is of such a nature as to be incapable of compression within limits suitable for quotation. I have, however, given full reference to the original sources which are readily accessible.

Herein lies a difficulty which must be felt by all who endeavour to deal with this subject. The strength

of the evidence lies both in its complexity, (as will be seen later), and also in its cumulative effect. It is, as Prof. William James said, its "cumulative massiveness" which impresses. But how to give an adequate idea of this massiveness in a few pages? It is impossible. All that can be attempted is the humble, yet not useless, function of serving as a sign post, a directory, to the full sources of information. It is fortunate that the inquirer has not to search at large for these. The *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* contain full records of the reliable evidence in the subject. These Proceedings are readily accessible to the public. Furthermore, and this is of capital importance to the serious inquirer, the standard of evidence demanded by the investigators is high. This may have resulted in the exclusion of some matter of potential evidential value, but it gives the assurance that what is included has been sifted with care, and that the conclusions of the investigators are cautious and conservative.

Before proceeding to a description and analysis of the evidence itself, we must first consider the means, or agencies, by, or through which the communications which compose that evidence are received. We must also consider the quality of these channels, and the possibilities of error and deception which may arise in their use.

For our present purposes we may say that these channels are human beings. It is true that there are cases where communications purport to have been received without any human intermediary. Thus there is the phenomenon of the "direct voice." It is stated that, at some séances, words spoken by no human voice have been heard. There are also cases of alleged direct writing; where the pencil is

held by no human hand. No such phenomena have, however, been produced under strict "test" conditions. The evidence for them is therefore inadequate. Without, therefore, going so far as to say that these phenomena are invariably due to conscious, or unconscious, deception, we cannot admit them as having sufficient evidential value for consideration herein.

There are also the remarkable experiments by Drs. Malta and Zaalberg van Zelst, of The Hague. These two experimenters devised an elaborate apparatus in which an electrical contact, capable of being operated by most delicate pressures, was arranged to actuate a printing apparatus somewhat similar to that of the familiar "tape machine." The whole apparatus was installed in a sealed chamber. The evidence seems to show that some non-human force did, at times, act directly on the apparatus with the result that messages were received. Further confirmation of these experiments is, however, needed before they can be finally accepted.

Lastly, in the case of table tilting, a method by which many alleged messages have been received, movements, resulting in intelligible messages, are stated to have occurred without physical contact between any person and the table.

For our present purposes we must err on the side of caution, and must therefore restrict ourselves to communications received by human agency only. These may be given by voice or hand, which latter may be supplemented by some simple mechanism.

Communications by word of mouth are generally made when the sensitive, the medium, is in a state of trance, and when his normal (*supra-liminal*) consciousness is wholly, or partially, in abeyance.®

Communications by the hand may be made by an entranced sensitive, but the majority have been received when the writer, the automatist, is, to all appearances, in a normal condition. Strictly speaking, however, the automatist is never quite normal when producing script. There must be a certain disintegration of personality since the control of the pen, or of the autoscope, is chiefly in the hands of the *sub-liminal*—the subconscious self. This disintegration is, however, so slight that any interruption, or other external stimulus, generally at once restores the automatist to full normal consciousness.

When the hand is employed, obviously some mechanism is needed to translate its movements into written words. The simplest "mechanism" is, of course, a pen or pencil. Next we have the familiar *planchette*, which is really only a pencil with a magnified handle, which can, if required, be actuated by the fingers of several persons.

There is also the *ouija board*. Here the indicating apparatus is similar to the *planchette*, the pencil being replaced by a plain point. The indicator traverses, with slight friction over a sheet of glass, or some other smooth surface, on, or under, which the letters of the alphabet are fixed. Communications are spelt out by recording the letters at which the indicator pauses in its perigrinations.

Lastly, we have the use of a table which, in effect, operates as a crude telegraphic key. Some evidential messages have been received through this crude apparatus, if so it may be called. For some reasons it is to be wished that this autoscope had never been thought of. The idea that disincarnate intelligences should use a table as a means of communication ap-

pears to excite the derision of many people. If, however, disincarnate intelligences do communicate it would seem reasonable that they might find it easier to effect a simple movement—the tilting of a table when the required letter is reached as the alphabet is called over—than to effect the complex muscular movements required for writing. These movements are really quite complex, although by practice they have become automatic to us. Some of my older readers will have had a tangible example of this if they have ever watched an adult learning to write. Although the mental idea of what was to be written was quite clear, yet the co-ordination of the necessary muscular movements was difficult and defective. In the same way a communicating intelligence, though equipped with full mental powers, might yet, at first, find great difficulty in causing the muscles of an automatist to move so as to form the desired letters, and hence might prefer to employ a mode of communication which entailed only the repetition of a simple muscular movement.

Since human beings are the present channels for all evidential communications from the dead, we have first to consider the reliability of these channels. Human agents have obviously the power, consciously and unconsciously, to distort, colour, or even fabricate the communications which are recorded.

Firstly, as to conscious and deliberate fraud. The reader will not hesitate to accept the entire *bona fides* of the automatists who have been responsible for the records detailed in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. These automatists have generally been persons of some consideration in social, literary, or scientific circles. They have been animated by a scientific interest in the scripts which their hands

have produced. They have had no financial ends to serve. The question of conscious fraud really cannot be raised in this case.

In regard to trance communications, however, we come into contact with "professional mediumship" so called. It is this contact that has proved a great obstacle to the dispassionate and rational consideration of the subject. It is, even now, common to find people who say, in effect, "Paid mediums are frauds, therefore all alleged communications from the dead are fraudulent." The answer is that no psychical investigator, of any repute or experience, would accept as evidential, any communication through any sensitive whatever, if the information contained therein could possibly have been acquired by normal means. The powers of subliminal (unconscious) deception are so much greater than those of supra-liminal (conscious) deception that *bona fides* alone do not carry us very far; while suspicion of *mala fides* does not, logically, invalidate results which comply with the only sure condition, namely, that the information given in trance mediumship *could not possibly have been obtained by normal means*. This caution demands that we refuse a possible extra-normal origin for any information, unless it can be clearly shown that it could not have had a normal source.

These remarks must not be taken as a general imputation of intentional fraud against "professional mediumship." There are, no doubt, fraudulent practitioners, but there is also no doubt that, in very many cases, the trance condition is genuine, and that the communications then made are indeed the result of impressions which have reached the subliminal of the sensitive, and are not deliberately concocted from information normally acquired by judicious

guessing, "fishing," or subtle observation of the facial expression of the sitter.

As previously remarked, even if the possibility of conscious fraud is negligible, we are not thereby in any better position to decide whether the origin of an alleged communication is terrene, or extra-terrene.

A sensitive may tell us, and tell us truly, in the ordinary sense of the word, that he has never heard of some person, or known of some circumstance, mentioned in his trance utterance, or script; or that he has never read some book or poem quoted from therein. To the ordinary inquirer, unacquainted with the extraordinary and erratic powers of the subliminal, under conditions of partial disintegration of personality, communications of the above nature must needs seem to have an extra-normal origin; and to have been initiated either telepathically from some other living person, or by some extra-terrene intelligence.

The records of careful investigation, especially those during the last fifteen years in regard to automatic writing, as also the researches of physiologists and psychologists, have, however, disclosed the extraordinary breadth and complexity of subliminal—subconscious—cerebration..

It is a notable example of the misconceptions which possess many people in regard to this subject, that the investigators of the S.P.R.—who, it is often said by those ignorant of their work, are special pleaders in the cause of spiritualism—should have been the chief instruments in accumulating data which provide a normal explanation for many putative communications, which, but for this data, it would be impossible satisfactorily to explain by any other than an extra-normal cause.

The laborious and minutely careful, analyses of automatic scripts which will be found in the *Proc*, S.P.R. from 1906 to the present date, in which each passage in the scripts is submitted to critical examination and traced, where possible, to some normal source of information, often completely forgotten by the conscious memory of the automatist, have made a notable contribution, to the study of the psychology of the unconscious, not unworthy to rank with the results obtained by another avenue of approach by psychologists and psycho-analysts.

Possibly the next generation will accord to F. W. H. Myers the credit, which is truly his, of being the first to formulate and to develop, in his great work *Human Personality*, the conceptions of the subliminal consciousness, which psychological investigation appears to be confirming up to the hilt.

We may, I think, anticipate a convergence of the views of psychical researchers and psychologists, and that the latter will soon generally admit, as some do even to-day, that not all the manifestations of the subliminal are to be attributed to physiological or psychological causes, but that there is a substantial residuum of phenomena for which no cause, other than extra-normal origin, is conceivable.

Since, in our present state of knowledge, the cautious investigator is bound to exhaust the possibilities of normal origin of any communication, before he can admit the possibility of an extra-normal cause, it is necessary to review the apparent powers and limitations of the subliminal. This is the more necessary in view of the large number of ostensible communications from the dead which have been published during the last few years. It is not unusual to find pre-faced to these collections of after death communi-

cations, some such words as, "the subject matter is entirely different from the writer's own views," or "I am quite incapable of writing anything of the sort."

We can accept these statements as being entirely true as far as the supra-liminal, the normal consciousness, of the automatist is concerned. He may be, indeed, not consciously responsible for what his hand has written. This acceptance does not, however, mean that we can receive these scripts as originated by some intelligence external to that of the automatist. The analyses of the scripts produced by the late Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Salter, Mrs. Holland and others, detailed in the *Proc. S.P.R.* from Vol. *xx.* to the present date, have shown that matter, which is quite outside the normal consciousness of an automatist, can sometimes be traced to information received long ago, by reading or otherwise, but, as far as the normal (supra-liminal) memory is concerned, completely forgotten. Also the sub-liminal has powers and tendencies different to those of the supra-liminal. The power of the former to dig into the store-house of "forgotten memories," and its exaltation of faculty, by which it can do things which are beyond the powers of the supra-liminal, are abundantly evidenced in the above investigations.

For example in the case of Mrs. Holland's scripts, which are analysed in detail in three papers by Miss Johnson (*Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. *xxi.*, *xxiv.*, and *xxv.*), the automatist herself, speaking of the verse which she at first produced in some quantity, says:

Their most striking feature is the rapidity with which they come. I once wrote down fourteen poems in little over an hour. When I write (normally) original verse, I do so slowly and carefully,

with frequent erasures. Automatic verse is always as if swiftly dictated, and there are never any erasures. My hand moves so rapidly that I seldom know what words it is forming.

The two specimens given (Vol. *xxi.*, pp. 172-3) show that the automatic verse was of respectable quality; at least it is rational and connected in idea, and correct in metre and rhyme.

Again, in the late Mrs. Verrall's scripts, which are of great interest both in themselves, and also by reason of the masterly manner in which the automatist herself analysed them, we find a strange feature. Mrs. Verrall was one of the leading woman classics. There is therefore nothing surprising in the fact that some of her script should be in Latin. What is remarkable is the kind of Latin of which it consists. For Mrs. Verrall, Latin was the language of the classical authors. The Latin of the scripts is not, however, classical Latin, but of the "late" and mediæval type, in which grammatical constructions are far less strict, and the vocabulary more extensive than in classical Latin. Numerous errors, which even a school boy would not commit, are also found. Any classical scholar will appreciate that the difference between this sort of Latin, and the strict classical models (with which latter alone, Mrs. Verrall was acquainted, and on which her own Latin prose had always been modelled) is considerable.

It may be remarked that we can detect cases of exaltation of faculty in many of the pseudo-miraculous happenings of past ages. Examples will occur to every reader. An interesting and fairly well authenticated case is that of the persecuted peasantry of the Cevennes at the beginning of the 18th century. To these peasants French was then, as it has been almost

to the present day, a foreign tongue. Yet there were several cases, where, under religious exaltation, illiterate persons gave long exhortations in fluent French (*vide* Bertrand *Du Magnétisme Animal* pp. 807, *seq.*). The naturalistic explanation is that these persons had often heard French spoken without consciously understanding it, but yet their subliminal consciousness had thereby acquired a knowledge of the language.

There is a distinct similarity between the behaviour of the subliminal when functioning in trance or automatism, and its behaviour under external suggestion and hypnosis. Dr. Boris Sidis has shewn that any condition in which there is even a rudimentary disaggregation of consciousness differs in degree, not in kind, from the state of the subject in hypnosis. To the former condition he has given the name of the *hypnoidal* state. It is possible that the only considerable difference between the hypnotic and hypnoidal states on the one hand, and the conditions of trance and automatism on the other, is that the former are externally induced (hetero-suggestion), the latter self-induced (auto-suggestion).

The records of both trance and automatic communication would seem to show that the alleged disembodied intelligences are unable to initiate any communication until the sensitive has, by some degree of auto-suggestion—imperceptible in the case of automatic writing, but very noticeable in the case of trance—placed himself in a receptive condition. There are, however, a few cases where the communicators seem to have been able to induce the automatists, by means of definite physiological sensations, to place themselves in the required condition (*vide*, pp. 36 and 38 below).

The similarity referred to above is notably ex-

hibited in this matter of exaltation of faculty. The ability of a hypnotized subject to do things which he would not, or could not, do in his normal condition, is well known. An interesting example of this is the power of some hypnotized subjects to make mental numerical computations while under influence, which are quite beyond their normal powers. Dr. T. W. Mitchell gives in his paper *The Appreciation of Time by Somnambules* (*Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. *xxi.*, pp. 2--59) a number of cases where a hypnotized subject has been instructed to perform a certain action at a definite future time, given in minutes or seconds. For example the subject was instructed to perform a definite action, 274,800 seconds, and 184,620 minutes after the order, and did so accurately. Mentally to compute the precise date and time at which, for example, 184,620 minutes will have elapsed, is obviously beyond the powers of the normal consciousness.

Examples of the remarkable powers of the subliminal, when temporarily and partially freed from the inhibitions of the supra-liminal consciousness, might be multiplied. Enough has been said to make it clear that ostensibly supernormal elements in trance or autograph communications, cannot safely be accepted as such until the communications have been exhaustively analysed, and every avenue explored by which the information might normally have reached the sensitive. When this has been done, the possibility that the communications are the result of telepathic affects from some living person, has still to be considered, and rejected, before we can accept them as veridical.

It will be conceded that it is a formidable task to review all the possible sources of information of

a sensitive, even when that sensitive is willing and anxious to afford every explanation in his power, and has the necessary knowledge of the problem which will make his assistance of real value.

It is obvious that in the case of communications received through "professional mediums" who are casually employed, no accurate estimate can be made of their normal knowledge. It is therefore rare that anything of evidential value can be obtained through such channels. It is only in the very infrequent cases when information is given which could not possibly have been known to the sensitive or the sitters, e.g., the well known "group photograph" episode in "Raymond," that these casual communications can make any definite contribution to the evidence for communication with the dead. I would repeat that this is not to say that veridical communications do not come through such channels, but simply that the absence of any definite information as to the anterior knowledge of the sensitive (apart from his clairvoyant powers) makes any decision, between the subliminal and the extra-terrene, impossible. In such cases the position of the inquirer is as one who would attempt to take compass bearings in a locality surrounded with masses of magnetic material, continually varying in magnitude and position, in a manner unknown to the experimenter.

It will therefore be clear that full acquaintance with the normal knowledge and sources of information of a sensitive is indispensable before any estimate can be made of the evidential value of the communications of which he is the putative vehicle.

In the case of professional trance mediumship, where the sensitive has generally an exaggerated

opinion of his supernormal powers, and an imperfect acquaintance with the psychology of mediumship and automatism, this acquaintance is only to be obtained by the continuous observation of the sensitive, by competent investigators.

There are obviously great practical difficulties in the realization of this condition.

Firstly the number of developed trance sensitives is exceedingly small.

Secondly, among such, it is very difficult to find any "professionals" who are prepared to devote their gifts to the service of psychical research for a remuneration smaller than they would obtain as "general practitioners," while private individuals, for obvious reasons, very rarely indeed become developed trance sensitives, and, even so, cannot be expected to submit to the very severe tax on their time, entailed by a prolonged series of sittings extending over several years.

Thirdly, it is no easy matter to obtain competent and skilled observers, to undertake the lengthy and tedious business of supervising a series of sittings.

The labour of conducting a sitting in such a manner as to produce a record of evidential value is heavy. Where communication is by word of mouth it is obviously a formidable task to record accurately the trance utterances, and also, and this is essential, what is spoken by the sitter. Where, as in Mrs. Piper's later trances, communication is by writing, the deciphering of the script, the reading of questions put and remarks made by the sitter, general attention to the physical condition of the sensitive, and the subsequent transcription and annotation of the script, make considerable demands on the ex-

perimenter in charge. Sir O. Lodge's description quoted on p. 32 below will give an idea of this.

Under these limitations of time, resources, and available experimental material, the reader will not be surprised that there is only one trance sensitive—Mrs. Piper—who has yet been submitted to prolonged observation and experiment.

In her case the experiments have been very numerous, and conducted with extreme care by observers of unquestionable competence.

From 1887, when the late Dr. Hodgson commenced his experiments in America, to 1911, when Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship came to an end, a very great number of sittings have been conducted both in England and America, by distinguished and experienced investigators. Chief amongst these were Mrs. Sidgwick, Miss Johnson, Mr. Myers, Dr. Hodgson, Dr. Hyslop, Dr. Lea, Sir O. Lodge, Prof. William James and Prof. Romaine Newbold. The records of these sittings are very considerable. In the *Proc. of the English S.P.R.* alone large portions of Vols. *vi.*, *vii.*, *xiii.*, *xiv.*, *xv.*, *xvi.*, *xxii.*, *xxiii.*, *xxiv.*, and the whole of Vol. *xxviii* are devoted to them.

The great length of the investigation, the competence of the experimenters, and the care with which the records have been kept, enable a very accurate estimate to be made of the sensitive's normally, and sub-normally, acquired knowledge. Thus, when apparently extra-normal information was given, it was possible, by reference to the records of previous sittings, to see if that information had accidentally been furnished by a previous sitter, perhaps long ago, and although forgotten by all concerned, revived in the manner which we have seen, is characteristic of the subliminal.

Furthermore, as Mrs. Piper's "goings out and comings in" were, in effect, under observation for over twenty years, the boundaries of her normal knowledge could be closely defined. We can, in view of what has been said above, place great reliance on the accuracy of the records of Mrs. Piper's mediumship.

After what has been said, no reader will, I hope, make the foolish observation that the case for communication with the disembodied through trance mediumship must be a poor one, because the evidence is drawn largely from observations on a single sensitive.

Another case of professional trance mediumship has recently been investigated. In this case the sensitive was Mrs. Leonard, whose name will be familiar as the channel by which the majority of the communications, recorded in Sir O. Lodge's book "Raymond," were received. A number of sittings with this lady were held in 1916-17 by Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall, which are recorded in their paper in *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. xxx., pp. 339-554. Owing, in part, to the nature of the results thus obtained, a further series of sittings, some eighty in number, were held under the supervision of investigators appointed by the Council of the S.P.R. The account of these latter sittings is not yet published in *The Proceedings*.

Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship may be divided into two portions. Up to about 1897 communication was generally by word of mouth. Thereafter it was, with rare exceptions, in writing. A description of the *modus operandi* of the latter, as described by Sir O. Lodge (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. xxiii., p. 131, *seq.*), will be of interest.

A quiet room was selected in which interruption need not be feared A comfortable chair was placed near a table on which was a pile of cushions on which the medium, sitting in the chair and leaning forward, could securely rest the side of her head when sleep came on, turning it to the left side so as to be able to breathe during the trance. On the right hand side of the pillows, on a table, the writing materials were arranged namely a large pad (10in. x 8in.), of 100 blank sheets, all numbered in order, and four or five pencils.

It was the duty of the experimenter in charge to record all that the sitter said. This could be generally be done sideways on the same sheet without interfering with the medium's hand. He had also to arrange the pad so that the hand could conveniently write upon it, and to tear off the sheets as they were done with.

Mrs. Piper seated herself in the chair in front of the pillows, then the experimenter in charge sat down on a chair near the table leaving a vacant chair for the sitter Mrs. Piper sat with her hands on the pillows in front of her ; about five minutes of desultory conversation followed, then heavy breathing began, and the head of the medium presently dropped on to her hands on the pillows, and turned itself with its face to the left.

Then almost at once the right hand disengaged itself and fell on the table near the writing materials. After about 30 seconds of complete quiescence, this hand alone " woke up " as it were. It slowly rose, made the sign of the cross in the air, and indicated that it was ready to write.

The experimenter then gave the hand a pencil, placing it between the fore and middle fingers; it was at once grasped and writing began.

It may be well to mention that exhaustive tests shewed that Mrs. Piper's loss of normal consciousness, while in trance, was complete, and that she remembered, when awake, nothing of what had occurred in the trance state. The same thing occurs, as is well known, in deep hypnosis, the subject remembering nothing that has happened while he was under influence.

The trance script was never shown to Mrs. Piper and was always taken away before she regained consciousness. In her normal condition she neither asked for, nor received, any information about it (*vide* Mr. Piddington's remarks *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxii.*, p. 25).

It should be added that some trance communications, inconsiderable in bulk compared with the Piper records, but containing matter of evidential value, have been received through non-professional sensitives. In England Mrs. Thompson was in earlier days, the vehicle for some few communications which was dealt with in *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xvii.* in papers by Mrs. Verrall, Miss Johnson, Sir. O. Lodge, Dr. Van Eeden, Dr. Hodgson, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Piddington, also in Vol. *xviii.* by the last-named investigator. In Vol. *xxiii.*, pp. 198 *seq.*, Sir O. Lodge gives an interesting report of two sittings with this lady, given as a special case, after she had discontinued the practice of trance mediumship. In this latter paper (p. 219, *seq.*) and in Mr. Piddington's paper (Vol. *xxviii.*, p. 294, *seq.*), will be found references to another sensitive--A Miss "Rawson." Mrs. "Willett" in addition to producing automatic script,

has given communications by word of mouth, when in a condition of trance.

In America Dr. Hyslop carried out some experiments of considerable value with a Mrs. "Chenoweth."

It will be seen, therefore, that the available records of non-professional trance mediumship are not large. No substantial improvement is likely in this direction. Although, judging from the case of Mrs. Piper, there are no grounds for the not uncommon assertion that the constant practice of trance mediumship is physically or mentally deleterious, yet persons who have no financial or personal ends to serve, will obviously be chary of submitting themselves to the constant repetition of a process which is sometimes unpleasant, and is also no light tax on their time and energies. Probably most automatists could, if they wished, develop into trance sensitives, but they naturally, and, I think wisely, prefer to employ their psychic faculties in the far less exacting mode of automatic writing, which from the evidential point of view, is as useful as trance mediumship.

The other mode of communication, is, as has been said, automatic writing, including under this heading cases where the pen or pencil is replaced by one of the autoscopes above referred to. Here the available material is considerable, and the number of persons whose scripts have been submitted to investigation is larger than in the case of trance mediumship.

A large part of all the volumes of the *Proc. S.P.R.*, from Vol. *xx*. (1906) to the present date, is devoted to their record and analysis. The automatists whose scripts have thus been examined, are Mrs. Verrall, Mr. Salter (Miss Verrall) Mrs. "Forbes," Mrs. "Holland," Mrs. "Willett," Mr. and Miss "Mac." It is unfortunate that the prejudice of friends and relatives

should constrain most of these automatists to adopt pseudonyms. This does not, of course, affect the evidential value of the scripts. It is however, a lamentable commentary on the intolerance, which is found in many quarters even at the present day, that these persons, who are endeavouring to contribute items of evidence for the solution of this weighty problem, should have to seek the screen of anonymity in order to protect themselves from disapprobation or ridicule. For example Mrs. Holland writes (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p. 174).

My own people hate what they call "uncanniness" and I am obliged to hide from them the keen interest which I cannot help feeling in psychic matters.

The nature of these written communications, and the evidence which they furnish, will be discussed in the following chapters. We may, however, appropriately here consider the general *modus operandi* of automatic writing. This, as might be expected, varies with different automatists, and at different times with the same writer. Mrs. Verrall (*Proc.* Vol. *xx.*), described her own experiences in considerable detail. Referring to the sensations which she experienced when she first began to obtain intelligible script, she says:

I suddenly felt a strong impulse to change the position of the pencil and to hold it between the thumb and first finger. Ever since an attack of writers cramp, some sixteen years ago, I have held the pen or pencil between the first and second fingers, and I had naturally held the pencil in the same way when trying to get automatic writing. Now, however, in obedience to the impulse, I took the pencil between my thumb and first finger and,

after a few nonsense words, it wrote rapidly in Latin. I was writing in the dark and could not see what I wrote. The words came to me as single things, and I was so much occupied in recording each, as it came, that I had not any general notion of what the meaning was. (*loc cit*, p. 8.)

In discussing her sensations in later communications, she says :

For the most part the same conditions and sensations continue to prevail. Whether I write in light or dark I do not look at the paper . . . Though I am aware, at the moment of writing, what language my hand is using, I often cannot say, till I read the finished script what language has been used, as the recollection of the words passes away with extreme rapidity. (*loc cit*, p. 12.)

Generally Mrs. Verrall used to sit for script at regular times, but on several occasions she received a sudden impulse to write, for example in the presence of others, in trains, and at other inconvenient times, when she was not desiring to do so. She says :

Sometimes the impulse to write takes the form of discomfort in the right arm or hand . . . On another occasion I had a feeling some time before the writing came, that I might want to write. I was just going by train, but it was not until 50 minutes after the train had started that I had any definite desire to write. (*loc cit*, p. 13).

The following remarks are interesting as pointing to the similarity between the "automatic" and the "hypnoidal" states above referred to :

I am sometimes exceedingly sleepy during the production of the writing, and more than once I have momentarily lost consciousness of my surroundings.

On another occasion :

I got very sleepy and lost consciousness, I think, in the middle. The writing was very violent and more automatic than usual . . . When the writing was over I was left with a feeling of fatigue and some discomfort in the right arm. (*loc cit*, p. 14.)

In Mrs. Verrall's script the handwriting was generally her own, but a larger hand was used, occasionally, apparently to draw attention to a word, or to a change in the nature of the matter conveyed.

In the case of Mrs. Holland the impulse to write was at first accompanied with the sensation of a severe headache, which vanished when the impulse was complied with. This symptom disappeared at a later date, and, as in the case of Mrs. Verrall, the production of script was accompanied by "an occasional tendency to drowsiness . . . which, if encouraged, might develop into trance." (*Proc.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p.182.)

A feature (found also in some other cases) in which Mrs. Holland's script differed from Mrs. Verrall's, is the handwriting :

Mrs. Holland's own handwriting is of a rather strongly marked type—clear, bold, round and legible . . . the words are very disjointed, the pen being lifted generally several times in every word. The automatic writing is more sloping and pointed and far more continuous. This is the usual writing of the Myers control . . . The Gurney control uses a more bold and upright style. (*loc cit*, p. 180).

Another interesting feature is that Myers used a pen, and Gurney a pencil. Much of Mrs. Holland's script purported to emanate from these two communicators, but Miss Johnson tells us that there is no resemblance between their putative scripts, and

their handwriting when alive. Also, that there is no reason for associating the pen specially with the one, and a pencil with the other. She remarks: "It appears to be simply a sort of sub-liminal device for keeping the two personalities distinct."

In Mrs. Holland's script (as in some other cases) occasional short passages of "mirror writing," *i.e.*, writing similar to ordinary writing when reflected in a mirror, are obtained. This is another example of subliminal faculty. No one could produce such writing normally without a model in front of them, and then but slowly.

Special impulses to write, as that of Mrs. Verrall described above, are not necessarily followed by the production of script of special value, although, in a few cases, the results have been exceptionally evidential. One of these latter occurred in Mrs. Willett's script. The evidential value of the script will be considered later (p. 103).

The sensations, however, are of interest. Mrs. Willett says (*vide Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. xxv., p. 125).

I came downstairs from resting and suddenly felt I was getting very dazed and light-headed with a hot sort of feeling on the back of my neck. I did not think of script until I felt my hands being, as it were, drawn together. I could not keep them apart. The feeling got worse, and with a sort of rush I felt compelled to get writing materials and sit down, though people were in the room.

After writing she says :

I still feel very dazed and uncomfortable. The script has no meaning whatever for me.

I have thought it well to devote some little space to a description of the sensations and accompaniments of the production of automatic script. It will be seen

that these are sometimes of a striking nature. An automatist unfamiliar with the results of research, and attempting the production of script without competent advice, is likely, if experiencing sensations of a like nature, to be impressed with a conviction that the script is indeed due to extre-terrene influence. Thus the changes in the hand-writing or in the use of pen and pencil above referred to, could hardly fail greatly to impress anyone who was unaware that there is no reason to look further than the sub-liminal for an explanation of this striking phenomenon.

The power of automatic writing is to-day being somewhat cultivated by others besides those pursuing it for scientific purposes. It is therefore of importance that all such persons should bear in mind that no script, however, striking it may appear, should be taken at once, at its face value. It may contain, as other scripts have already been found to contain, matter for which the most searching analysis can find no explanation except that it may have been originated by disincarnate intelligencies. The evidential matter will, however, certainly be mingled with much of sub-liminal or telepathic origin. The separation of the grains of gold from the sand can only be effected by careful and skilled analysis. It is only by the laborious process of tracing allusions in scripts, and investigating all possible normal and telepathic origins for them, that we can, by a process of elimination, sift out a residuum for which no such explanations suffice. It is in this residuum alone that the evidence for communication with the disembodied lies.

In this connection I would specially direct attention to Mrs. Sidgwick's cogent remarks quoted on p. 139 *seq.* below.

If the potential automatist will keep the above
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facts in mind he should certainly not be deterred from developing his powers in this direction. The mental and moral danger is nil, and the results may be of evidential value.

For the uninstructed automatist there is certainly a possibility of moral danger. If he believes that he is the amanuensis of a "spirit" he will take a mixture of a little wheat with much chaff as being all good grain. There is, of course, a definite spiritual danger if, on these very mixed foundations, a superstructure of belief is raised, which tends towards a denial of any fundamental element of the Christian faith. Even, if we could make the assumption that such scripts are throughout inspired by the departed, we have no warrant for assuming that the communicators have any such knowledge of the mysteries of God as qualify them to be accepted as inspired guides. Though they know more than we on earth can know, yet this further knowledge may be very far, indeed, from full knowledge. No conclusive authority must, therefore, be attached to spiritual teachings contained in such communications. To do otherwise is to open the door to obvious moral dangers or, at the very least, to exhibit a great want of moral judgment.

Having described the methods of communication and given, I trust, a fairly clear view of the possible sources of deception therein, and of the cautions to be observed, we can now proceed to a discussion of the available evidence as it stands to-day.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL EVIDENCE

As previously remarked the evidence for communication with the disembodied is of such a nature that a due appreciation of its value is not to be attained without a fairly wide acquaintance with the authoritative records. Especially is this true of the best and most recent evidence the "cross correspondences," the complexity of which is, as will be shown in the next chapter, one of their strongest evidential features. This feature is destroyed if an attempt is made to compress them to limits suitable for quotation. All that can be attempted within the present limits of space is to give a description of the nature of the evidence.

At the outset it is necessary to state quite clearly that the treatment of the subject herein is purely evidential. We must entirely leave out of account emotional experiences. A man may have had personal and intimate experiences of communion with the departed which are more convincing to him than volumes of evidence, yet they are *not* evidence to any other person. Mr. Constable (*Personality and Telepathy*, p. 314) puts this very clearly.

Many of us know, outside cognition, that this communion is a fact, but the knowledge is purely personal. We have no human evidence to offer of the fact, so that we can offer no proof to others who have not had like experience.

The inquirer's position is, to some extent, analagous to that of a historical critic. He has to reach a conclusion in regard to certain alleged facts by examination of the documentary evidence for them. As Prof. Schiller said, in a Presidential Address, (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxvii*, p. 194) :

The evidence . . . is primarily historical and and has to be ascertained according to the canons used by the historian and the lawyer.

In this subject conviction will be reached, not by any single item of "knock-down" evidence; but by the cummulative weight of the evidence in its totality. Prof. Henri Bergson's words in regard to telepathy, are equally apposite to the present subject. (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxvi*, p. 467).

I am constrained to believe in Telepathy just as I believe in the defeat of the Armada. My belief is not the mathematical certainty that I have of the law of falling bodies, but it is at least all the certainty that we obtain in a historical or judicial matter.

It is clear that we cannot hope to arrive at any just opinion of the value of the evidence until we reach an agreement as to what does constitute evidence in this matter. The simplest method of dealing with this rather confused issue is to ask the reader the question : "What evidence, (apart from personal experience) would satisfy you that the disembodied communicate with us?"

Perhaps some people would say, thoughtlessly, that there are numerous ways in which a communicator, (if such there be) could give definite proof.

Further reflection will shew that this is not the case, and that so far from there being many ways in which a deceased communicator can give proof of his con-

tinued existence and authenticate his communications, there is probably no way in which he can give absolute proof, and not many in which he can give relative proof.

One answer to the above question, which some superficial thinkers might give, is that the communicators can tell us what they are now doing in the present time. Such information can, however, have no direct evidential value, as we have no means either of verifying it, or of deciding how much may be due to the subliminal of the sensitive through whom it comes. Thus, in regard to this latter point, when communications, such as those written by the hand of Mrs. Leale (*vide* quotation on p. 128 below) give a picture of the after life, generally similar to the visions of the Apocalypse, we cannot safely assume, that the script is other than a product of the automatist's own subliminal conceptions, since the book of Revelations is so familiar to everyone. This consideration cuts both ways. As similarity with revelation is *per se*, no evidence in favour of any script purporting to depict the present state of the departed, so dissimilarity is *per se*, no evidence against it. The only way in which communications purporting to describe the *present* condition of the departed could be of any evidential value at all, would be if we found that a number of different and perfectly independent sensitives transmitted descriptions of that condition which were all in substantial agreement. We should then have some grounds for assuming that there was a certain basis of truth in their common quality.

Among the scripts of automatists who are spiritualists we do find some little agreement. This, however, cannot safely be attributed to any more remote origin than the general familiarity of the writers with the standard type of spiritualist eschatology.

No valid evidence of the continued existence of the departed, and of their ability to communicate with us, can be obtained from communications purporting to deal with their *present* state and condition.

The putative communicator must therefore either deal with the *future* or with the *past*.

Communications dealing with the future are also unverifiable at the time when they are received. If, however, events are predicted to occur comparatively soon in point of time, after the date of the prediction, verification may be possible. Alleged communicators have sometimes made such predictions, but with very mixed success. There are, probably, no cases where a communication has quite correctly predicted an event. There have been, however, some cases of what might be called "intelligent anticipations." Mrs. Verrall, in her analysis of her own scripts (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xx.*, p. 319, *seq.*), gives 15 cases of these. None were absolutely correct, but in 5 cases a portion of the statements made were fulfilled and, what is chiefly important, the matters predicted were not of an ordinary nature. Prognostications of ordinary and likely events are of little or no value, even if correct. Thus one prediction, not included in the above five partial successes, pretold correctly "a breach in Dr. Verrall's family" but, as Mrs. Verrall says, "it is a fairly safe prophesy to suggest a breach in a family containing some old members." In the case of ordinary occurrences the target may sometimes be hit if a sufficient number of random shots are fired, but where the occurrence predicted is of an exceptional, or *bizarre*, nature the hypothesis of mere chance is very difficult to maintain. The shots must have been fired at such an incredibly long range.

One of the above mentioned anticipations may be summarized : (*loc cit*, p. 335, *seq.*)

On April 2nd, 1903, Mrs. Verrall produced a script as follows :

Now draw on five steps a cross, and on the cross hang a wreath, a fresh green wreath. They have come to see it there, out in the open, on the hillside, in the sound of the sea This is for evidence. There is an inscription fastened to the wreath, " In honour, A. J. C.," (the middle initial is doubtful) Grey sea and sky and the grey gulls cry in the wind.

Inquiries made in 1903 failed to identify the cross in any way. It was not till 3 years later, on April 4th 1906, that Mrs. Verrall happened to observe, at the house of a lady, Miss Curtois, whose acquaintance she had but recently made, a photograph of a memorial cross corresponding with the description and sketch given in her script of three years before, but without the wreath therein referred to.

Further inquiry shewed that the facts about the cross were as follows :

In the churchyard of Washingborough, a village near Lincoln, on the river Witham, was an old pedestal of five stone steps. On this pedestal a modern cross was erected and dedicated in memory of Mrs. Curtois, on July 5th, 1903. The cross stands near the top of a little hill. The sea is 30 miles away, but the adjoining low lying country is often flooded and sea gulls are frequently to be seen there. The five stone steps once formed the base of an old cross. Mrs. Curtois' initials were A. H. C. A green wreath was once placed on the cross, probably at Christmas, 1903.

It is extremely difficult to account for the coincidences between the script and the actual facts, by

chance alone. Telepathy, as at present known, is not a possible explanation, since the description of the cross antedated its erection by 3 months. The other four cases of approximately correct anticipation dealt with matters trifling in themselves, but of such an unusual nature that, as already said, the "chance" hypothesis seems hardly reasonable.

The well known "Faunus" incident in "Raymond" (p. 90, *seq.*), is a familiar case of anticipation. It is weak, inasmuch as the possibility of a bereavement in a family containing members of military age was, at the time of the prediction (Aug. 1915), considerable. Its strength, such as it is, lies in the peculiar and complex manner in which it was made (through Mrs. Piper's automatic writing in America), and its partial correspondence with a communication received through an English sensitive at a later date (*loc cit*, p. 99.)

It may be remarked that there does not seem to be any good reason why we should attribute to the departed any real powers of foreknowledge. I think that the most, which reason will allow us to assume, is that disembodied intelligencies can discern the motives and tendencies likely to lead to events, with greater clearness than we can. If so, their anticipations are but prognoses based on what they can thus observe.

The partially correct anticipations are so few that they can hardly be said to contribute anything of tangible value to the evidence for communication with the dead, so they need not further detain us.

The present, and the future, being then eliminated as subjects for evidential communications we are left only with the past. The putative communicator has to establish his identity, and prove the extra-

terrene origin of the alleged communications, by reference alone to his past experience and knowledge when he was on this earth. This field might seem, at first sight, to be of ample area for the construction of any number of veridical messages. Further consideration will show that this is by no means the case, and that satisfactory past subjects are indeed very few.

Direct communications dealing with the communicators past, can be of three kinds.

Firstly the subject may be unknown to, and unknowable by, any living person.

Secondly the information may be unknown to any living person at the time when it is transmitted, but capable of subsequent verification.

Thirdly the subject may be known to one or more living persons and therefore capable of immediate verification.

The first class have clearly, no evidential value. Communications of the second class are of evidential value but, obviously, the occasions when they are possible are very rare. The only communications which could strictly fall within this class would be those which gave information as to the contents of a document which had been written by the deceased before his death, shown to no one, and sealed by him. Or, if the communicator had secreted some article before his death, and after his decease gave correct information as to its nature and location.

It is well known that Mr. F. W. H. Myers attempted to provide facilities for such a test, by leaving a sealed envelope, to be opened after his decease, if, and when, *post mortem* information as to its contents was received. Numerous references to the supposed contents of this envelope were made in Mrs. Verrall's

script during 1903 and 4. The most detailed reference was that contained in the script recorded on July 13th, 1904.

I have long told you of the contents of the envelope, Myers' sealed envelope left with Lodge. It has in it the words from the Symposium (of Plato) about Love bridging the chasm. They are written on a piece of single paper folded and put in an envelope. That is inside another envelope which has my initial at the bottom left hand. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xx.*, pp. 424-5.)

When the envelope was opened the description of the contents was found to be incorrect.

On the other hand there is a record of a double success of this kind (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *viii.*, pp. 248, *seq.*).

Here the deceased had left a message in a sealed envelope, and had also, before his death, broken a brick into two parts, given one part to a relative (who was a sensitive), and secreted the other portion in a sealed package in a place unknown to any living person.

By means of messages, received through table tilting, the exact position of the package was indicated, and also the contents of the sealed envelope was correctly given.

Mrs. Sidgwick's observations in regard to this type of test are very much to the point.

Success in such an experiment must necessarily be very doubtful, for there are obviously many difficulties. The depositor may forget his message—I am sure I should—or his medium may fail to receive or to deliver his message as given. But a more important reason for questioning whether the experiment is worth repeating, is an evidential

weakness in it. It is difficult to see, how, in case of success the objection can be met that the message might have been learnt telepathically from the depositor, before his death.

There are a few other cases of this class in which partially correct information has been given. Among comparatively recent cases, one communication purporting to have been originated by the late Dr. Hodgson, is rather striking.

Richard Hodgson died on Dec. 20th, 1905. An old friend a Mrs "Lyman" had, some years previously, given him a signet ring of somewhat unusual design. After Hodgson's death the donor had made inquiries of the executors in regard to the ring, but it could not be found among his effects. The gift was unknown to anyone except the donor and the recipient. At a sitting, with Mrs. Piper, held some five weeks after Hodgson's death, a communication purporting to come from him gave, amidst some incorrect matter, the information, subsequently verified, that he had been wearing this ring when he went to his tennis club (where he died suddenly), but had taken it off when he went to play, and left it in his waistcoat pocket in his locker in the club house.

As a result of this communication a thorough search was made in the pockets of the deceased's clothing, and the ring was actually found in the lining of the waistcoat in question. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxiii*, pp. 15 *seq.*)

Prof. William James' remarks on the series of records of the Hodgson-Piper control given in his paper (*loc cit*, pp. 2-121), are of special interest in view of the extremely cautious character of that eminent investigator.

I myself feel as if an external will to communicate

were probably there, that is I find myself doubting in consequence of my whole acquaintance with this sphere of phenomena, that Mrs. Piper's dream life, even if equipped with telepathic powers, accounts for all the results found. But if asked whether the will to communicate be Hodgson's, or some mere spirit counterfeit of Hodgson's, I remain uncertain.

Another recent case, somewhat of this type, possibly familiar to the reader is that described by Mr. Bligh Bond, F.R.I.B.A.

This architect had, for some time been endeavouring to locate the site of the Loretto chapel at Glastonbury Abbey which was known to have been built by Abbot Bere. The available records seemed to show that it was attached to the north side of the main building, but, after digging along the whole of that side, no remains whatever were found. Subsequently, while in a condition resembling trance, Mr. Bond gave out information purporting to show that the site of the chapel was in quite a different situation. Further, excavation proved the correctness of the information received.

The naturalistic explanation of this case is that it is one of subliminal reasoning. It is rather similar to a case reported in Prof. Romaine Newbold's paper *Subconscious reasoning* (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. xii., p.11 seq).

An archæologist, who had been much exercised in regard to the deciphering of the inscriptions on two Babylonian fragments (found in the temple of Bel. at Nippur, had a dream in which, with most circumstantial accompaniments, a priest of Nippur appeared to him and gave him certain information, which, when he awoke, enabled him readily to solve the difficulty.

Although there are a few rather impressive cases in this class they are numerically insignificant. We are, therefore, left only the third class of communications among which to find our evidence, namely communications which deal with matters known to living persons.

Correct communications of this class are very numerous. Apart from the authoritative records, there are many people who, at sittings with trance sensitives, have received fairly accurate descriptions of the deceased relatives or friends with whom they are desirous of communicating. Granted, and the evidence admits of no other conclusion, that a developed trance sensitive is highly susceptible to telepathic affects, and can thereby, so to say, obtain knowledge of the dominant ideas of the sitter's subliminal, or supraliminal, consciousness, we should expect that this would happen. Thus a sensitive may accurately describe a deceased person whom he states to be psychically present, and to be communicating through him. This must necessarily impress a sitter who is not acquainted with the powers of telepathy, but from the evidential point of view, such occurrences are not to be accepted without any further analysis.

It does not, indeed, follow that because a communication may have a telepathic origin, therefore it can have no other.

The point is that of two equally reasonable explanations we are bound always to chose the least extra-normal. Therefore, if we can fairly explain any alleged communication by telepathy, we must do so before we pass to the spiritistic hypothesis. Similarly, if we can explain it by normally acquired knowledge, we must not even go so far as telepathy.

Be it noted that these explanations do not imply any reflection on the *bona fides* of the sensitive. He receives an affect on his trance consciousness, he extenalizes and describes that affect, and by a natural process of association, he conceives the phantasm as speaking. There is no conscious deception in this. The trance consciousness is as a delicately suspended pendulum which is affected by all vibrations, not like the moving element of a seismograph which records only major earth tremors, and is insensitive to local vibrations.

For reasons stated in the previous chapter, the records of communications received through casually consulted professional trance sensitives cannot, generally, be of evidential value. Therefore, for our present purposes, we must confine ourselves to the S.P.R. records. These are chiefly those of Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship. The voluminous records thereof, to which references were given on p. 30 above contain hundreds of instances in which information was given which certainly could not have been obtained by Mrs. Piper through the normal channels of her senses. Numerous deceased persons purported to communicate, and made references to their past experiences when on earth, and also to the present action of living people, which were correct. There are so very many of these correct communications that, were there no such thing as telepathy, we could not resist the conclusion that they were, indeed, initiated by the disembodied intelligencies which purported to be responsible for them.

I will quote Dr. Hodgson's remarks about one alleged communicator ("George Pelham") alone, from which it will be seen that the amount of accurate information given is infinitely greater than chance

could account for, while the possibility of that information having been normally acquired by the sensitive is absolutely eliminated. Dr. Hodgson said (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xiii*, p. 328 *seq.*)

On the first appearance of the communicating G.P. to Mr. Hart in March, 1902, he gave not only his own name and that of the sitter, but also the names of several of their most intimate common friends, and referred specifically to the most important private matters connected with them. At the same sitting reference was made to other incidents unknown to the sitters, such as the account of Mrs. Pelham's taking the studs from the body of G. P., and giving them to Mr. Pelham to be sent to Mr. Hart, and the reproduction of a notable remembrance of a conversation which G. P. had with a daughter of his most intimate friends, the Howards. These were primary examples of two kinds of knowledge concerning matters unknown to the sitters of which various other instances were afterwards given; knowledge of events connected with G. P., which had occurred since his death, and knowledge of special memories pertaining to the G. P. personality before death. . . .

Nearly two weeks later came his most intimate friends, the Howards; and to these, using the voice, he showed such a fulness of private remembrance and specific knowledge, and characteristic intellectual and emotional quality pertaining to G. P. that, though they had previously taken no interest in any branch of psychical research, they were unable to resist the conviction that they were actually conversing with their old friend G. P. And this conviction was strengthened by their later experiences. Not least important at

that time, was his anxiety about the disposal of a certain book, and about certain specified letters which concern matters too private for publication. He was particularly desirous of convincing his father who lived in Washington, that it was indeed G. P., who was communicating, and he soon afterwards stated that his father had taken his photograph to be copied, as was the case, though Mr. Pelham had not even informed his wife of this fact. Later on he reproduced a series of incidents, unknown to the sitters, in which Mrs. Howard had been engaged in her own home. Later still, at a sitting with his father and mother in New York, a further intimate knowledge was shown of private family circumstances, and at the following sitting, at which his father and mother were not present, he gave the details of certain private actions which they had done in the interim.

At their sitting, and at various sittings with the Howards, comments were made concerning different articles presented which had belonged to G. P. living, or had been familiar to him; he inquired after other personal articles which were not presented at the sittings and shewed intimate and detailed recollections of incidents in connection with them. In points connected with the recognition of articles, with their related associations of a personal sort, the G. P. communicating, so far as I know, has never failed. I may say, generally, that out of a large number of sitters, strangers to Mrs. Piper, the communicating G. P. has picked out the friends of G. P. living, precisely as the G. P. living might have been expected to do, and has exhibited memories in connection with these and other friends which are such as would naturally be

associated as part of the G. P. personality, which certainly do not suggest in themselves that they originate otherwise, and which are accompanied by the emotional relations which were connected with such friends in the mind of G. P. living. At one of his early communications, G. P. expressly undertook the task of rendering all the assistance in his power towards establishing the continued existence of himself and other communicators, in pursuance of a promise, of which he himself reminded me, made some two years or more before his death, that if he died before me and found himself still existing, he would devote himself to prove the fact; and in the persistence of his endeavour to overcome the difficulties in communicating, in his constant readiness to act as amanuensis, in the effect which he has produced by his counsels—to myself as investigator and to numerous other sitters and communicators—he has, in so far as I can form a judgment in a problem so complex, and still presenting so much obscurity, displayed all the keenness and pertinacity which were eminently characteristic of G. P. living.

Many other alleged communicators have given unmistakably correct information as to their doings when on earth, and to a lesser extent, as to the present actions of living friends and relatives. Such information was obviously within the knowledge of some living persons, though by no means always within the knowledge of the sitters present when the information was given.

The paper by Miss Radclyffe-Hall and Lady Troubridge referred to on p. 31 above (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. xxx, p.339-554), also contains a number of communications of the same kind received through the trance

mediumship of Mrs. Leonard. The putative communicator gave many correct references to her earth memories, and her doings when alive. A house at which she had lived, and places which she had visited with Miss Radclyffe-Hall, were correctly described, and other incidents were accurately detailed.

It will interest those persons, who are always ready to say that "paid mediums" get up facts about their sitters by judicious inquiry, to learn that the authors employed a private detective to find out whether any such inquiries had been made. The result was a clear negative.

In addition to memories of her earth life, the ostensible communicator related correctly some of the present doings of the authors, and also gave information entirely unknown to the sitters, which was afterwards verified.

In regard to the records of non-trance sensitives—the automatists whose names have been given in the previous chapter (p. 34)—the question of the sitter's knowledge does not arise as there is seldom anyone analagous to a sitter, most script being produced when the automatists are alone. These scripts contain plenty of information which could not have been normally acquired by the writers. A rather striking example from Mrs. Holland's script may be quoted. The ostensible communicator, F. W. H. Myers wrote as follows :

Make an effort not to be so doubtful. I know this all seems meaningless to you, but it has its meaning nevertheless . . . It is like entrusting a message on which infinite importance depends to a sleeping person. Get a proof, try for a proof if you feel this a waste of time without. Send this to Mrs. Verrall, 5 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge.

This script was one of those produced in India, before Mrs. Holland had made the acquaintance of Mrs. Verrall or any of the members of the S.P.R. At that time she had never seen any of the *Proceedings*, nor indeed had she read any psychic literature other than *Human Personality*. She could not have had any knowledge whatever of Mrs Verrall's address.

Space does not permit of any further references to this class of communication, but there can be no doubt that there is abundant evidence that sensitives can give information which could not possibly have been acquired by them through the normal channels of the senses. No one who has examined the records with impartiality and care, has ever reached the conclusion that they can be explained by any strictly normal hypothesis. Even Mr. Podmore reached this conclusion (*vide, Modern Spiritualism, Vol. 2., p.342*).

The communications above described provide us, then, with a mass of material for which in our present state of knowledge only two explanations are possible. Firstly that the information was received by the sensitives from other living beings. Secondly, that it was received from some extra-terrene source, *i.e.*, that it was originated by some deceased communicators.

It is therefore of capital importance that we should determine approximately both the powers and the limits of the telepathic faculty.

I think it may safely be said that Telepathy is now accepted as a proved fact, at least by everyone who has examined the evidence for it. This is not the place for a discussion of that evidence. The great classic on the subject is *Phantasms of the Living*, chiefly the work of Edmund Gurney. This has lately (1918) been reissued in an abridged form under the
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editorship of Mrs. Sidgwick. It is an old book, but, as the editor says "its value has been but little affected by subsequent investigations." Mr. Constable's *Personality and Telepathy* (1911), is also of much value. A brief synopsis of the subject will be found in the writer's little book *Practical Views on Psychic Phenomena*. An immense amount of data is also to be found in the *Proc S.P.R.*, from its first volume down to the present date.

I might incidentally remark that if there are any persons who cannot bring themselves to accept telepathy because it "smacks of the supernatural," it is permissible to point out that this refusal lands them in a dilemma. They have then either to accept the power of disembodied intelligencies to communicate as a proved fact, or to maintain that a number of men and women many of high standing and abilities, are either knaves or fools. There is no logical escape from these horns.

The conclusions which can fairly be drawn from the exhaustive researches and experiments in Telepathy, which have extended over a period of forty years are as follows:

Information can be transmitted from one person (the agent) to another person (the percipient) other than through the normal channels of the senses, under the following conditions:

Firstly, when a conscious endeavour is made by the agent, and the percipient is aware of the experiment and suitably disposes himself for the reception of the communication (experimental telepathy).

Secondly when the agent is a conscious experimenter, and the percipient is unaware of the experiment (called by Gurney, "transitional" cases).

Thirdly, when neither of the parties are making any conscious endeavour (spontaneous telepathy). To this class belong the very numerous cases where the agent is in some critical position, often *in articulo mortis*, and is not consciously endeavouring to communicate with the percipient who is quite unaware of the situation of the agent. The affect on the percipient, generally takes the form of a hallucination, more or less fully externalized, which unmistakably directs his attention to the agent.

There are also cases of what is usually called clairvoyance. Here there may be no apparent agent, while the percipient is acting consciously. For present purposes the term telepathy includes clairvoyance, *i.e.*, all kinds of communication "other than through the normal channels of the senses."

These being, according to present knowledge, the powers of the telepathic faculty we have to consider what are its limitations.

Firstly, the evidence seems to show that a telepathic transmission is *directional*. It passes more or less directly between the parties affected. An agent does not, so to say, radiate a telepathic impulse in all directions, which can be picked up by any sensitive at any point of the compass. Secondly there is no evidence that a percipient has anything approaching what might be called "pantoscopic" powers, that he can see things occurring, or pick up information available, anywhere on the earth.

The present question is how far these powers of extra-sensuous communication can reasonably be held to account for the alleged communications above described. The question is not an easy one to answer. Although there are some cases in which it can be easily decided that telepathy is either a probable or an im-

probable explanation, yet there are many others in which no such definite decision is possible.

Those cases in which the trance utterance or script gives information definitely known to those in physical or psychical proximity to the sensitive, must generally be referred to telepathic action. As already stated we cannot go beyond this hypothesis to account for such a phenomenon as an accurate description, of a deceased person, given to a sitter who was well acquainted with him. Nor can we safely give any other explanation when a question is asked by a sitter and the expected (and correct) answer is given. When, however, the answer is not that expected, but takes the form of a description of matters, accessory, yet pertinent, to the actual subject of the question, the telepathic explanation is hardly satisfactory. If the sensitive, so to say, can dig the answer out of the questioner's mind, we should anticipate that the expected answer - at the moment the most prominent idea in the latter's mind - would be seized by the sensitive. Now it is a noticeable fact that the expected answer to a direct question seldom comes, although the ostensible communicator may exhibit in his reply knowledge, often convincingly correct, of memories and circumstances pertinent to the question. For example, the sitter may ask for the name of some person well known both to himself and the alleged communicator. Probably, the name will not be given, but, in many cases, a description of the person in question, his house, his occupations, his peculiarities of manner, etc., will be given with much accuracy. The superficial sceptic asks for a plain answer to a plain question, but anyone who will reflect a little, will see that an answer accurately describing matters accessory to the question is eviden-

tially far more valuable than the plain, expected, and therefore telepathically accessible reply.

Speaking generally, we may conclude that, where a communication gives information known to the sitter, the telepathic explanation becomes the more improbable, the more remote the information is from the present thoughts of the sitter, and the less it accords with his expectations.

Next we have the cases in which the information given is unknown to the sitter. These are fairly numerous and roughly fall into two classes. Firstly where the information deals with past facts or events connected with the alleged communicator. Secondly, where it deals with contemporary events.

In regard to both these classes the determining factor seems to be the degree of psychical contact between the sensitive, and the person or persons who know of the past circumstances of the alleged communicator, or who are parties in the contemporary events referred to by him. For example, a person has several sittings with a sensitive. At these sittings a relative or friend of that person purports to communicate. Shortly afterwards some other person, who has no knowledge of the former sitter or his affairs, sits with the same sensitive. The same ostensible communicator gives information subsequently verified, either as to his own past, or in regard to contemporary events in which the previous sitter had taken part. Here the telepathic explanation is possible, for it may be that a sensitive remains more or less in psychical contact, at least for some little time, with those who have frequently sat with him.

On the other hand when the person, concerning whom the contemporary information is given, is unknown to the sensitive, telepathy *inter vivos* does not

seem to be a reasonable explanation. As for example, when "G. P." gave information as to the contemporary actions of his father, who was, at that time, unknown to Mrs. Piper (*vide* p. 54 above), or when A. V. B. communicating through Mrs. Leonard gave information appertaining to the affairs of two persons unknown to her (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxx.*, pp. 506-46).

There are many cases of this sort, and, as the possibility that the information had been acquired through normal channels is, for reasons above stated, excluded, there is no logical alternative to the provisional conclusion that the communications were initiated by extra-terrene influence.

It cannot, however, be denied that the potentialities of the telepathic faculty do introduce a certain atmosphere of uncertainty into evidence of this class. The boundaries of that faculty are far from being rigidly defined. There is also the anticipation, justified, to some extent by recent experiment, that further investigations may enlarge those boundaries.

Under these circumstances it cannot be claimed that the class of evidence dealt with in this chapter has that certitude which enables us to say with entire confidence that no known hypothesis, other than that of communication with the dead, will explain it. It must be admitted that it is strongly suggestive of that communication, but the number of cases in which the telepathic hypothesis is so improbable that it can safely be neglected, is hardly sufficient to provide definite proof. To reach this, we need additional evidence of a different kind, of such a nature that the telepathic explanation becomes too remote, too extravagant, for serious contemplation.

At first sight this seems an impossibility, for, if the information given in an alleged communication is

known to any living person it may conceivably have had a telepathic origin, while if not known it cannot be verified.

This difficulty, at first sight insurmountable, has yet, apparently, been surmounted in a manner which will be explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE CROSS CORRESPONDENCES

IN the previous chapter we have considered "direct" communications, those in which the ostensible communicator gives information through a single sensitive. We have seen also that the existence of telepathy makes it possible that information thus given may come, not from extra-terrene sources, but only from the minds of living beings. Furthermore, in Chapter II, examples have been given of the extraordinary and erratic powers of the subliminal of a sensitive, from which we infer that, when, as in trance or automatism, supra-liminal control is more or less in abeyance, the sub-liminal is likely to wander at large, and to distort, and colour, any affects, whether telepathic or extra-terrene, which impinge upon it.

If then, our evidence is to approximate to conclusiveness, the communications on which it is based must clearly be such as shall reduce the possibilities, both of telepathic origin and of sub-liminal distortion, to a minimum.

The explanation of the method by which this object is apparently being achieved, can be most simply given by setting forth the problem, so to say, from the other end.

It is clear that communication with the dead can never be proved without the active co-operation of the disembodied communicators. There must obviously be, on the other side, the will and the power to prove

communication, as there must be on this side the desire and the ability to assist in the proof. It is also a fair deduction that those who had most experience of the problem in this life, will, in the life beyond, be those most likely to make valuable contributions to its solution. Furthermore, since disembodied intelligence is higher than embodied intelligence, the disembodied must occupy the higher place in any joint scheme of experiment. We, at our end of the line, should take our orders from them. F. W. H. Myers anticipated in a remarkable manner the very phenomenon which we find to-day. He said:—

It is not we who are in reality the discoverers here. The experiments which are being made are not the work of earthly skill. All that we can contribute to the new result is an attitude of patience, attention, care; an honest readiness to receive and weigh whatever may be given into our keeping by intelligences beyond our own. Experiments, I say, there are; probably experiments of a complexity and difficulty which surpass our imagination; but they are made from the other side of the gulf by the efforts of spirits who discern pathways and possibilities which for us are impenetrably dark.

Such being his appreciation of the problem, we should expect that, if the power and the will to communicate survive death, Myers, disembodied, would attempt to carry on the investigations of Myers embodied, that he would apply his past experience, supplemented by the wider knowledge to which his present condition gives him access, to devise a scheme by which telepathic and sub-liminal interference should be minimised. F. W. H. Myers died in 1901. Soon thereafter we find apparently systematic attempts at communication on new lines. Of these

attempts the ostensible originator is Myers himself, assisted by Edmund Gurney, who pre-deceased him, and, later, by Richard Hodgson, who died in 1905 ; also, in some cases, the late Profs. Verrall, Sidgwick, and Butcher.

Let us, then, look at the problem from the apparent point of view of the above workers. They desire to prove to us that certain putative communications, received through sensitives, are originated by them. They know that if the information conveyed is known to living persons (as it must be known if it is to be verified), then their co-workers on earth will never be able to assure themselves that the information was not obtained by telepathy *inter vivos*. They have to use as their intermediaries human beings in a state of disintegration of consciousness. They are intimately acquainted with the erratic tendencies of the subliminal under this condition. They have, however, to use these unreliable and faulty machines as best they can. They have to induce an intermediary, a trance sensitive, or an automatist, to say or write what they want ; yet they know that if the sensitive understands, or thinks he understands, what he is writing, he is very likely to run off on a track of his own and, so to say, distort the message into what he himself thinks it ought to be. In this particular the communicator is as one dictating a letter to a semi-intoxicated and stupid amanuensis, whose knowledge of English is most imperfect, but who, with a confidence due to his potations, will not admit his ignorance, but supplies what he does not hear, or embroiders what he does not understand, from his own vocabulary.

It is interesting to note that the ostensible communicators often complain of this difficulty. Thus in one

of Mrs. Holland's scripts, purporting to emanate from Edmund Gurney, we find the following :—

I do wish you would not hamper us by trying to understand every word you write, as you write it. It is not meant for you. At least you may look at it after, if you will, but now you need only write. Do try to forget your abiding fear of being made a fool or a dupe. If we ever prompt you to fantastic follies you may leave us. But we only wish you to give us a few passive patient minutes each day. It is a form of restless vanity to fear that your hand is imposing upon yourself as it were. Leave *yourself* out of the matter. Your personality is not an equation in this problem. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xvi.*, p.207).

These are the difficulties which any scheme of communication has to surmount, or at least to minimise.

The course adopted by the communicators is, as far as we can see, the only one by which this end could be achieved. It is as follows :—

A subject is selected. It is split up into several fragments deliberately made obscure so as to be unintelligible in themselves. These fragments are transmitted through different automatists, and when, and only when, the various fragments are collected and analysed they are clearly seen to compose a single idea, or group of cognate ideas. To these communications the names of "cross correspondences" and "concordant automatisms" have been given.

Since correspondences of this nature are not reasonably explicable by the telepathic hypothesis, as will be shown later, and since the nature and number of the correspondences makes the possibility that they are the result of chance an absurd assumption, they must have an extra-terrene source.

To take an analogy; suppose half a dozen people in various places each receive one or more cuttings from a newspaper containing a few disconnected words or sentences, and suppose the recipients to send these cuttings to some central bureau, where it was found that the various fragments fitted together so as to form a connected paragraph. The only possible conclusion would be that the paragraph had been cut up, and the various fragments despatched, by one person, or group of persons. It would not be reasonable to say, either that several persons, unknown to one another, had been at work cutting up the same paragraph out of different copies of the same paper, and independently distributing the fragments, or that the recipients had cut up the papers themselves. The fact that the various fragments perfectly fitted together would negative any such explanations. In other words the evidence that the fragments had been despatched from one central source, *external to the recipients*, would be conclusive. Let it be particularly noted that the subject matter of the newspaper paragraph has no bearing on the question. The evidence is afforded by the correspondence of the fragments, which proves that they form part of a single paragraph, whatever the subject of that paragraph may be.

It will be readily understood that the task of the disembodied originator of a cross correspondence, is much more difficult than that of the human originator in the above analogy. The latter can make his correspondences—which are merely the meeting edges of various pieces of paper—as clear and definite as a pair of sharp scissors will permit. The former dare not make them too clear. He has always before him the knowledge that an obvious correspondence may be attributed to telepathy *inter vivos*. He has therefore

to compromise. He must, on the one hand, arrange that the correspondences between the independent fragments of script which he originates shall be definitely discernible by careful comparison; while, on the other hand, he must make these fragments so obscure that his intermediaries shall not, so to say, be able to guess the probable contour of the meeting edges, since we cannot be quite sure that there may not be a certain amount of telepathic leakage between sensitives.

Any cross correspondence therefore gains in evidential value, as it increases in complexity, and decreases in obviousness. Miss Johnson (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p.375) put this point most lucidly.

The characteristic of these cases, or at least of some of them, is that we do not get in the writing of one automatist anything like a mechanical verbatim reproduction of phrases in the other, we do not even get the same idea expressed in different ways. What we get is a fragmentary utterance in one script, which seems to have no particular point or meaning, and another fragmentary utterance in the other, of an equally pointless character; but when we put the two together, we see that they supplement one another, and that there is apparently one coherent idea underlying both, but only partially expressed in each. . . . If we simply find the same idea expressed, even though in different forms, by both automatists, it may be explained by telepathy between them; but it is much more difficult to suppose that the telepathic perception of one fragment could lead to the production of another fragment which can only, after careful comparison, be seen to be related to the first.

Complexity and obscurity, therefore, greatly increase the evidential value of the cross correspondences. But they inevitably make it difficult to appreciate that value without some study, and they make it easy for the superficial critic reading isolated scripts, in a casual manner, to say that they are nothing except dream-like vapourings.

The Rev. Joseph MacMahon, a leading American Roman Catholic, is reported to have said (*The Times*, December 13th, 1919): "I have tried, in my simplicity, to read the Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research and such a farrago of nonsense and puerilities I have never seen." The Rev. Father did not possibly appreciate when he uttered these words, that he was giving unconscious testimony to the evidential value of the cross-correspondences. If the scripts are unintelligible to the exalted intellect of a Roman cleric much more must they have been unintelligible to the meaner intellects of the automatists who transmitted them, and the greater, therefore, their value as evidence.

The number of cross-correspondences which have been recorded, since their systematic study first commenced, up to the present date—a period of about 15 years—is very considerable. Their number is difficult precisely to define, as there is a certain amount of overlapping between them. The following summary of the leading cases, with references to the volumes of the *Proc. S.P.R.*, where they will be found, will, however, satisfy the reader as to the weight of the evidence, or at least enable him to satisfy himself by reading the evidence.

The first systematic comparison of cross-correspondences between the script of the late Mrs. Verrall and other automatists will be found in that lady's
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paper in Vol. *xx.*, which analyses some 40 correspondences between her own scripts and those of Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Thompson, and Mrs. Forbes.

Miss Johnson's paper, *On the Automatic Writing of Mrs. Holland*, Vol. *xxi.*, contains details of four clear correspondences between the scripts of Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Verrall. Vol. *xxii.* contains Mr. Piddington's classic paper, *A Series of Concordant Automatisms*, which gives a very clear analysis of 24 correspondences between Mrs. Piper's trance script, and the scripts of Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland, Myers and Hodgson being the chief ostensible communicators. Vol. *xxiv.* contains a paper by Mrs. Sidgwick (p.170 *seq.*) regarding cross-correspondences, some 24 in number, between Mrs. Piper's trance script, written in America, and English automatists. In the same volume (pp.201-63) will be found Miss Johnson's *Second Report on Mrs. Holland's Script*. This paper gives six excellent correspondences between Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Salter (Miss Verrall), Mrs. Home and Mrs. Piper. Also in the same volume there is a paper by Mrs. Verrall (pp. 264-318) entitled, *A New Group of Experimenters*, analysing four correspondences between the planchette writings of Mr. and Miss "Mac" and other automatists.

In Vol. *xxv.* in Miss Johnson's *Third Report on Mrs. Holland's Script*, 16 correspondences with five other automatists are analysed very clearly and tabulated (pp. 222-3). In the same volume some 24 correspondences, between the scripts of Mrs. Willett and other automatists, are detailed in Mrs. Verrall's paper, *Notes on Mrs. Willett's Scripts* (pp.176-217).

In Vol. *xxvi.* the same lady gives three cases in her paper, *A Month's Record of Automatisms* (pp.24-56).

Vol. *xxvii.* (pp.1-156) contains a paper by Miss Johnson, *A Reconstruction of Some Concordant Auto-*

matisms, in which five complicated cases are subjected to very careful analysis.

In Vol. *xxix.* (pp.1-45) Mr. Piddington gives eight cases of the simpler kind of cross-correspondences.

In addition to the cross-correspondences there are two highly evidential cases in which the scripts are of the same nature as those of the cross-correspondences, but which have been obtained through one automatist only. These are firstly the "Staius" scripts described by the Rt. Hon. Gerald Balfour (Vol. *xxvii.*, pp.221-43) and secondly the remarkable series of scripts known as *The Ear of Dionysius*, described by the same author (Vol. *xxix.*, pp.198-243). In both cases the automatist was Mrs. "Willett." It is obvious that a series of scripts obtained through a single automatist, can be very good evidence, if, as in these cases, the knowledge displayed in the scripts is absolutely beyond the supra-liminal or sub-liminal knowledge of the automatist, and also if the various scripts remain unintelligible until the key to the puzzle is given in a final script.

I have selected the Ear of Dionysius for quotation, chiefly because Mr. Balfour's most lucid comments, which I give at length, as far as space permits, enable the reader to follow the case without much difficulty, and also because the neat manner in which all the isolated fragments fit together, like the bits of a jig-saw puzzle, when the key is given, is most interesting. The case will serve as a sample of a cross-correspondence if the reader will imagine that the scripts quoted were produced by different hands.

The matter started by the appearance of the phrase, "Dionysius' Ear, the Lobe," in a "Willett" script of August 26th, 1910. The script in which the phrase was contained was seen by Dr. and Mrs.

Verrall soon after the date of its production. They discussed the phrase and Dr. Verrall expressed his surprise that Mrs. Verrall did not know what it alluded to.

No further reference to the subject appeared in any scripts until January 10th, 1914. (Before this date Dr. Verrall had died.) The script of this date was as follows: (The letters in parenthesis do not, of course, form part of the script)

Script A. (Jan. 10th, 1914).

(a). Do you remember you did not know and I complained of your classical ignorance.

(b). It concerned a place where slaves were kept—and audition belongs, also acoustics.

(c). Think of the Whispering Gallery.

(d). To toil, a slave, the Tyrant—and it was called Orecchio, that's near

(e). Where were the fields of Enna

(f). An early pipe could be heard

(g). To sail for Syracuse

(h). Who beat the loud-sounding wave, who *smote* the moving furrows

(i). The heel of the Boot

(j). Dy Dy and then you think of Diana Dimorphism

(k). To fly to find Euripides

(l). Not the Pauline Philemon

This sort of thing is more difficult to do than it looked.

The explanation of the scripts is fairly clear. The first paragraph (a) is a reminder to Mrs. Verrall by the ostensible communicator, Dr. Verrall, of the above-mentioned incident.

Paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) are clear descriptions

of the Ear of Dionysius. This latter is to quote Mr. Balfour :

A kind of grotto hewn in the solid rock at Syracuse, and opening on one of the stone quarries which served as a place of captivity for the Athenian prisoners of war, who fell into the hands of the victorious Syracusans, after the failure of the famous siege, so graphically described by Thucydides. A few years later these quarries were again used as prisons by the elder Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse. The grotto of which I have spoken has the peculiar acoustic properties of a Whispering Gallery, and is traditionally believed to have been constructed or utilised by the Tyrant in order to hear (himself unseen) the conversations of his prisoners. Partly for this reason, and partly from a fancied resemblance to the interior of a donkey's ear, it came to be called *L'Orecchio di Dionisio*, or the Ear of Dionysius ; but the name only dates from the sixteenth century. The grotto is still one of the objects of interest which every visitor to Syracuse is taken to see.

The remaining allusions are explained by Mr Balfour as follows :

(e). The fields of Enna are in Sicily and introduced probably simply to indicate that place.

The atrocious pun in (f) is another reference to the Ear.

(g) and (h) refer to the ill-fated Athenian expedition to Syracuse.

(i). To the course taken by that expedition which passed around the " Heel " of Italy.

(j). Appears to be an attempt at the name Dionysius, which the subliminal of the automatist switches off in another and unmeaning direction.

(*k*) and (*l*) have a more complete explanation which must be extracted from Mr. Balfour's paper. (*Loc cit*, p. 203) :

A script written by Mrs. Holland in 1907 contains the words: "To fly to find Euripides Philemon." The script is quoted by Mr. Piddington in Volume *xxii.* of the *Proceedings*, p. 215, and the source of the reference to Euripides and Philemon given—namely, Browning's *Aristophanes Apology or the last Adventure of Balaustion*.

In *Aristophanes Apology* (writes Mr. Piddington) Balaustion tells to Philemon the story of how, on the night on which the news of the death of Euripides reached Athens, Aristophanes, flushed with wine, and with the success of his Thesmophoriazousæ came to her house and there justified his attacks on the dead poet; and of how the apology ended, Balaustion read to Aristophanes and the assembled company the *Hercule Furens* the original tablets of which Euripides had presented to her as a parting gift. The poem ends by Balaustion telling Philemon that she sent the original tablets to Dionysius tyrant of Sicily, who placed them in a temple of Apollo with this inscription:

"I also loved

The poet, Free Athenai cheaply prized—
King Dionusios—Archelaos like."

Balaustion then asks Philemon:

"If he too have not made a votive verse!"
and Philemon replies:

"Grant in good sooth, our great dead, all the
same,

Retain their sense, as certain wise men say,
I'd hang myself—to see Euripides."

Mr. Balfour proceeds:

The reference to Browning's poem is aptly chosen. Not only does it bring in Dionysius the Tyrant in the manner described, but also, though indirectly, the two other main topics alluded to in the script, namely, the Athenian expedition against Syracuse, and the stone-quarries where the Athenian prisoners worked, until they were sold as slaves, or released because they were able to recite Euripides. The second "adventure" of Balaustion inevitably recalls the first, related in the companion poem; and the first adventure starts from the defeat of the Athenian Expedition, and ends with Balaustion seeking safety for herself and her whole ship's company from the threatened hostility of the Syracusans by the exercise of a similar gift of recitation.

One other point is perhaps worthy of mention. Browning's line:

"I'd hang myself—to see Euripides."

which is an almost literal translation from a fragment of Philemon which has come down to us, is misquoted by Mrs. Holland, and after her by Mrs. Willett in the form "To fly to find Euripides." I owe to Mrs. Verrall the suggestion that the remark in the Willet script about "this sort of thing" being "more difficult to do than it looked," is due to a recognition by the communicator of the misquotation—a misquotation which in his lifetime Dr. Verrall "who was much interested in Mrs. Holland's allusion to Lucus and Philemon, never failed to note and regret."

"So far" says Mr. Balfour "all is plain sailing," and I hope it may be so to the reader.

We pass to the next script (February 28th, 1914), which is as follows:

Script B. (Feb; 28th. 1914).

Some confusion may appear in the matter transmitted but there is now being started an experiment not a new experiment but a new subject, and not exactly that but a new line which joins with a subject already got through

A little anatomy if you please

Add one to one

One Ear x (*sic*) one eye

The one eyed Kingdom

No, in the K of the Blind the one-eyed man is King

It is about a one-eyed

The entrance to the Cave Arethusa

Arethusa is only to *indicate* it does not belong to the one-eyed. A Fountain on the Hill Side.

What about Baulastion (*sic*)

(Drawing of a Boot)

Twelve little nigger boys thinking not of Styx,

Some were eaten up and then there were six.

(At this point Mrs. Willett ceased to write and began dictating to the sitter, Mr. Balfour).

Some one said—Oh I'll try, I'll try. Oh! Some one's showing me a picture and talking at the same time. Somebody said, Give her time, give her time . . . Oh if I could only say it quickly, and get done with it. Its about a cave, and a group of men. Somebody then—a trident rather like a toasting fork I think.

Poseidon, Poseidon.

Who was it said: It may be that the gulfs will wash us down—find the great Achilles that we knew? He's got a flaming torch in his hand. And then someone said to me: Can't you think of Noah and the grapes?

Optics—Oh! *that* you know (putting a finger to her eye).

Oh, if I could only say what I hear! Oh, I *will* try, I *will* try.

Do you know that man with the glittering eyes I once saw?

He hit me with one word now.

Aristotle.

And poetry, the language of the Gods. Somebody killed a President once and called out—something in Latin, and I only heard one word of it, Tironus, Tiranus, Tiranius, something about sic. (*Sic semper tyrannis*—uttered by Booth when he murdered President Lincoln).

What is a tyrant?

Lots of wars—a Siege (spoken loud and with emphasis) I hear the sound of chipping. (Here Mrs. W. struck the fingers of one hand repeatedly against the palm of the other). Its on stone. Now, wait a minute. Oh, if I could only get that word. Oh! its got to do with the serf. It's about that man who said it was better—oh! a shade among the shades. Better to be a slave among the living he said. (Spoken by the shade of Achilles to Ulysses in Hades).

Oh, the toil—woe to the vanquished.

That one eye has got something to do with the one ear.

(Sighs). That's what they wanted me to say.

(A pause and then sobbing). He was turned into a fountain that sort of Stephen man, he was turned into a fountain.

Why? That's the point. Why?

Somebody said something about Father Cam
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walking arm in arm with the Canongate? What *does* that mean?

I'll try and say it. (Pause).

It may take some considerable to get the necessary references through. But let us peg away; and keep your provisional impressions to yourself. May (Mrs. Verrall) is to hear nothing of all this at present; *because this is something good and worth doing*, and my Aristotelian friend—

(At this point the subject is abruptly broken off and not referred to again until the very end, when E. G. (Gurney) intervenes to close the sitting).

Enough for this time. There is sense in that which has been got through, though some disentanglement is needed. A literary association of ideas pointing to the influence of two discarnate minds.

It will be observed that this communication contains references to subjects contained in the previous script—the Ear, the Tyrant Dionysius, the stone quarries, Syracuse (“War,” “Siege,” and “Arethusa”), the heel of Italy, the adventures of Balaustion.

There is, however, much new matter. Mr. Balfour says:

We are now told that an experiment is being attempted; and that this experiment consists “in a literary association of ideas,” some of which have already appeared, while others are now being introduced for the first time. Much importance is attached to the experiment: it is “something good and worth doing.” There are additional references yet to come which may take a “considerable time” to “get through.” Meanwhile Mrs. Verrall (May), is not to be told about it:

any provisional impressions the other investigators may form, are to be kept to themselves.

The literary riddle—for such it proves ultimately to be—which is thus in the course of being propounded—is the work, we are told, of two intimate friends no longer in the flesh. It is intended to be characteristic of them, and to serve as evidence of their personal survival.

The identity of the two friends, indicated without disguise in the later extracts, is made sufficiently clear even in the present one, to anybody acquainted with previous Willett Scripts. They are Professor S. H. Butcher and Dr. A. W. Verrall.

Professor Butcher died in December, 1910, and Dr. Verrall, in June 1912. The word "Aristotle," combined with "Poetry," is an additional clue, for Butcher wrote a work upon Aristotle's *Poetics* which is well known to all classical scholars. Hence the description of him as "My Aristotelian friend" given later on . . . Another symbolic reference to Prof. Butcher is "Father Cam walking arm in arm with the Cannongate." This signifies the association, in the persons of Verrall and Butcher, of the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh. Butcher was himself a highly distinguished Cambridge man, and in later life represented his University in the House of Commons; but he was also for many years Professor of Greek at Edinburgh.

. . . We have now learnt that the subjects associated together in A. and reproduced in B. are intended to find their place in some kind of literary scheme carefully thought out and devised by two friends who in their lifetime were eminent classical scholars. They are, as it were, pieces which have to be fitted into a single whole, more or less after

the manner of a jig-saw puzzle. The tale of pieces, however is not yet complete. Two additional subjects of great importance lie embedded in extract B., and my next task must be to disengage them. They are the stories of Polyphemus and Ulysses, and of Acis and Galatea—the first derived from Homer's *Odyssey*, the second from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. (Ancient tradition placed the Cyclopes in Sicily).

In the story told by Homer, Ulysses is overtaken by a storm on his voyage home from Troy, and driven to the country of the Lotus Eaters. He reaches next, the land of the Cyclopes, a race of one-eyed giants to whom the laws of hospitality are unknown. Going ashore with twelve of his companions, he enters the cave where dwells one of the giants, by name Polyphemus, a son of the sea-god Poseidon. Polyphemus is away tending his flocks and herds, but returns towards evening and discovering the strangers, imprisons them in his cave and proceeds to devour them, two at a time, in three successive meals. But Ulysses and his six remaining companions have devised a terrible revenge. They prepare a stake of olive wood with its end sharpened to a point; and having made the Cyclops dead drunk with wine they had brought from the ship, plunge the end of the stake into the embers, and bore out the monster's single eye with its glowing point. Next morning, when the blinded giant rolls away the stone from the mouth of the cave to let his flocks pass out, himself remaining in the doorway to catch his tormentors, Ulysses and his companions escape from his clutches concealed beneath the bellies of the sheep, and clinging to their fleeces. The allu-

sions to this story are scattered in a fine confusion through the script ; but once we have the key in our hand there is no difficulty in detecting them. The "one eye," the "twelve little nigger boys thinking not of Styx, some were eaten up and then there were six," the reference to a cave and a group of men, to Poseidon with his trident, to the flaming torch, to Noah and the grapes—all fall into place, once we realize that they belong to the story of Ulysses and Polyphemus.

The allusion to the meeting of Ulysses in the underworld with "the great Achilles whom we knew" seems at first sight irrelevant. I suspect it is only a roundabout way of suggesting Ulysses himself. The actual names of the two principal characters in the story are never mentioned ; and the same remark applies to the story of Acis and Galatea. In this tale, as in the other, the one-eyed Cyclops plays the part of villain in the piece. Acis, a shepherd dwelling at the foot of Mount Etna, and Galatea the sea nymph, are lovers. Unfortunately Galatea is also beloved by the "Monster Polypheme," as Handel's libretto calls him. Rejected by the nymph and mad with jealousy, he hurls a mighty rock at his rival, and crushes him to death. Galatea cannot save her lover, but she gives him a kind of immortality by changing him into the stream which bears his name, and has its source in a fountain issuing from the rock by which he was overwhelmed.

Two passages in Extract B refer to this story. The first speaks of "a fountain on the hill side," followed by a rough drawing intended for a volcano. The second occurs towards the end of the Extract. "He was turned into a Fountain that sort of Stephen

man, he was turned into a Fountain. Why? that's the point: Why?" "That sort of Stephen man" describes, of course, the manner in which Acis came by his death. To the question Why? an answer is given by Extract C. There is a point in it, but a point which only becomes intelligible when the whole of the riddle has been read. Up to this stage the riddle remains a riddle still. At all events it did so to me. We are told to join the one ear to the one eye; but I doubt if any one can say how the Ear of Dionysius and the stone quarries of Syracuse are connected with the stories of Polyphemus and Ulysses, and of Acis and Galatea, except by the geographical accident of their all belonging to Sicily. Such a mere geographical unity would hardly justify the communicators in describing their scheme as "something good and worth doing" which it had taken the united industry of two scholars to think out.

The next script was as follows:

Script C. (March 2nd, 1914).

The Aristotelian to the Hegelian friend, greeting.
Also the Rationalist to the Hegelian friend, greeting.

("The Aristotelian" is S. H. Butcher. "The Rationalist" is A. W. Verrall, possibly with allusion to his book *Euripides the Rationalist*. The "Hegelian Friend" is Mr. Balfour.)

These twain be about a particular task and now proceed with it.

A Zither, that belongs the sound. Also stones, the toil of prisoners and captives beneath the Tyrants rod.

The Stag, not stag, go on.

Stagyr, write, rite

(Here Mrs. Willett ceased writing and proceeded to dictate),

Somebody said to me Mousike

I can see Edmund (Gurney) as if he were working something ; and the thing he is working is me. It isn't really me, you know ; it is only a sort of asleep me, that I can look at. He is very intent—and those two men I don't know. One is very big and tall with a black beard. The other man I don't see so well. But he holds up a book to me. Oh ! Somebody wrote a book about something, and this man, who's holding up the book, wrote a book about *him*. And the reference he wants isn't just now to what *he* wrote, but to what this person he wrote about wrote. What does *Ars Poetica* mean ?

Edmund said to me, Juvenal also wrote satires — and then he laughed and said, Good Shot

The pen is mightier than the sword. Oh it's so confusing. Stones belong and so does a pen.

Somebody said, Try her with the David story. She might get it that way. The man he sent to battle hoping he'd get killed because he wanted him out of the way

A green-eyed monster

Now all of a sudden I had it. Jealousy that first infirmity of petty minds

Such an odd human story of long ago

He that has an ear to hear, let him hear

What is an ear made for

* * * * *

Gurney says she has done enough now but there is more (to come) later. Until the effort is completed, the portions as they come, are not to be seen by any other automatist.

Mr. Balfour comments on this script as follows :

After what has already been said there is comparatively little in this extract that requires further explanation. Nevertheless some important additions are made in it to the stock of materials at our disposal.

First an answer has been given to the emphatic question, asked in the previous script, concerning the cause which lead to Acis having been changed into a fountain. The cause was jealousy, a lover's jealousy like that which sent Uriah to perish. Jealousy, then, is one of the pieces which have to be fitted into the finished picture of our jig-saw puzzle.

Next mention is made for the first time, of a *Zither*—the sound of which instrument we are told " belongs " also of *Mousike*, the Greek word for the Art of Music. Further, the references to Aristotle seem to carry with them a significance beyond what they possessed in the previous script. There they appeared to serve merely as a symbol of S. H. Butcher. Here they are apparently introduced on their own account as well. " The Stagirite " is a correct description of Aristotle who was born at Stageira. It would seem, however, an odd title to use in this place unless with the deliberate purpose of inviting attention. Again, a few sentences later, it is explicitly stated that a reference is wanted not to what Butcher wrote about Aristotle but to something which Aristotle himself wrote ; and we are left to infer from the words *Ars Poetica* which follow, that this something is to be found in Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry.

Lastly, a rather quaint transition leads up to yet another new subject. The Latin words *Ars Poetica* to a classical scholar suggest, *Horace* more readily

than Aristotle. Horace is not actually named, but the thought of him is clearly implied in the interpolated remark, attributed to Edmund Gurney, "Juvenal also wrote satires."

"Juvenal *also*" must mean "Juvenal as well as Horace." Aristotle, I need hardly say, did not write satires.

We have here, I think, one of those subtle touches not uncommon in Mrs. Willett's automatic productions, and making strongly for their genuineness. The idea which the communicator wants to "get through" is that of *Satire*. The name of Juvenal, the Satirist *par excellence*—a name which has previously occurred in Willett Script—serves as a stepping-stone, by means of an association familiar to any educated person. On the other hand, the train of association which leads from Aristotle's *Poetics* to Juvenal, using Horace as an *un-expressed middle term*, seems to me altogether foreign to Mrs. Willett, and outside the scope of any knowledge with which she can reasonably be credited.

The notion of satire is continued in the words that immediately follow: "The pen is mightier than the sword . . . stones belong and so does a pen." As they stand these words are rather obscure; but the sequel shows that the "stones" are the stones of the quarry-prisons, and the pen is the pen of a satirist.

Let me now recapitulate. The scripts have furnished us with a number of disjointed topics: the problem is to combine them into a literary unity.

Here is list of the leading topics so far given:

The Ear of Dionysius.

The stone-quarries of Syracuse in which prisoners were confined.

The story of Polyphemus and Ulysses.

The story of Acis and Galatea.

Jealousy.

Music and the sound of a musical instrument.

Something to be found in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Satire.

I have already compared these topics to the separate pieces in a jig-saw puzzle. They might perhaps be still more aptly likened to the letters in a letter-game. Each letter has a significance of its own ; their joint significance is only realised when the word they together spell has been discovered. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Now obviously, if one or more of the parts are missing the difficulty of divining the whole is progressively increased. Extract C, you will notice, ends with an intimation that more is to come, and repeats the injunction, already given as respects Mrs. Verrall, but now made general, that the portions as they come are not to be shewn to any other automatist until the effort is completed.

For a long time we waited in vain, and it was not until nearly a year and a half later, in August, 1915, that a return to it was made. The "sitter" on this occasion was Mrs. Verrall, who had not been allowed to see either of the scripts from which Extracts B and C have been taken.

The relevant passages in this new script are as follows :

Script D. (Aug. 2, 1915.)

Someone speaks a tall broad figure with a dark beard & eyes that emit light.

Ecate

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(Mrs. V. Yes.)

The Aural instruction was I think understood
Aural appertaining to the Ear

(Mrs. V. Yes.)

and now he asks HAS the *Satire* satire been
identified

(Mrs. V. I don't know.)

Surely you have had my messages concerning it
[it] belongs to the Ear & comes in

(Mrs. V. I have not had any messages.)

It has a thread. Did they not tell you of refer-
ences to a *Cave*

(Mrs. V. No, not in connection with the Ear of
Dionysius.)

The mild eyed melancholy Lotus Eaters came.

That belongs to the passage [*i.e.* to the passage in
the *Odyssey* preceding that which tells the story of
Polyphemus.] immediately before the one I am now
trying to speak of. men in a cave herds

(At this point Mrs. V. repeated, half aloud, the
last two words.)

listen don't talk, herds & a great load of firewood
& the EYE
olive wood staff

the man clung to the fleece of a Ram & so passed
out surely that is plain

(Mrs. V. Yes.)

well conjoin that with Cythera & the Ear-man

He said Aristotle then Poetics The incident was
chosen as being evidential of identity & it arose out
of the Ear train of thought.

There is a Satire

write Cyclopean Masonry, why do you say
masonry I said Cyclopean

Philox He laboured in the stone quarries and

drew upon the earlier writer for material for his Satire Jealousy

The story is quite clear to me & I think it should be identified

a musical instrument comes in something like a mandoline

thrumming thrumming that is the sense of the word

He wrote in those stone quarries belonging to the Tyrant

[Drawing of an Ear.]

The Ear theme is in it too The pen dipped in vitriol that is what resulted & S H [Professor Butcher was familiarly known among his old friends by the two first initials of his name.] knows the passage in Aristotle which also comes in There's a fine tangle for your unravelling.

Sicily

He says when you have identified the classical allusions he would like to *be told*.

In this Extract, again, there is little with which we are not already familiar. But that little contains the key to the puzzle.

"Cythera"; "Cyclopean, Philox, He laboured in the stone quarries and drew upon the earlier writer for material for his Satire, Jealousy"—in these words I will not say that he who runs may read the riddle, but he will certainly have a fair inkling of it if he first takes the trouble to read up the account given of a certain Philoxenus of Cythera in *Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, or in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Philoxenus was a writer of dithyrambs, a species of irregular lyric poetry which combined music with

verse, the musical instrument most generally employed being the Kithara or Zither, a kind of lyre. He was a native of Cythera, and at the height of his reputation spent some time in Sicily at the Court of Dionysius the Tyrant of Syracuse. He ultimately quarrelled with his patron and was sent to prison in one of the stone-quarries.

So far the accounts that have come down to us agree ; but they differ as to the cause of the quarrel. Most writers, according to the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ascribe the oppressive action of Dionysius "to the wounded vanity of the tyrant, whose poems Philoxenus not only refused to praise, but, on being asked to revise one of them, said the best way of correcting it would be to draw a black line through the whole paper." This version of the quarrel is also followed by the writer in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and by Grote in his *History of Greece*. There was, however, another account, mentioned in the *Dictionary of Biography and Mythology* only to be rejected, which ascribed the disgrace of the poet "to too close an intimacy with the tyrant's mistress Galateia."

I now come to the heart of the mystery which has hitherto baffled us. The most famous of the dithyrambic poems of Philoxenus was a piece entitled *Cyclops* or *Galatea*. Of this poem only two or three lines have been preserved ; and any attempt to reconstruct its plot must depend on other sources of information. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says of it : "His masterpiece was the *Cyclops*, a pastoral burlesque on the love of the *Cyclops* for the fair *Galatea*, written to avenge himself upon *Dionysius*, who was wholly or par-

tially blind of one eye." This falls in well with the references in the scripts to *Satire*; but does not provide much of a foundation for the references to the stories of Ulysses and Polyphemus and of Acis and Galatea, and to the topic of jealousy. The *Dictionary of Biography and Mythology* helps even less. Moreover, it states that the poem was composed in the poet's native island; whereas the script affirms that it was written in the stone-quarries.

I have searched through various other English authorities and books of reference as well as a few foreign ones, in order to discover, if possible, whether there was any single modern source from which the story told or implied in the scripts could be supposed to be derived. Apart from works in German or Latin—languages which Mrs. Willett does not understand—there are only two books, so far as I have been able to discover, which can fairly be said to fulfil this condition. One of these is Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*. Lempriere's account is as follows: "A dithyrambic poet of Cythera, who enjoyed the favour of Dionysius tyrant of Syracuse for some time, till he offended him by seducing one of his female singers. During his confinement Philoxenus composed an allegorical poem, called Cyclops, in which he had delineated the character of the tyrant under the name of Polyphemus, and represented his mistress under the name of Galatea, and himself under that of Ulysses." The other is a work on the *Greek Melic Poets* by Dr. Herbert Weir Smyth, Professor of Greek at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, obviously intended for scholars, and not in the least likely to attract attention from the general public. The copy I have seen was a presentation copy sent by the publishers to

the late Dr. Verrall, who thought well of the book and used it (so Mrs. Verrall told me) as a text-book in connection with some of his lectures.

“ Like Simonides,” writes Professor Smyth, “ Philoxenus was a man of the world, a friend of princes, and many stories are told of his nimble wit at the Syracusan Court. His friendship with Dionysios the Elder was finally broken either by his frank criticism of the tragedies of the tyrant or in consequence of his passion for Galateia, a beautiful flute-player, who was the mistress of Dionysios. Released from prison by the prince to pass judgment on his verse, the poet exclaimed: ‘ take me back to the quarries.’ In his confinement he revenged himself by composing his famous dithyramb entitled either *Kyklops* or *Galateia*, in which the poet represented himself as Odysseus, who, to take vengeance on Polyphemus (Dionysios), estranged the affections of the nymph Galateia, of whom the *Kyklops* was enamoured.”

Here evidently is the literary unity of which we were in search and which was to collect the scattered parts of the puzzle devised by the two friends on the other side into a single whole. It is to be found in the version just given of the plot of the *Cyclops* of Philoxenus. Dionysius and his “ Ear,” the stone-quarries of Syracuse, Ulysses and Polyphemus, Acis and Galatea, Jealousy, and Satire—all these topics fall naturally and easily into place in relation to this account of the poem. Music and the thrumming of a musical instrument can be fitted in without much difficulty, as belonging to the characteristics of dithyrambic poetry. It only remains to trace the passage in Aristotle which “ comes in,” and which “ S. H. knows.”

There are two passages occurring within a page of each other in the first and second chapters of Aristotle's *Poetics*, either of which might be the passage referred to. One of these is general, and classes the dithyramb with those kinds of poetry which depend for their effects not only upon rhythm and metre, but also upon melody. The other distinguishes between the poetry which aims at representing men as worse, and that which aims at representing them as better, than they really are; and mentions the *Cyclops* of Philoxenus as a specimen of the former—that is to say, as a Satirical poem. This second passage is referred to by Professor Smyth in the paragraph following the one I have already quoted. The same paragraph lays stress upon the essentially musical character of the dithyramb, and upon the fame of Philoxenus as musical composer no less than as poet.

Script D closed with a request from Gurney that he should be told as soon as the classical allusions had been identified. This request was complied with about a fortnight later, as will be seen from the following:

Script E. (Aug. 19, 1915.)

(Present: G. W. B.)

(G. W. B. First of all, Gurney, I want to tell you that all the classical allusions recently given to Mrs. Verrall are now completely understood.)

Good—at last!

(G. W. B. We think the whole combination extremely ingenious and successful.)

& A W ish—

(G. W. B. What is the word after “A. W.”?)

A W-ish

(G. W. B. Yes.)

Also S H-ish
(G. W. B. Yes.)

For the rest, the above extract is chiefly interesting for its insistence upon the claim that the whole scheme is characteristic of the two friends who have devised it, and therefore points to the survival of their distinctive personalities.

I have quoted at length from Mr. Balfour's admirable paper because his lucid analysis of the scripts makes it clear that the naturalistic explanation—that the whole puzzle was subliminally framed by the sensitive herself—is wholly inapplicable. The scripts contain a mass of information beyond the reach of any but a classical specialist ; certainly quite beyond that of a lady who, as Mr. Balfour tells us, has no more classical knowledge than the ordinary educated Englishwoman.

My clerical readers are, of course, all good classics, but I wonder if any of them knew even the name of Philoxenus ?

When we consider that the above case is typical, subject to the difference above referred to, of some 150 cross-correspondences which have been recorded during the last fourteen years, we have, obviously, before us a phenomenon for which the volume and weight of the evidence is very considerable. Some explanation which will fit the facts, must be given. Let us summarize the possible alternatives to the acceptance of the hypothesis that these communications are, as they claim to be, initiated by some extra-terrene intelligences.

The alternative explanations are five in number. The first is deliberate fraud. This has only to be stated to be dismissed as absurd. If anyone thinks that a distinguished Privy Councillor, and other per-

sons of consideration, have combined in a heartless conspiracy to deceive, he must be impervious to the dictates of reason and common sense.

The second alternative explanation is chance coincidence. This is not, indeed, capable of arithmetical disproof. It is nevertheless quite obvious that the number of the correspondences enormously exceeds that which can possibly be attributed to the operation of the laws of chance.

The third explanation is that of subliminal recrudescence of memory and exaltation of faculty. This has already been discussed in Chapter II. above. It has been shown that these possibilities cannot safely be disregarded, however, remote they may seem, until an exhaustive examination of the normally acquired knowledge of the sensitives has been made. This examination is carried out in every case, and all information which can, even remotely, be traced to normally acquired knowledge, is eliminated. For example, a reference to the latter part of Mr. Balfour's paper will show how carefully all normal sources for the information contained in Mrs. Willett's scripts, were explored. The inquirer may be quite confident that in the S.P.R. records nothing is admitted as having a possible extra-normal origin which is traceable to normal causes.

The fourth alternative is telepathy. The powers and limitations of this faculty have been discussed in the previous chapter (p. 57 *seq.*), with which should be read Miss Johnson's remarks on p. 69 above. The telepathic hypothesis may, as she says, be strained to explain the simplest kinds of cross-correspondences between two sensitives alone—the mechanical reproduction of common phrases in both scripts—or even the appearance of the same idea expressed in different,

yet simple and obvious ways. But it breaks down altogether when we come to the cases (the great majority of the cross-correspondences) where the individual scripts are meaningless in themselves and only acquire a definite meaning when brought together and, even more so, when a multiple correspondence, between more than two automatists, is concerned.

Thus in the simple cases, one automatist, acting as agent, may transmit an idea comprehensible to himself to another automatist, acting as percipient which the latter embodies in his script. But when the script produced by the agent automatist is incomprehensible to himself, both supra-liminally and subliminally, how can he transmit a comprehensible idea concerning it ?

Telepathy, then, is an *improbable* explanation for any of the cross correspondences, and an *impossible* explanation (according to present knowledge) for the great majority of them.

The fifth alternative is that of misinterpretation. The evidential value of the cross correspondences obviously stands or falls on the correctness of the interpretation of the scripts.

If it could be shown that the interpretations given by the investigators were incorrect, or even that equally plausible interpretations were possible which did not show correspondences, those who deny that there is evidence of communication with the dead would be justly entitled to say that the investigators had interpreted these, necessarily obscure scripts to suit their preconceived belief in that communication, that they had strained facts to find correspondences where none really existed.

Fortunately this is a question which can readily be

decided. Anyone possessed of some literary knowledge and a moderately good library can verify the correctness of the interpretations for himself.

Criticism on these lines if well founded, would be destructive. It would destroy all the best evidence for communication with the dead and also so shatter our confidence in the impartiality of the investigators that no further reliance could be safely placed on their work, and would reduce the voluminous records of the S.P.R. to mere waste paper from the point of view of the serious inquirer.

It is therefore quite clear that it is to this point that the attacks of those who deny extra-terrene communication can be most profitably directed.

The records of the cross correspondences have been before the public for fourteen years in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. which are readily obtainable by the public. We do not, however, find that any single one of the opponents of psychic research, any single one of those who so vehemently deny the possibility of communication with the dead, have ever endeavoured to show, by detailed and reasoned argument, that the scripts have been misinterpreted. They have never directed any attack to this point, so easily accessible, in the walls of the evidence, where a successful breach would bring the whole structure to the ground. We must therefore conclude that those critics who lack neither skill nor vehemence, must have carefully reconnoitered this portion of the defences and found it far too strong for reasoned attack. They have, therefore, confined themselves to the scientifically profitless, but far easier, task of bombarding those walls with high explosive generalities, which, although they make no impression on them, yet burst with much pomp and circumstance, and

inevitably impress the spectators on the surrounding hill-tops, with the might of the attack.

The plain practical man, who can understand the utter futility of mere generalities as criticism in a matter of this sort, must find his confidence in the evidential value of the cross correspondences greatly strengthened.

Enough has, I think, been said to satisfy the reader that there is a great mass of evidence unexplicable by any other hypothesis, except that some non-human intelligences are communicating with us human beings.

We want, if we can, to get further than this and to obtain an assurance, not merely that the communications are due to extra-terrene influence, but that they are indeed originated by their ostensible authors, namely certain persons who have once lived on this earth.

Before entering upon a discussion of the evidence for the authenticity of the communications, we must consider the possibility of extra-terrene personation. If any intelligences besides ordinary human beings, exist in the universe, they may have powers, similar to the human faculties of telepathy and clairvoyance, but far more developed than those of earthly sensitives. If so, it is conceivable that "lying spirits" may thus be able to extract, from the storage of memory of deceased persons, enough matter to enable them to personate the ostensible communicators. This conception cannot obviously be directly disproved. However, great the apparent authenticity of the communications may be, by extending the supposed telepathic powers of the personating intelligences, and by assuming that they have the fullest access to the earth memories of the departed, no limits need be placed to the perfection of the personations. As

Mr. H. Arthur Smith says "it is hopeless to find any personation agent to put into our polling booths to detect such deceptions."

The hypothetical personating intelligences may be of two kinds. They may be either personalities who have once lived on this earth, or they may be a race of entities who have never been embodied, in theological language "devils." Whichever they are, they must obviously be actuated by evil motives since their object is to deceive mankind. If this were so, should we not find in the vast mass of communications attempts to subvert faith and morals? Diabolic intelligences certainly would not rest content with the very mild moral obliquity of "pulling the legs" of psychical investigators. They would surely proceed to greater lengths and endeavour, with Satanic thoroughness, to bring these rash men and women to perdition. We find, however, throughout the records of the alleged communications, nothing whatever of an evil nature, nothing tending, even remotely, to subvert faith or morals. We also look in vain for that outbreak of crime, or madness, amongst psychic investigators which mediævally minded Christians would tell us is the inevitable result of having "dealings with the devil." The top floor of 20 Hanover Square stands still where it was, and does not seem likely to disappear in a faint blue cloud leaving only a slight smell of burning, as according to Ingoldsby precedents it should.

The extravagance and grotesqueness of the "lying spirit" hypothesis must be its own reputation.

Apart altogether from any deliberate attempt at personation, there is the obvious possibility of confusion in the transmission of communications. The ostensible communicators themselves, seem to be

fully conscious of this. Thus Myers H. wrote in 1904. (*Proc S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p. 236.)

It is impossible for me to know how much of what I send reaches you, and how much you are able to set down. I feel as if I had presented my credentials, reiterated the proofs of my identity, in a wearisomely frequent manner. But yet I cannot feel as if I had made any true impression.

In regard to trance communications the possibilities of confusion on the "other side" and misinterpretation on this, seem to be specially recognized by the controls and communicators *vide* Caps II., III. and V. of Mrs. Sidgwick's paper, *The Psychology of Mrs. Piper's Trance Phenomena*. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxviii.*)

It may be said at once that definite and unmistakable evidence of authenticity cannot be attained. Returning to the analogy of the newspaper cuttings (*vide* p. 68 above), we see that if the distributor of the cuttings wished to tell the recipients who he was, he had only to sign his name on each cutting as evidence of his identity. The disembodied communicators can, of course, give their names, and do so frequently. The name is indeed often repeated in the most insistent manner, as if the communicator wished to make it perfectly clear that it was he himself, and none other, who was communicating. The following example, taken at random from Mrs. Willett's script, shews this:

Myers I have not done yet. To Lodge this may have meaning. Let him remember the occasion *Myers*. I am not vague. I want an answer to the script from Lodge *Myers*. Tell him I want an answer.

In the case of other automatists we also find that

communications are generally signed with the name, or initials, of the ostensible authors. Furthermore, as we have seen on p. 37 above, special means have been taken, in cases where two intelligences habitually communicate in the same script, to distinguish clearly between them.

It is clear, however, that these signatures are not, in themselves, evidence of identity. They cannot be accepted as such, any more than the reader's bankers would accept his name typewritten on a cheque, as a sufficient signature.

If the handwriting of a script resembled that of the ostensible communicator this would furnish some evidence of identity. We do not, however, find, nor could we expect it, that communicators have the power to cause automatists to reproduce the handwriting which they adopted when on earth. A slight similarity is, indeed, sometimes traceable between a script and the handwriting of the ostensible communicator. This resemblance is, however, too vague and infrequent to be evidential.

Evidence of identity can only be obtained by inference from the nature of the scripts which must be considered as anonymous in spite of the fact that they contain the names, or initials, of those who purport to be their authors. In everyday life we often venture to identify, with confidence, the author of an unsigned article in a paper or magazine. We do so by virtue of our previous experience of his literary style, and our acquaintance with his knowledge of the subject, and the views and opinions which he holds upon it. These characteristics are evidence, but evidence which suffers from the inevitable disadvantage that it is *personal*. Thus a person, who has an intimate acquaintance with the works of a living writer,

may feel quite sure that a certain anonymous article is from his pen, and from no other. He might, however, find it very difficult to convince some other person, unacquainted with the writer's works, that his opinion was correct.

In this matter, therefore, we have inevitably to attach weight to the opinions of those who intimately knew the ostensible communicators when they were alive. Thus when Sir O. Lodge or Mr. Piddington tell us that certain scripts are highly characteristic in style or matter of the late Mr. Myers, with whom they were so well acquainted when he was on earth, we must give due weight to these opinions, although they are not translatable into terms of concrete evidence. In some cases, such as the scripts of the Ear of Dionysius, these characteristics can be appreciated even by those unfamiliar with the works of the ostensible communicators.

It may also be remarked that the very scheme and nature of the cross-correspondences, the obvious effort so to frame the communications as to render them difficult of explanation by telepathy, the general use of classical material in the scripts, seem very characteristic of men who were at once experienced psychical investigators, and profound classical scholars.

There is also another way by which fairly strong evidence of identity may be obtained. If we ask a communicator what a certain subject, phrase, or passage in a book means to him and we receive answers through various sensitives which are appropriate to the communicator's earthly connections with that subject, or phrase, it is obviously evidence of identity. It is true that ideas pertinent to the given subject are within the minds of living persons, but a

definite combination of pertinent ideas, may be specially appropriate to a particular personality, and to no other.

Thus, for example, the question, "What does the word *Lethe* suggest to you?" was put by Mr. G. B. Dorr to the ostensible Myers, through Mrs. Piper, in America.

To any non-classical reader this word does not suggest anything more than the name of one of the rivers of the under-world in Greek mythology, whose waters gave oblivion to those who drank them, and this was all that it suggested to Mr. Dorr, the sitter, himself. Also at a later date the same question was asked of Myers through Mrs. Willett, in England. In both cases the ostensible communicator answered the question by giving a large number of allusions and passages pertinent to the word, but most of them quite beyond the knowledge of anyone except a widely read classical scholar, such as F. W. H. Myers himself was.

This question gave rise to a striking incident strongly, if not conclusively, demonstrating the operation of a disembodied intelligence, which, as it is quite short, may be quoted here, though somewhat out of its proper place. (*Vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. xxv., p.120 *seq.*) Sir O. Lodge had sent the above question to Mrs. Willett, which was asked and answered as above mentioned. A day later Mrs. Willett experienced the exceptional symptoms described on p. 38 above, and the following script was produced.

You felt the call. It is I who write Myers. I need urgently to say this. Tell Lodge the word, I will spell it, Myers, Yes the word is DORR. Myers, the word is DORR.

It should be noted that the automatist had no knowledge whatever of Mr. Dorr's experiments and knew nothing about him. The script is reproduced in *facsimile* (p.127 *loc cit*). It would be difficult to find a single word by which more impressive proof could be afforded of the identity of Myers P. with Myers W.

It may also be remarked that where communications are made by the voice, as in the earlier Piper sittings, the controls often gave most life-like impersonations of the habitual gestures, tricks of expression, voice, etc., of the ostensible communicator. It is difficult to decide on the evidential value of this dramatic semblance. As Prof. W. James says (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxiii.*, p.32) :

One who takes part in a good sitting has usually a far livelier sense both of the reality and of the importance of the communication than one who merely reads the record. . . . When you find your questions answered, your allusions understood ; when allusions are made which you think you understand, and your thoughts are met by anticipation, denial, or corroboration, when you have approved, applauded, or exchanged banter, or thankfully listened to advice that you believe in ; it is difficult not to take away an impression of having encountered something sincere in the way of a social phenomenon. . . . But a sitting that thus seemed important at the time may greatly shrink in value on a cold re-reading ; and if read by a non-participant, it may seem thin, and almost insignificant.

Still Prof. James says earlier in the same paper :

Most of us felt during the sittings, that we were
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in some way, more or less remote, conversing with a real Hodgson.

It is idle to deny that the evidence for the identity of particular communicators, resting, as it does, largely on personal impression, and opinion, is less concrete and tangible than that for the more limited hypothesis of communication *in abstracto*. It is, however, probable that those who are satisfied on the general question will not find much difficulty in going a step further, and in admitting the probability that the communicators are indeed the personalities whom they claim to be. The absence of any tenable alternative explanation lends strength to this presumption.

I cannot but fear, that some readers, although they may accept the reasoning of this chapter as fairly logical, yet find themselves unconvinced owing to a purely *a priori* difficulty. In effect, such persons would say "it is inconceivable that disembodied personalities should have nothing better to do than to devise classical conundrums and transmit messages in cryptic fragments." Surely, it is plain, that if disincarnate intelligences are endeavouring to prove communication, they will adopt such subject matter for their messages which will best effect this proof? Surely it is not necessary further to labour the point that is *only* by the use of such material, such subjects—call them puerilities if you will—that telepathic and sub-liminal influence can be eliminated, and the messages can become available as positive evidence? Surely it must be clear that before any line of communication can be usefully employed, it has to be proved that the line exists? If we are ever to derive moral and spiritual benefit, it must first be definitely proved that lines of communication are open. Then and not till then, can these lines be confidently used.

Psychical investigators here, and their co-workers on the other side, are somewhat like electricians endeavouring to open communication through a very faulty submarine cable. Before that line can be open for traffic it has to be tested. It is that process of testing which is now going on. Those who consider that the subject matter of the cross-correspondences demonstrates the valuelessness of psychic investigation, are as those who would say that a submarine cable would never be any use because, at the moment, all that was being transmitted through it was messages (unintelligible to them) between the electricians at the two ends of the line.

One almost despairs of making clear this really simple point when one finds even so acute a thinker as Bishop Gore saying, in a sermon preached on December 7th, 1919 :

In every period when the attempt to hold intercourse with the dead has been prevalent, the ideas derived from it have simply reflected the ideas current in the minds of the people who resorted to [the attempt at communication].

How could the process of testing go on at all if those on the other side were to use ideas which could not be reflected in the minds of their colleagues on this side? Cannot Bishop Gore see that the present need is for evidence not for edification?

If I have now carried the reader to the point of admitting that there is, at least, evidence pointing strongly towards proof of communication with the disembodied as a fact of human experience, we can profitably proceed to discuss, in the following chapters, the implications of this fact on our religious belief.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO RESEARCH

HAVING, in the previous chapters, set forth a general description of the evidence for communication with the dead, we may now proceed to a discussion of the objections, both to psychic research, and to the evidence which it has produced. The present chapter will be devoted to the former class of objections, although there is inevitably a considerable amount of overlapping between the two classes. It is hoped, however, in this and the following chapter to deal with all the objections detailed in the introductory chapter.

We will therefore first consider whence comes the belief that the attempt to hold communication with the dead is forbidden to Christians, and must therefore, if attempted, like every other action contrary to the Divine Will, result in moral and spiritual harm. It may, at once be granted that if this opinion can be sustained, it would not be an unreasonable deduction that the punishment for transgression might take the shape summarized in the second objection (*vide p.* above), namely that the transgressors would, without knowing it, actually come into touch with "spirits" of a low, and even malevolent nature. For we can often observe that punishment takes a form which arises directly out of the transgression itself. Those who play with fire are allowed to burn their fingers.

This objection can be met and successfully met, on the general grounds that the fullest exercise of the

powers of reason and investigation which we possess, can never be contrary to Divine Will. It is not open to question that every department of human activity is a proper sphere for the employment of human intelligence, that the soul of man is as proper a subject for investigation, as his body and its environment. This aspect of the case will receive further consideration in the following chapter. Herein we are to consider a narrower, yet important, issue and to discover, if we can, how, and why, the impression has arisen that the subject of communication with the dead is a forbidden subject for the application of reason and experiment.

It can hardly be doubted that one source of this impression is to be traced to the Old Testament. Both the Law and the Prophets contain condemnation of all forms of occult practices, and, by implication, of attempts to hold communication with the dead.

Clearly the Mosaic and Levitical prohibitions were due to the fact that occultism, in various forms, entered so largely into the religions of the heathen tribes and nations by which the Jews were so closely surrounded.

To establish and maintain under these conditions a strict and rigid Theism, necessitated the drawing of a very sharp line of demarcation between the worship of Jehovah, and that of the heathen deities. The recognition of supernormal phenomena would have been calculated to impair the majestic simplicity and directness of the relations between God and man as taught in the Mosaic law. The task accomplished, under Divine Guidance, by the great lawgiver of dragging a small nation out of a slough of the grossest polytheism, into the clean and simple

faith of the One God, was so tremendous, so revolutionary, that anything which could complicate or obscure this simplicity had to be cut right away. Some things were thus discarded, not because they were harmful in themselves, but because they were potential nuclei for dangerous doctrines or practices.

This policy of complete severance between Jew and Gentile is specially exemplified in the destruction, which was meted out, on some occasions, when the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine were overcome, a destruction extending to all the possessions of the conquered tribes. The fate which befel King Saul when, actuated, as we should think, by a proper desire to avoid useless destruction, he spared the cattle of the Amalekites, clearly shows the immense importance which the leaders of Judaism attached to the maintenance of a perfectly distinct and rigid barrier between the "chosen people" and their pagan neighbours.

Throughout the period covered by the Old Testament writers, the need for segregation must have been ever present. The prohibition of any traffic with the supernormal which, as already stated, might have proved a stepping stone to paganism, was therefore natural.

Indeed, apart from other reasons, it is obvious that, in such an early age, when the vast potentialities of self deception in the region of psychics were unknown, acquaintance with psychic phenomena of any kind could but confuse the moral sense of the people, and weaken their faith in the one Omnipotent Being whose chosen people they were.

Without, in any way, depreciating the essential rightness of the prohibitions of the Mosaic Law for the times during which it held sway, we can surely

say that these prohibitions are not binding on us in the 20th century. To believe otherwise must logically result in upholding the absurd position that we are still subject to all the provisions and restraints of the Levitical Law. It would, for example, be to find in the Second Commandment justification for Mr. Kensit and his crew when they endeavour to tear down the Calvaries which pious hands have raised in memory of those who have given their lives for their Country.

The prohibitions of the Old Testament need therefore detain us no longer.

The New Testament is wanting in direct prohibitions. We have, as in the Old Testament, denunciations of witchcraft, *e.g.*, Acts xiii., 8-11 (the punishment of Elymas the sorcerer) but nothing suggesting that communication with the disembodied was forbidden. On the contrary we find certain fairly clear indications that the appearance of the dead to the living was accepted as a fact, *e.g.*, Matthew xiv., 25-6., "Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they were troubled saying, it is a *spirit*."

Matthew xxvii., 52-3, "Many bodies of the saints which slept arose and appeared unto many."

Acts xii., 15. When after St. Peter's deliverance from prison, his appearance, at the house of Mary, was thought to be *his angel*.

Other examples will occur to any Student of the New Testament. The point to be noted is that nowhere do we find a suggestion that belief in the veridical character of these appearances was in any way considered improper for Christian people. It seems to have been a tacit assumption that such occurrences were not the works of the Devil, but

were manifestations, and not, we may infer, very exceptional manifestations, of the continuity of human existence. Visions and apparitions were, it may be said without irreverence, almost commonplaces of the religious experience of those days, to be accepted at their face value and, most certainly, not to be explained as illusions of diseased mentality, or the works of evil intelligences. It is, I suggest, not unjustifiable to consider apparitions of the departed as a form of communion with the disembodied. Certainly we have no record in Scripture of anything similar to the present communications through automatic writing, but we have accounts of "prophesying" and "speaking with tongues" which must have been very similar—if not psychologically identical—with trance utterances. The disintegration of personality, as exhibited in trance mediumship, must therefore have been familiar to the early Christians, and was ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit, not to the influence of the Devil.

It may fairly be said that there is nothing whatever in the New Testament which can fairly be taken to imply prohibition of communication with the departed.

Apart, therefore, from the influence of the Old Testament we have to look elsewhere for the origins of the objections which we are now considering.

In ecclesiastical history, right down to the Reformation period, we find this communication tacitly recognized. Even after the separation which then took place, this recognition, in principle, has persisted almost down to the present day in the Roman Communion, for, as has just been explained, the appearance of departed saints to the faithful is but a particular manifestation of the general phenomenon

of communication. It is not the least of the inconsistencies of that Communion that while enjoining belief in the *particular*, it should forbid investigation in the *general*.

The Reformation, in its zealous rooting out of superstition and superstitious practices, undoubtedly made the "communion of saints" a dead article of faith as far as any practical realization thereof was concerned. To the Protestant the *communion of saints* was perilously near to the *invocation of saints*. "A fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of scripture but, rather, repugnant to the Word of God" (Art. xxii.)

The Puritan supremacy—which, though short in point of time, has yet exerted so profound an influence on the thoughts of religiously minded Englishmen—naturally continued this repudiation of communication and communion. The gloomy temper of that time, to which Satan was a real and all pervading personality, did not hesitate to attribute to the latter any apparently supernormal happenings. Hence communion with the dead, together with other psychic phenomena, were included in witchcraft where they still remain, legally, even at the present day.

Puritanism lay heavy on the Church of England until the middle of the last century so that it became, at least in later Georgian and early Victorian times, a system of Christian Materialism—if this contradiction in terms may be allowed. It was not until the Oxford movement commenced its spiritualising influence that there was any possible accommodation for the super-normal in the Church's spiritual economy; that room could be formed for the "cloud of witnesses" not merely as a nebulous platitude,

but as a living fact. The successful endeavour which that movement initiated, to restore to the Church of England her Catholic heritage, and to approximate her beliefs and practices to those of the primitive Church, gradually restored the "communion of Saints" to its ancient place.

Enough has, I think, been said to show that neither in Holy Scripture, primitive Christian belief, or true Catholic practice, is there any prohibition of belief in the phenomenon in question. There is obviously no prohibition of the sober investigation of the phenomenon. For our Church, which holds in her hand the open Bible, has never prohibited, but rather encouraged, inquiry in every lawful subject.

I hardly think that the reader will contest the propriety of treating "communion" and "communication" as, in effect, one and the same thing. Communion is clearly but a highly spiritualized form of communication, analogous to that sympathy between man and man which can sometimes convey deeper things than any form of words.

The antithesis used by a speaker at the Church Congress, though a good debating point, was not well chosen, "Spiritualism offers communication, the Church offers communion," he said. The Church does not offer something radically different. She offers but a far higher form of the same thing. She makes the celebration of the highest and most transcendent communion her great Central Act of Worship; how then can she forbid other forms of communion or communication across the veil, if undertaken in a right spirit?

Another objection to the research itself is found in the not uncommon statement, that if communication with the dead was a good and lawful thing,

it would be possible to effect it in a direct manner. That any living person should be able himself, without the intermediary of a medium or sensitive, thus to communicate.

It is possible that the power of mediumship, so called, the ability to receive affects otherwise than through the normal channels of the senses, is latent in mankind to a greater extent than is apparent. It is fairly clear that, like other powers, it needs development to bring it to light. The general prejudice against the subject has undoubtedly deterred some persons from developing these latent powers. Hence it comes about that the number of sensitives is but an insignificant fraction of the whole community. The latent power is rare, and its tangible development is rare among the rare, but it can hardly be necessary to say that the rarity of a power, or faculty, is no evidence of its non-existence. We have, then, simply to take the facts as they stand, recognize that the faculties, or at least the development of the faculties of mediumship or automatism is extremely rare, and make the best use of the means at our disposal.

The opinion is somewhat widely spread, that the evidence for communication with the disembodied rests on communications received through persons of dubious integrity. It has already been shewn that, from the evidential point of view, the integrity of a sensitive is not of capital importance, if, as is not difficult, measures are taken to assure that even if he has the will, he can have no power, or opportunity, to deceive. The potentialities of sub-liminal (unconscious) deception are so great that the mere assurance of supra-liminal (conscious) integrity does not lessen the precautions which have to be taken before any communication can be accepted as evidential.

Still, an inquiry which necessitated the employment of persons of dubious integrity, would lie open to the charge of affording indirect encouragement to fraud.

It is therefore necessary to make it quite clear that the reliable evidence for communication with the dead—that set forth in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R.—rests, with one exception, on communications received by the voices or hands of persons who have had no ends to serve other than those of assisting in research, and who are, as has been previously stated, persons whose positions entitle their *bona fides* to full acceptance.

The one exception is, of course, Mrs. Piper. In a previous chapter it has been shewn that the exceptional supervision to which her sittings were subjected, and the exhaustive analyses which have been made of the records of her trance-mediumship, enable possible sub-liminal origins of the information communicated by her agency, to be traced with some certainty. Conscious and deliberate fraud, far easier to detect than sub-liminal fabrication, may safely be considered to be eliminated. It would be absurd to maintain that after so many years of systematic investigation, by numerous competent and often sceptical investigators, such fraud would not have been soon detected.

It may, however, serve to allay the objections of those who find a stumbling block in the fact that Mrs. Piper has received remuneration for her valuable services in the cause of psychic research, to state that, in the unanimous opinion of the many eminent men who have investigated her case, there are no possible grounds for impugning her *bona fides*. One of these opinions, that of the late Prof. William James, which, by reason of his world-wide reputation must carry

much weight, may be quoted (*The Psychological Review*, July, 1898, p. 421).

Dr. Hodgson considers that the hypothesis of fraud cannot be seriously maintained. I agree with him absolutely. The medium has been under observation, much of the time under close observation, as to most of the conditions of her life, by a large number of persons, eager, many of them, to pounce upon any suspicious circumstance, for fifteen years. During that time not only has there not been one single suspicious circumstance remarked, but not one suggestion has ever been made, from any quarter, which might tend positively to explain how the medium, living the apparent life she leads, could possibly collect information about so many sitters by natural means. The scientist who is confident of "fraud" here, must remember that in science, as much as in common life, a hypothesis must receive some positive specification and determination, before it can be profitably discussed, and a fraud which is no assigned kind of fraud, but simply "fraud" at large, fraud *in abstracto*, can hardly be regarded as a specially scientific explanation of concrete facts.

It may also be mentioned that Mrs. Piper's mediumship has never been associated with any of the dubious manifestations of the darkened séance room above referred to. In her case we have none of the "physical" phenomena of spiritualism raps, levitations, playing of musical instruments, "spirit lights," and the like which, illogically perhaps, yet not unnaturally, create a feeling of repulsion in some minds.

The tone of the communications is sober and reverent. Thus the "Imperator" control, who purported to exercise a general supervision over the

line of communication through Mrs. Piper, describes his work in terms to which no one can take exception as being irreverent or frivolous. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxviii.*, pp. 486 and 489).

We move in many different ways. We act upon the minds of mortal men in many ways Our aim, beneath all this is to teach thee how thou mayest find God, to teach thee to live in Him and obey His laws We are sent to enlighten thee, and to teach thee how to live, so as to best meet what lies before thee.

There is another possible objection to research which, although only of an emotional nature, yet demands a passing reference.

There may be some who, although they have neither a specific religious objection to this inquiry, nor a logical objection to the evidence which the inquiry has produced, yet feel that the state of the departed is too sacred, too intimate a thing to be subjected to the methods of scientific research.

I would venture to answer this in the noble words of one whose profound knowledge, whose truly scientific spirit, did not abate his wide sympathy. (F. W. H. Myers' *Phantasms of the Living*, Introduction).

Attempting, as we do, to carry the reign of law into a sanctuary of belief and emotion which has never thus been invaded in detail—lying in wait, as it were, to catch the last impulse of the dying, and to question the serenity of the dead—we may seem to be incurring the poet's curse on the man "who would peep and botanize on his mother's grave," to be touching the Ark of sacred mysteries with hands stained with labour in the profane and common field.

How often have men thus feared that Nature's wonders would be degraded by being closer looked into! How often, again, have they learnt that the truth was higher than their imagination; and that it is man's work, but never Nature's, which to be magnificent must remain unknown! How would a disciple of Aristotle—fresh from his master's conception of the fixed stars as types of godhead, of an inhabitation by pure existences of a supernal world of their own—how would he have scorned the proposal to learn more of those stars by dint of the generation of fetid gases, and the sedulous minuteness of spectroscopic analysis! Yet how poor, how fragmentary were Aristotle's fancies compared with our conception, thus gained, of cosmic unity! Our vibrant message from Sirius and Orion by the heraldry of the kindred flame! Those imagined gods are gone; but the spectacle of the starry heavens has become for us so moving in its immensity that philosophers, at a loss for terms of wonder, have ranked it with the Moral Law.

Again, arising to some extent out of the same emotions, there may be a feeling that these investigations may disturb the peace, or hinder the progress, of those beyond the veil. This seems, on the face of it, a groundless supposition. If those who have passed that veil exist at all, they must exist in a higher state than us here on earth. How then can the lower, the earthly, command the higher, the spiritual? Surely we cannot believe that it lies within *our* powers to constrain spiritual beings against their own will? If communication there be, it cannot be otherwise than because those on the other side desire it. We cannot invade their

seclusion, or trouble their repose. It must be they who determine, they who originate. We can but provide channels and conditions so that they, the spiritual ones, can communicate if they will.

To conclude, we find that there is nothing in the teaching of Scripture, as applicable in this present time, which warrants the opinion that intercourse with the departed is forbidden. We also find that those prohibitions which the Church has, from time to time, issued against investigation in the subject, are not founded on any Scriptural basis, but have been due to the temporary religious or political conditions, or have been the result of bigotry or obscurantism. Finally, we see that there is nothing in the research itself which should repel us on emotional grounds.

It is clear, then, that the subject is one, like many others, in which the Christian has to form an opinion on evidence in conjunction with the knowledge as to the state of the departed which revelation has afforded. This comparison will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

OBJECTIONS TO THE EVIDENCE

ASSUMING that I have now carried the reader to a point where he is prepared to concede that there is, at least, evidence pointing strongly towards proof of communication with the dead; assuming also that he no longer feels an inherent objection to research in this subject, we have now to review the implications of the evidence on the Christian faith.

Herein we cannot avoid touching on a wider issue. What is to be the attitude of the logical Christian man or woman when Fact and Faith appear to be in conflict? Some would not hesitate to say that in every case fact, definite and tangible, must be followed, rather than faith, transcendental and intangible. Others would maintain that faith—if it be real faith—stands far above and beyond fact. That it can nowise be affected by such conflicts, any more than a river's seaward flow can be affected by local back-wash, or eddy.

I suggest that these divergencies of opinion arise from the failure to realize that Faith and Fact have each their own province, their own proper boundaries, within which they stand supreme. Thus when faith endeavoured to maintain the Mosaic cosmology against the experimental results of biological and geological research, she was plainly in the wrong, since she had set up her standard in a territory which was not hers. When, on the other hand, natural

science endeavours to disprove a central Christian verity, such as the Incarnation, by reference to human knowledge and experience, she errs, because she is endeavouring to appraise the transcendental by the finite, to measure the undimensioned by the dimensional.

But between the exclusive domain of Faith, and the inclusive province of Fact, there lies a broad strip of territory in which both have claims. It is in this neutral zone that our present subject is domiciled. Any subject thus situated has to be considered in the light of both faith and fact, heart and head, and a just balance has to be struck between their respective claims. When faith descends into this neutral ground, she no longer carries with her the right to demand belief as above reason. When fact ascends to it no longer can she claim the unlimited application of those ascertained laws of nature which, in her own domain, reign supreme.

As our present subject is concerned with the state of the departed we need first to consider what are the Christian beliefs in this matter.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find any formula which will fairly enunciate the Christian faith in this matter. There is a vast difference between the beliefs, not only of past and present Christian men, but also between present day theologians. Thus in regard to the connotation of the phrase, "The Resurrection of the Body," few, if any, would now subscribe to the intensely literal, though poetical, picture drawn by the learned Dr. Donne.

In what corner, in what ventricle of the sea, lies all the jelly of a body drowned in the *generall flood*? What cohaerence, what sympathy, what dependence maintains any relation, any corres-

pondence, between that arm that was lost in Europe, and that leg that was lost in Afrique or Asia scores of years between? All dies and all dries, and mouldens into dust, and that dust is blown into the River, and that puddled water tumbled into the sea, and that ebs and flows in infinite revolutions, and still, still God knows in what *Cabinet* every *seed-Pearle* lies, in what part of the world every grain of every man's dust lies; and, *sibilat populum suum* (as His Prophet speaks in another case) He whispers, He hisses, He beckens for the bodies of His Saints, and, in the twinckling of an eye, that body that was scattered over all the elements, is sate down at the right hand of God in a glorious resurrection.

In this matter, where the most learned theologians are at issue, it behoves the layman to walk warily. I think, however, that all schools of thought will accept the following statement as common ground:

That human personality is immortal. That the immediate or ultimate condition of each personality is affected by the use made of the opportunities for spiritual development which have been afforded to it during this life. That those who are worthy, attain, ultimately, to a state of blessedness in the continual presence of the God-head.

When, however, we pass beyond these general statements we find very wide divergencies of belief and opinion.

On the one hand there are those who believe that man's destiny is irrevocably decided by the use which he has made of his opportunities in this life. That after dissolution there is no further spiritual progress. That at some time there is a great assize, when every man's human life comes up for judgment,

and those who fail to reach a certain standard pass to everlasting punishment, while those who reach that standard pass to everlasting bliss.

This school of thought generally, though not always, holds that this assize is not a court which awaits each human being at death, but is a definite event to occur at the "end of the world." Hence, in the meanwhile, the personality "sleeps" until at that last day it awakes, draws to it the elements of its one time physical body, and then, and only then, is arraigned for judgment. The late Rev. Arthur Chambers described this view as "Christian Materialism." The term is aptly chosen, for this school of thought makes personality a function of the material organism.

The other school of thought has various degrees, but, in effect, it holds that there is no inhibition of personality at death. That there is continuity. That spiritual life, progress, and development continue (at least for those who are worthy of it) beyond the grave. That by various stages, and in varying times, dependent on the state of spiritual development at death, souls are, sooner or later, made worthy of entry into the highest heaven, into union with the God-head.

Among those who hold these views, there is difference of opinion on the weighty question whether this development is a possibility for *all*, or whether those who have misused their opportunities when in this life are irrevocably excluded from it; in other words, whether the punishment of Hades is remedial or punitive. The great majority of liberal churchmen incline, however, to the former view. At least there is a general agreement that there is the possibility of spiritual growth for all who, as Canon Storr

puts it, have their faces set in the right direction at death. It is held that this development commences with a personality which, immediately after death, is substantially the same as it was immediately before. This continuity in spiritual development seems eminently reasonable since it is so entirely in accordance with our observations on physical development.

The logical outcome of this view is that the principle that survives physical dissolution is the complete human personality with all its ideas, interests, and storage of memory. I think, however, that there are some who, so to say, dualise personality, and who hold, implicitly if not explicitly, that it is only the spiritual content of human personality that survives, while the non-spiritual portion, human ideas, interests, and memories, is sloughed off, in the same manner as the physical body is abandoned at death. This view really denies the full survival of human personality since without its terrestrially acquired knowledge and memory, it can be but a "fragment" of personality. It is not to be denied that the very idea of progress beyond the grave necessarily involves modification of human personality. If it is to progress spiritually there must obviously be profound readjustment between its spiritual and non-spiritual concomitants. This readjustment need not, however, take the form of the excision of all that was gathered when on earth. It may mean, indeed most of us feel it must mean, the purification and spiritualization of the non-spiritual, and its ultimate absorption in the spiritual. Thus the personality will retain its earth memories, its earth interests, but they will, in due time, be purged of all dross. Love for those on earth, interest in those on earth, will

remain ; but they will be directed more and more to spiritual, less and less to material aspects. As Sir Oliver Lodge has well put it, there will be a change of values. The relative importance of things will not appear the same to disembodied personalities as they do to us.

If the above is a fair summary of the beliefs held by Christians as to the state of the departed, we can now proceed to consider how far the evidence furnished by psychical research agrees or disagrees therewith.

In regard to the bare fact of survival of physical death, there is obviously no conflict. The evidence obtained through psychical research proves, or, at least, points strongly towards proof of that survival. It does not indeed prove that this survival is eternal, but, then, it does not lie within the powers of the finite to prove infinity. Logically, proof of the fact that human personality survives death does not prove that it is eternally indestructible. It does, however, afford a strong presumption in favour of eternal survival. It would not, I think, be wrong to say that most if not all, of those who cannot believe in " eternal life " find their obstacle to this belief in physical death. They interpret the teachings of biology as shewing that personality is purely phenomenal, a function of the physical organism. Such persons, if satisfied that human personality survives the death which they can see, will not, probably, find much difficulty in believing that it will survive any, problematical, future deaths of which they can know nothing.

Perhaps we may trace an analogy between the great physical principle of the Conservation of Energy and the eternal survival of personality. Until Joule

made his great determination of the Mechanical Equivalent of Heat, it had been thought that heat was a material substance capable of being created and destroyed. The law of the Conservation of Energy, demonstrated, not by speculation, but by experiment, showed that heat was but one form of energy capable of various transformations, but remaining constant and indestructible, in any system undergoing such transformations.

In this may we not see an analogy to the eternal indestructible principle in man. Personality, like energy, taking on various forms: Firstly (if it be firstly) in the physical body. Next in some "spiritual body," and thereafter manifested in other forms, which our finite intelligence cannot even speculate upon.

Personality then is the indestructible principle in psychical life, as energy is in physical life.

We see, then, that, so far, the results of psychical research simply prove, or point towards proof, of that which the Christian believes by faith, namely that human personality survives death. We have next to see what these results tell us as to the nature of the personality that survives, and its environment.

Now the Christian believer should find nothing unexpected in the fact that the personalities which purport to communicate with us, are not able to give any clear description of the higher aspects of the life after death. These things, obviously, transcend human imagination and, even more, human language.

Many communications, however, contain descriptions which are, at least, in no way repugnant to Christian beliefs. Thus Myers writes (*Proc, S.P.R.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p. 233) :

If it were possible for the soul to die back into
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earth life again, I should die from sheer yearning to reach you, to tell you that all that we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth—that immortality, instead of being a beautiful dream, is the one, the only, reality—the strong golden thread on which all . . . lives are strung.

The *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. which are, properly, confined to the record of communications of potential evidential value, contain very few scripts of the type, which, as already explained, are not evidence because they cannot be verified. One or two passages may, however, be quoted from other records of automatism. Thus in the collection of scripts received by the hand of the Rev. Stainton Moses there is much excellent religious teaching of which the following extract is a fair sample :

Immutable laws govern the results of deeds. Deeds of good advance the spirit, while deeds of evil degrade and retard it. Happiness is found in progress, and in gradual assimilation to the godlike and the perfect. The spirit of Divine love animates, and in mutual blessing the spirits find their happiness. For them there is no craving for sluggish idleness, no cessation of desire for progressive advancement in knowledge. Human passions and human needs and wishes are gone with the body, and the spirit lives a spirit life of purity, progress and love. Such is its heaven.

We know of no Hell save that within the soul, a hell which is fed by the flame of unpurified and untamed lust and passion, which is kept alive by remorse of agony and sorrow, which is fraught with the pangs that spring unbidden from the results of past misdeeds, and from which the only escape lies in retracing the steps, and in cultivating the

qualities which shall bear fruit in love and knowledge of God.

Or again, in a recent publication, *The Dawn of Hope* (E. A. Leale)—a series of communications received through a mother's automatic writing from her son—we find passages similar to the following, which are very much akin to the descriptions of the After Life found in the Book of Revelations :

We saw a great white building, standing quite by itself. Drawing nearer, we could scarcely contain our admiration. Never could mind conceive such beauty. It was of immense size, glistening as if made of every precious stone ever heard of, built in that wonderful manner which is utterly indescribable, with the glorious rays of light radiating every hue from the stones it was built of, the roof shining with pure gold, and at every end tall pinnacles of shining gold. Dazzled and full of wonder, we drew near, and then we saw there were long flights of steps leading up to the broad, open entrance, up which were passing a large company. Mingling with them, we passed up the steps, until we reached the door, and, pausing, we looked up and saw many letters there inscribed. We could read them quite clearly; the letters were very large: "There are many roads by which the pilgrim desires to reach Heaven; only through the inner searching of the Spirit shall the Soul attain the Heaven of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Heaven dwells in the hearts of all who live in the truth of the Holy Trinity. Within these walls shall those who seek the Truth be satisfied, and find the Heaven for which their souls have hungered and thirsted. Here shall the Father give to all who ask, and in that Glorious Union of
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the Blessed Trinity each pilgrim shall find his true Heaven." We entered, walking through the entrance to this beautiful building. All around light radiated from one great centre, which hung overhead like an immense sun, casting its searching beams into every corner of the vast interior. I hardly know how to describe what that interior consisted of. It was of immense size and height, and the walls were transparent, as if of glass, only more solid. The floor was of the same substance, and the whole was one great glory, as of the sun, transmitting sparks of living fire through the coloured rays of the precious stones. Standing there beneath that circle of Light, I saw that a very great assembly were present, and all knelt upon that floor of glass; the rays from above descended, and seemed to rise and fall like showers of living fire. We could feel them scorching us like the sun's rays upon a summer's day. There was no discomfort, only a delicious sense of being uplifted into that circle of Light, and the heat rays penetrated our souls until we were all bathed in the Glory and Light of the Eternal.

As we knelt in silence, there came to us a Voice from within that circle of Light, which could be heard in every part of that vast building. Words which I cannot utter, such wonderful words, telling of things which no man could ever conceive, of Love and Beauty in the highest degree, and of Great Truths revealed only through the power of Infinite Light. How long we knelt there I cannot tell; I only know that time was nothing. We were caught up into that living fire of Light, and listened to things which can only be heard by those who search through the power of that inner

spirit of the Eternal. Then there happened a very beautiful thing. As we knelt there beneath the great circle of fire, a Voice spoke, and this time it was our Lord Who spoke. A few of His words I may be able to repeat, but I could not make you hear the beautiful melody of His Voice: "My children, here, in this place to which ye have been led, even into the Inner Circle of the Father of Light, here shall ye receive the great Gift of the Holy Spirit, which shall teach you all things. In the power of this Gift go forth endued with such Light as shall show you those inner things which can only be revealed through the Power and the Spirit of the Father. In His Name, do that work, which ye have been called over to fulfil, through the Father's Love, the Son's Love, and the Power of the Holy Spirit."

The Voice of our Lord ceased, and suddenly there came upon us a thick cloud, which wrapt us within its folds, so that we saw nothing, only we were conscious of the glory round about us, and a great, scorching heat which seemed to burn into our souls, and a wonderful power which carried us right up in that cloud within the Circle of Light, and there we hung suspended, until our whole souls were bathed in the Glory and splendour of that Light. Gradually we sank down, until we again rested upon the floor, and, the cloud dispersing, we saw all as it had been before, just that wonderful radiance and the Great Light over all.

In the above passages, which are fair samples of the automatic writings which purport to describe the higher aspects of the life beyond the grave, no Christian can find anything repugnant to his beliefs.

It is, however, with the lower aspects, so to say,
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of that life, that we are here concerned. It is these aspects alone that we can comprehend, and it can only be through these that the departed can place themselves in approximate contact with us on earth. Clearly, it can only be through their earth acquired knowledge and memory that contact can be established and maintained. In any communication of ideas there must be some material for the construction of those ideas which is common to both parties in the communication. This common material can only be the earth memories and earth knowledge of the disembodied. If the departed do not carry with them human memory, human knowledge, human interests, *cadit quæstio*.

Communication is impossible if the communicators have neither the will to communicate, nor the material with which to communicate.

That these faculties—human knowledge, memory, and interest—are, indeed, retained by the departed, has clearly been an implicit portion of Christian belief. The After Life has ever been described as a place of happy re-union for those who have once lived on this earth. But if human memory, human interests, perish at death, how can there be this re-union? How can the husband who has cast off all earth memories, be re-united to the wife; the mother to the son? Love without memory of, and interest in, human experience, is an impossibility, a contradiction. If then memory of, and interest in, humanity survive the grave, human knowledge survives also. For knowledge is memory, and there is no memory without the knowledge of the things remembered. Why then should any Christian consider it repugnant to his beliefs that certain persons who, when in this life, were interested in psychical

research, should retain that interest when they have passed over? That persons who, when here on earth acquired much classical knowledge, should retain that knowledge in their new life? And that these persons should combine their interest and their knowledge, and initiate, or endeavour to initiate, communications such as have been described in Chapter IV.

Given an interest in the problem of communication, a knowledge of its difficulties, and access to at least a portion of the storage of memories accumulated while on earth, it cannot be denied that the efforts apparently made to communicate, and the subject matter selected for communication, are precisely in accordance with our reasoned anticipations.

Anyone who will not admit the reasonableness of the above premisses cannot logically still retain his belief in that re-union with those whom we have "loved and lost awhile"; the thought of which is so precious to every Christian.

Enough has been said to show that there is no real conflict between the evidence furnished by psychical research and the teachings of the Christian faith. On the contrary, as far as it goes, that evidence confirms the central Christian verity of survival.

Still some Christian people do apparently find an element of conflict between them. Such persons would probably find it difficult to state precisely where they consider the conflict to lie. Perhaps most of them find the difficulty in the atmosphere, so to say, of the communications. They would say that the light of revelation on the condition of the departed makes it inconceivable that the latter should devote themselves to the transmission of messages which are of no moral value, and which are mundane, even trivial, in their contents.

This contention has already been dealt with on p. 105 above. I trust it is not necessary further to labour the point that it is just these types of communication, and these alone, which can be evidential. Communications containing moral teaching may edify, but they cannot prove anything. For example, the Spirit teachings of the Rev. Stainton Moses, above referred to, contain excellent moral teaching, but they contribute no solid item towards the proof of communication and survival.

The objector must therefore put his objection in a somewhat different form. He must say, in effect, "the proof of communication with the dead necessitates the transmission of so much morally useless matter that we cannot conceive that spiritualized personalities can find it worth their while to labour, as they seem to do, at such a subject."

Can the departed find this business, the proof of communication with us on earth, a task consistent with that spiritual progress which, we believe, must be their chief pre-occupation beyond the veil?

It will not be denied that anything which can conduce to the spiritual betterment of mankind must be of interest to those who have departed this life. Several passages in the New Testament support this. For example, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, we find the former described as still interested in the spiritual state of his living relatives. Also it may fairly be deduced from Scripture that those of the departed who are fitted for the task, are permitted to help those on earth. The Ministry of Angels is very clearly taught in the Christian Faith. Revelation tells us nothing of what the angels are, but, I presume, most Christian people to-day believe that they were once embodied personalities who have reached great

heights of spiritual development, but yet are, in addition to their spiritual service in heaven, appointed to "succour and defend us on earth."

Will any Christian, then, deny that it may be, nay, that it must be, permitted to all of the departed, who are qualified for the work, also to serve humanity? We believe that for the departed, at least for those whose faces at death were set in the right direction, the future life is one of service, the perfecting of spiritual development by the service of God. We know, also, that it was one of Our Lord's most insistent teachings that God is served by serving man. "For as much as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me." Can any Christian, then, find it consistent with his belief to assert that the power of serving the brethren is denied to man after he has passed the veil? Surely not!

If, then, the proof of communication between the dead and the living is a matter of benefit to humanity, we should expect that those on the other side, who are qualified for the task, should be permitted to assist in the establishment of that proof. If so—and I fail to see what can logically be advanced against this proposition—is it not fitting and natural that those persons, who by their earth acquired experience are specially fitted to attack the problem, should be precisely those who, it appears, are actually working at its solution on the other side of the veil?

It is probable, however, that the opponent of psychical research will not admit that the establishment of communication with the dead is of actual or potential benefit to mankind. He may even say that the endeavours to establish this communication are shewn by experience, especially recent experience, to be detrimental to the moral and spiritual side

of human life. Let us examine this objection, which since it purports to be based on observation, demands reasoned consideration, in some detail.

It is a truism that every department of human activity is a proper subject for human inquiry. To-day, the Tree of Knowledge bears no forbidden fruit. Are we then to say that because our subject lies, at least partially, outside the domain of phenomena, beyond the present boundaries of natural science, that therefore its investigation cannot lead to results beneficial to humanity?

It cannot be denied that the experimental proof of communication with the dead, and its corollary the proof of survival, is a matter of the most profound importance to man.

We have to recognize the plain fact that the majority of thinking men and women are no longer content to rest belief on faith and authority alone in those subjects into which observation and experiment can also enter. If, as F. W. H. Myers wrote, "if a spiritual world exists, and if that world has, at any epoch, been manifest or even discoverable, it ought to be manifest or discoverable now." It is most true that human understanding cannot penetrate into that world. Yet it may at least discern, not only by the eye of faith, but by the exercise of human reason, the coast-line of that far country. Although human intelligence can tell us little of what lies within that coast-line, yet the definite and tangible knowledge that the far country does indeed exist, that everyone can see with his own eyes that it exists, and has not to rest his belief in it on authority alone, must truly be of profound benefit to humanity.

To those who have the full faith, the experimental confirmation of an item in that faith can, at least,

do no harm. While for the great majority, whose faith is weak or non-existing, the tangible establishment, by experiment, of one great Christian verity, must serve to the former as a powerful aid to increase their belief, and for the latter as a foundation, firm and tangible, on which the ladder of faith can be reared.

Whatever be our innate and personal faith we have to face this problem, not for ourselves alone, but for the world at large. And the world of thinking men and women demands proof—in every case where proof can be within human faculty. As F. W. H. Myers has said so eloquently :

More clearly must our age realize that any relation between a material and a spiritual world cannot be an ethical or emotional relation alone, that it must needs be a great structural fact of the universe involving laws at least as persistent, as identical from age to age, as our known laws of energy and motion. And especially as to that central claim ; of the soul's life manifested after the body's death, it is plain that this can less and less be supported by remote tradition alone ; that it must more and more be tested by modern experience and inquiry. If it be said that this attitude tends to eliminate faith, the same writer supplies the answer :

It may be that, for some generations to come, the truest faith will be in the patient attempt to unravel from confused phenomena some traces of the supernal world. To find this at last, " the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen."

The Church, if she be true to her mission, has to supply not merely " meat for strong men, but milk for babes " ; not merely spiritual food for those whose

faith is strong, but assistance for those whose faith is small or none. It is a patent fact that the Church will never fully perform her function—the evangelization of the world—by appeals to the heart, the emotions, alone. There must be also a definite appeal to reason, a definite welcome to experiment and research. Herein, in this very subject of psychical research, lies the probability, nay the certainty, that experiment can afford confirmation of one great Christian verity.

How then can any Christian who believes that the Faith is truly Catholic, truly potentially universal, oppose—how can he do otherwise than assist to the utmost of his power?—this great inquiry?

It is therefore abundantly clear that this inquiry makes for righteousness. Wherein, then, lies the improbability that those who have passed over with the necessary equipment of knowledge and experience, should play their part in it? Rather does it not seem that this is precisely the form of service for humanity which the Great Disposer would allot to them.

Perhaps some superficial persons may say: "All this is excellent theorising, but we have before us for all to see the patent fact that psychical research does lead to the repudiation of some articles of the Christian Faith."

This statement is due to the baseless generalization that confounds together psychical research and Spiritualism. It is said, in effect, that because Spiritualism has been evolved into a pseudo-religious system which for the Catholic is schismatic if not heretical, therefore, psychical research, which proves or tends to prove certain phenomena held by Spiritualists, is also to be repudiated.

It is at least an open question whether some Spirit-

ualists might not have been retained in the Church, if the attitude of their brethren had been more tolerant. The relations between the Church and Spiritualism are not, however, within our present discussion.

The point to be made clear is that Spiritualism as a religious or pseudo-religious system is in no sense whatever the outcome of psychic research.

The origins of Spiritualism may be traced to two main causes—the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg and the hypnotic practices of Mesmer. Some of the followers of Swedenborg were among the first to find in the phenomena of the hypnotic trance an apparent channel for communication with the spirit world. Thus in the journal of the *Société Exegetique et Philantropique*, of Stockholm, a society devoted to the propagation of Swedenborg's teachings, we find as early as the year 1788, a lengthy account of "spirit" messages received through certain somnambules.

Spiritualism, as a system, may be dated from about the year 1847, and Andrew Jackson Davis may be considered its founder. The movement soon spread to England and was well-established here before another decade had elapsed.

The Society for Psychical Research was not founded till 1882. The first few years of its existence were almost entirely devoted to the investigation of telepathy and the phenomena of hypnotism. It is not until the sixth volume of *The Proceedings* that the subject of communication with the dead begins to take any prominent place.

It is, therefore, clear that Spiritualism is no more the outcome of psychic research than, for example, hydrophobia is the result of Pasteur's researches.

The increasing influence of Spiritualism is a fact

which churchmen must face. It is obvious that many people are being drawn into paths which tend to lead away from the full Christian Faith. It is equally obvious that (as mentioned above, pp. 22 and 51) want of acquaintance with the results of psychical research causes some, perhaps many, people to accept as supernatural what is merely sub-liminal. In short, such people are being enveloped in an atmosphere of deceit, albeit the deceit is generally unconscious and but seldom deliberate.

How is the Church to keep men and women from losing their way in this mist, from following vain lights which lead but to confusion? Not, emphatically not, by ecclesiastical fulminations, that it is all gross deception, fraud, devil dealing; not by superficial generalities based on ignorance, which insult the intelligence of those forced to listen to them, but by, and only by, spreading the knowledge of the wide potentialities of unconscious deception and the immense and erratic powers of sub-liminal fabrication, and by emphasizing the prime and cardinal need for considering all apparently super-normal phenomena solely from the evidential point of view, and striving to eliminate from this consideration all predilections and emotional bias.

The most weighty warnings against the possible deceptions and dangers of "spiritualistic practices" have been given by those very leaders in psychical research whose work is, in the eyes of some superficial clerics, the *fons et origo malorum*. I will quote the words of three past presidents of the S.P.R. Mrs. Sidgwick said on the subject of automatic writing (*Proc.* Vol. *xxix.*, pp. 258-9):

If an automatist found the impulse to write

beginning to be irresistible, or if the contents of the script tended to be such as his or her normal judgment disapproved of, I should certainly advise desisting altogether from exercising the faculty. No one ought to let his reason abdicate in favour of the untrustworthy and ill-regulated mental stratum that the sub-liminal left to itself is liable to be.

For similar reasons no one should treat his own automatic writing, and, still less, communications through other mediums, as oracles. Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say this to members of our Society. But there are people who seem too ready to accept mediumistic utterances, uncritically, at their face value, and to regard them as revelations from spirits with better means of judging than themselves. Assuming, however, that through a medium, or through our own script, we are really in touch with the supposed communicator, we have no guarantee that the communication reaches us as he desired to send it. Our evidence, indeed, goes to show that it is often, if not always, adulterated by the automatist's own mind.

This want of clearness and purity in the stream of communication makes attempts at intimate converse with the dead doubtful and difficult, and to some people painful; and I think there are many who would get more comfort from dwelling on the hope that those who have loved us and gone are in touch with us sub-lingually, even when we are not consciously aware of it. This hope, it will be observed, is greatly justified and supported by scientific evidence that the soul survives bodily death and can, under whatever limited conditions, at times communicate with the living.

Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., the eminent physicist and a founder of the S.P.R., says in his recent work, *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p.257 :

It cannot be too often insisted on that supernatural gifts are rare and elusive, and require patience, knowledge, and discrimination on the part of the inquirer. For this reason I should rather dissuade uninstructed persons from resorting to mediums than encourage them to do so. Even those who yearn to pierce the veil for "The touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," would, in my opinion, if they have not Christian faith, do better to rest content with a perusal of the evidence for survival that is now being accumulated by rigorous and laborious expert inquiry.

Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., who has been the subject of much clerical abuse, and has been accused of encouraging all and sundry to resort to spiritualistic practices, says (*Raymond*, p.342) :

It may be asked, do I recommend all bereaved persons to devote the time and attention which I have done to getting communications and recording them? Most certainly I do not. I am a student of the subject, and a student often undertakes labour of a special kind. I recommend people in general to learn and realise that their loved ones are still active, and useful, and interested, and happy, more alive than ever in one sense, and to make up their minds to live a useful life till they rejoin them.

I think that enough has been said to demonstrate that the results of psychical research do not conflict with the fundamental verities of the Christian Faith. Also to justify the claim that the Church ought to

regard this research, not in a spirit of hostility, not even with indifference, but should welcome it as an ally and recognize it as a helper, albeit a humble one, in her mission of bringing mankind to that light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

WE can discern a partial paradox in the attitude of the World towards the Christian Faith. While, on the one hand, the ethical teaching of Our Lord and Master is accepted (I do not say followed) with a universal concurrence not seen in any other era ; yet, on the other hand, belief in some of the fundamental verities of The Faith has grown weak and vague. Especially is there an absence of intellectual assent to the miraculous elements in the Gospel narratives, extending even to a very qualified and limited belief in the Divinity of Our Lord.

Granted that the blatant and aggressive denial of these things, as exemplified in the militant agnosticism of the last generation, is seldom now heard, at least among persons of any intellectual standing, yet we can observe, even amongst the clergy, a certain disinclination to the assertion of the supernatural elements of our Faith, and a disposition rather to concentrate on the ethical teaching of the Master. It is not to be denied that the ethical side of the ministry of Him " Who went about doing good " is rightly to be given a very prominent place in all Christian teaching. Yet any presentation of Christianity, which concentrates on the moral teaching of Christ to the neglect of the spiritual aspects of the Faith, is surely woefully inadequate. The appeal of the Church must be Catholic in a double sense. Not

only must it be a call to all men ; it must be a call to all *in* man. It must constrain not merely the heart and the emotions, but the head, the intellect, the reason.

In the application of reason to the consideration of the Christian Faith there is a peculiar feature to which attention must be drawn.

Much learning and labour has been, and is being, devoted to textual criticism of the New Testament. It is tacitly admitted that this criticism is legitimate. Even when it is pushed to lengths which result in a denial, or at least a very qualified acceptance, of certain fundamental items of the Faith, the maintenance of such opinions does not seem to be considered any disqualification for advancement to high position in the Church's hierarchy. To the simple-minded layman there seems to be inconsistency, to use no stronger word, in the position of those who eat the bread of the Church, and yet are not backward to impugn articles of her creed.

This point, however, cannot be further pursued here. Suffice it to say, as is, indeed, abundantly clear, that the full application of the historical method to the criticism of Holy Scripture is permitted, even encouraged. Why, then, should the experimental method be discouraged ?

In the domain of natural science the experimental method reigns supreme. It is by this process, not by speculation, that all real advance in human knowledge has been attained. The process (as F. W. H. Myers said) which consists in an interrogation of nature, entirely dispassionate, patient, systematic. The method which, coloured by no emotion, swayed by no bias, vitiated by no pre-judgment, proceeds with but a single aim : the collection and interpre-

tation of facts, which, though facts be rare and experiments difficult and dubious, yet works on slowly, if painfully, refusing to fall back upon tradition or to launch into speculation, because straight is the gate which leads to valid discovery, indisputable truth.

Why, then, should this method of inquiry, which experience in the domain of nature has shewn to be the only sure road to the attainment of truth, be discouraged in that very subject in which Divine Truth dwells?

Plainly such discouragement is wrong, is contrary to the Divine purpose. It is but a discouragement of man's ordaining: "It is man's work, never God's, which to be magnificent must remain unknown."

And, indeed, it is clear that the systematic application of reason and experiment in this matter, even during the comparatively short time during which the subject has been studied, confirms, or, at least, is tending to confirm, the Faith; unlike the speculations of some historical critics, which, undoubtedly, have tended to impair the faith of those who do not realize that assertion is not argument, and that high position in the Church, even a seat on the bench of Bishops, is no guarantee of impartiality, and does not imply the possession of the spirit of the true seeker after Truth who must "sit down before fact as a little child," and be prepared to follow it wherever it leads.

The call to all Christians to give a reason for the faith that is in them, to "prove all things" is constant and universal. But especially is it cogent in this particular subject, and at the present time. It is useless, it is futile, to deny that many have been, or are being, repelled from the Church, either because they think, erroneously, that the Faith forbids that

communication with the dead in which they find, or look to find, tangible assurance of the survival of those who have passed beyond the veil; or because they see that a portion, at least, of the Church's Spiritual directors condemn investigation into this weighty subject. Cannot these latter read the lesson which is writ large in ecclesiastical history—that the only way to avoid schism and prevent heresy is to permit, nay, to encourage, full and free inquiry? To tell one, who has received manifestations of what he believes to be the surviving personality of one now dead, that it is all “rubbish,” or “devil dealing,” is a grave error of judgment. Such an one will but be repelled from a religion whose spiritual pastors and masters manifest such ignorance and lack of tolerance. To point out to such an one, with sympathy and without impatience, the great caution which is needed in accepting any such experiences as veridical; to explain how great are the potentialities of sub-liminal fabrication and telepathy, and to direct to the sources whence a just appreciation of the difficulties of the subject may be acquired, this is to “strengthen the feeble knees,” to confirm belief, seeing that the teachers of the Faith fear not to have applied thereto the touchstone of Fact, the test of Truth.

Those who believe that this great inquiry is both right in itself and also has lead, or is leading, towards a wider knowledge of the Divine Purpose, tacitly admit that Revelation is progressive; that it is not something given once for all, finally and completely, but is a thing to be enlarged and extended by investigation and by research.

The writer of the Book of Job asked the great question: “Can a man by searching find out God?” but he at once qualified this question by the words:

“Canst thou find out the Almighty *unto perfection?*” (Job xi., 7).

Never can God's purposes be found out “unto perfection.” The finite can never measure the infinite. Yet the knowledge and the intellectual powers which we have to-day can, surely, permit—do, surely, constrain—us to press forward our search further than was possible for men in past ages. We can never scale the heights of Divine knowledge, but we can, at least, use the relatively powerful equipment which is ours to-day to survey the foot hills.

Never can such inquiry be displeasing to the Divine Will. We see this so clearly figured in Gen. xxxii, 24-30 :

And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day
And he said I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me And Jacob called the name of that place Penuel (The Face of God) for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.

Full revelation is not attained, a full knowledge of God's will is not to be acquired by mere passivity. They have to be wrestled for, to be wrestled from God's store-house—Nature—by the use of those powers of reason and intellect which God has given us. And there is no condemnation, nay, there is indeed, as there was for Jacob, blessing, for those who fear not thus to wrestle.

THE END