THE HOUDINI MESSAGES

The Facts
Concerning the Messages
Received Through the
Mediumship of

ARTHUR FORD

By FRANCIS R. FAST

Copyright 1929. Printed in U.S.A.
Fourth Printing
Copyright in Australia 1937

LIBRARIES UNDER THE SUBJECT SPECIALIZATION SCHOOL.

THE HOUDINI MESSAGES

The Facts
Concerning the Messages
Received Through the
Mediumship of

ARTHUR FORD

BY

FRANCIS R. FAST

The detailed account of the Second Message is taken from stenographic records made at the sittings by Mr. John W. Stafford, Associate Editor Scientific American, and Mr. Fast,



NEWYORK CITY. JAN.9TH,1929.

REGARDLESS OF ANY STATE-

MENTS MADE TO THE CONTRARY,

I WISH TO DECLARE THAT THE

MESSAGE, IN ITS ENTIRETY, AND IN

THE AGREED UPON SEQUENCE,

GIVEN TO ME BY ARTHUR FORD,

IS THE CORRECT MESSAGE PRE
ARRANGED BETWEEN MR. HOUDINI

AND MYSELF.

VITNESSED; Harry T. Zander. Minne Chester John W. Stafford -

Fac-simile of statement made by Mrs. Houdini the day after receipt of the message. Witnesses: Mr. H. R. Zander, Representative of United Press; Mrs. Minnie Chester, lifelong friend of Mrs. Houdini and Mr. John W. Stafford, Associate Editor of Scientific American.

THE HOUDINI MESSAGES

·O---

The First Message

THAT a thoroughly clear understanding may be had of the much discussed message from Harry Houdini for which his wife and certainly the world has waited, it is apparently necessary to re-state the facts concerning a message preceding this one, with which the Houdini name is connected, and which we shall call the first message. Many persons, and the serious-minded portion of the press as well, have in some cases badly confused the two messages. The facts of the first message are these:

On the evening of February 8, 1928, in a private circle sitting with Arthur Ford in New York, "Fletcher," Ford's control, came through the medium while in trance, saying that a woman was there with him, one whom he had not seen before. "She is eager to say one word," he repeated. "She tells me that she is the Mother of Harry Weiss, known as Houdini," and then she went on to say: 'For many years my son waited for one word which I was to send back. He never got it. He always said that if he could get that he would believe. code which he gave to his wife can come from none save himself, yet the conditions which have developed in the family make it necessary for me to get my code word through first. If the family acts upon that he will be free and able to speak for himself. This is the word -- "FORGIVE." Capitalize that and put it in quotation marks. His wife knew the word, and no one else in all

the world knew it. Ask her if the word which I tried to get back all these years was not "Forgive." I have tried innumerable times to say it to him. Now that he is here with me I am able to get it through. Tonight I give it to you, and Beatrice Houdini will declare it to be true."

It is a matter of history, and there is no need to reiterate the facts in detail, except to add that Mrs. Houdini acknowledged the entire correctness of this message, and the following day stated publicly over her signature that this was "the sole communication received among thousands up to that time that contained the one secret key-word known only to Houdini, his Mother, and myself. I can say that had it but come to Houdini in his lifetime, it would have changed the whole course of his career." Houdini said at one time, before his end, "what would be more wonderful to me than to be able to converse with my beloved Mother?"

Lest it be considered that the simple key-word "Forgive" was all that the message contained, which would have been of slight evidential value in itself, be it said that the bulk of the message comprised facts in detail of an intimate family nature which have remained for Mrs. Houdini and her husband's relatives to interpret the meaning of, and in consideration of which they are omitted from this as from previous accounts.

"She is going now," concluded Fletcher, referring evidently to the Mother, "and she says that since this message has come through, it will open the channel for the other." This was taken at the time to refer to the second message pact, as it may be termed, the one established between Houdini and his wife.

The Second Message

THE important bearing of the first message on that which was to follow will be plainly seen. It may be rightly inferred that the family of Harry Houdini carried out the conditions imposed by the first message, so as to make possible the unfoldment of the second.

The first word of the second message was given to a group of friends sitting with Arthur Ford early in November, 1928. The message in its entirety came through during eight separate sittings, covering a period of two and one-half months. Four of the sittings were with groups of friends and four with individuals—one sitting with a New York physician, and three with Mr. Hamilton Emmons of England, visiting here at the time.

The method employed by Fletcher, the medium's control, was to give out the words as they came, and as the opportunity offered. Seldom more than one word came at the beginning, and frequently the intervals were as far as two weeks or more apart.

"The first word, 'ROSABELLE,' said Fletcher, "is the one that is going to unlock the rest." Two weeks later a second word was added, "NOW," and on December 18th, another word. Said Fletcher: "There is a lady I have been working with for a long time (presumably Houdini's Mother) and it is only one word that I get tonight, 'LOOK.' That is the sixth word in the code."

At a sitting one week later, he asked to know how many words had come in all, and repeating those already given he said, "The word 'NOW' does not belong." This was later confirmed by a letter received from Mr. Hamilton Emmons before his return to England, wherein he writes: "At a sitting with Ford this afternoon, Fletcher told me how the sequence of nine words of the Houdini message stood, but that the word 'NOW' was to be put in brackets as uncertain. The tenth word he thought had something to do with 'response,' but he was uncertain about that also."

It is interesting to note that at the earliest of the Hamilton Emmons sittings the first three words were given as "COME," "RIGHT," and "NOW." At the second sitting, Fletcher asked that the two first words be cancelled, leaving only "NOW," but asked that four new words be added — "ROSABELLE," "ANSWER," "PRAY," and "TELL."

In the group-sitting next to the final one of January 5, 1929, when the message was delivered complete, and in the correct sequence, Fletcher said, "Let me give you the words from the beginning, because I have to work hard to get them." In what may be called this semi-final grouping of the words, there were but two errors, consisting of transposing only; the third and fourth words, and the last four words, of the final ten. "He tells me now," he continued, "that he has put the next five words, which explain these, in French. I have not got them yet. I want to give you the other words now because, working on the French words, I may forget the others."

The details of the development, or gradual building up of this message, taken mostly from stenographic records of the sittings, are given in order that those interested may know that the message did not arrive full grown, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. At the final sitting on the evening of January 5th, Fletcher continued: "He tells me it has taken him three months working out of the confusion to get these words through, and that at no time has he been able to do anything without his Mother's and my help. 'TELL,' that is the last word! You now have ten words. Go over them carefully. It has been a hard job getting them through, but I tell you, he said, fairly shouting, "they are right! Now he wants to dictate the exact message you are to take to his wife. This is to be written down in longhand, no notes."

Fletcher then asked the time, which was 9:23 P.M. He said that this was to be noted and that the medium was in deep trance, controlled by Fletcher, that his pulse was at that moment 63, which he asked to have verified, also that the names of those present be set down. Fletcher continued: "A man who says he is Harry Houdini, but whose real name was Ehrich Weiss, is here, and wishes to send to his wife, Beatrice Houdini, the tenword code, which he agreed to do if it were possible for him to communicate. He says you are to take this message to her, and, upon acceptance of it, he wishes her to follow out the plan they agreed upon before his passing. This is the code:

ROSABELLE-ANSWER-TELL-PRAY-ANSWER-LOOK-TELL-ANSWER-ANSWER-TELL!

The letter was signed by the four persons present at the sitting: Francis R. Fast, John W. Stafford, Mrs. Helen E. Morris, and Mrs. Dorothy Stafford. Fletcher went on to say: "That last is the message which is to go to his wife. He wants it signed in ink by each one present. He says the code is known only to him and to his wife, and and that no one on earth but these two know it. He says there is no danger on that score, and that she must make it public. It must come from her; you are nothing more than agents. He says that when this comes through there will be a veritable storm, that many will seek to destroy her and she will be accused of everything that is not good, but she is honest enough to keep the pact which they repeated over and over before his death. The last words he spoke were those used in going over this together so that they would understand it clearly. 'I know,' he says, 'that she will be happy, because neither of us believed that it would be possible.'"

"Her husband says that on receipt of this message she must set a time, as soon as possible, when she will sit with this instrument while I, Fletcher, speak to her, and after he has repeated this message to her, she is to return a code to him which will be understood by her and by him alone. The code that will be returned will be a supplement to this code, and the two together will spell a word which sums it all up, and that word will be the message that he wants to send back. He refuses to give that word until he gives it to her."

Two members of the group, Mr. Fast and Mr. Stafford, both strangers to Mrs. Houdini, as were all of the sitters, delivered the message to her at her home the following day. She lay on a couch suffering from a fall sustained a week before, and a troublesome cold. To say that she was other than clear-minded, withal, is beside the mark. Dropping the letter to her side, and stirred with emotion, she said, "It is right!" She paused. "Did he say 'ROSABELLE'?" Mrs. Houdini asked. "Yes," was

the answer. "My God!" she exclaimed. "What else did he say?" Asking for more details concerning the message, she then undertook to carry out the plan agreed upon with her husband. The meeting above referred to was arranged for the second day following. The medium, Arthur Ford, accompanied by three members of his group and a representative of the United Press went to Mrs. Houdini's home, and, with two of her friends, gathered at her side.

In a short time the voice of Fletcher same through. "This man is coming now," he says, "the same one who came the other night. He tells me to say 'Hello, Bess, sweetheart,' and he wants to repeat the message and finish it for you. The code," he says, "is one that you used to use in one of your secret mind-reading acts." Repeating the ten words to her he said, "He wants you to tell him whether they are right or not." "Yes," replied Mrs. Houdini, "they are." "He smiles and says, 'thank you,' now I can go on," continued Fletcher. "He tells you to take off your wedding-ring and tell them what ROSABELLE means." Drawing her left hand from under the cover she took off the ring, and, holding it before her, sang in a small voice:

"Rosabelle, sweet Rosabelle, I love you more than I can tell; O'er me you cast a spell, I love you! My Rosabelle!"

"He says, 'I thank you, darling. The first time I heard you sing that was in our first show together years ago.'" Mrs. Houdini nodded her head in assent. "Then," said Fletcher, "there is something that he wants to tell me that no one but his wife knows. He smiles now and

shows me a picture and draws the curtain so, or in this manner."

That evidently was the clue for the unfoldment of the next part of the code, for Mrs. Houdini responded in French, "Je tire le rideau comme ca." "And now the nine words beside ROSABELLE spell a word in our code."

Then Fletcher, quoting Houdini word for word, explained the code: "The second word in our code was 'ANSWER.' 'B' is the second letter of the alphabet, so 'ANSWER' spells 'B.' The next word in the code is 'TELL,' and the fifth letter in the alphabet is 'E.' The twelfth letter in the alphabet is 'L' and to make up twelve we have to use the first and second words of the code."

Continuing in this intricate way to the end he said: "The message I want to send back to my wife is 'ROSA-BELLE, BELIEVE!' Is that right?" asked Fletcher. "Yes," answered Mrs. Houdini with great feeling.

Fletcher, concluding, repeated that which was being given him: "He says, 'tell the whole world that Harry Houdini still lives and will prove it a thousand times and more.' He is pretty excited. He says: 'I was perfectly honest and sincere though I resorted to tricks, for the simple reason that I did not believe it true, and no more than was justifiable. I am now sincere in sending this through in my desire to undo. Tell all those who lost faith because of my mistake to lay hold again of hope, and to live with the knowledge that life is continuous. That is my message to the world, through my wife and through this instrument'."

This may be said to comprise a complete account of the transmitting of the Houdini message. A few words concerning the code itself might not be out of place.

The Code

SOME persons, judging hastily, have made much over the fact that the ten words of the code for the twenty-six letters of the alphabet were published in a book by Harold Kellock on "Houdini: His Life Story." This code follows:

The Code			
1. Pray	A		
2. Answer	В	Key to the Code	
3. Say	C	Answer	В
4. Now	\mathbf{D}	Tell	E
5 Tell	\mathbf{E}	Pray, answer (1 and 2)	\mathbf{L}
6. Please	F	Look	1
7. Speak	G	Tell	E
8. Quickly	\mathbf{H}	Answer, answer (2 and 2)	V
9. Look	1	Tell	\mathbf{E}
10. Be quicl	s J		

As will be seen, the code agreed upon consists of 10 words representing the first 10 letters of the alphabet. For the eleventh letter the code is one-one, for the twelfth, one-two, and so on, the ten words in this way answering for the full alphabet.

This code was so much of a secret, Mrs. Houdini has said, that "Even the stage-hands wherever we appeared knew the words, but no one except Houdini and myself knew the cipher, or the key, to the code which we had arranged from these ten words, and its complete application."

Be it also made quite clear that neither the word ROSABELLE nor the word BELIEVE had been printed anywhere, nor appeared before this in connection with the Houdini message. That the medium himself was shown the printed code for the first time, three days after the message came, is also a matter of record.

It will be observed that out of the ten words in the printed list, but four were selected in building up the secret code between the Houdinis, that these four words were used in repetition, one word appearing three times, the other four times, and that a particular sequence was followed. Had one of these different words been out of sequence, the spelling of the word BELIEVE would either have been garbled entirely, or another word altogether might have resulted. Using the ten-word code list as a basis, many words and sentences could be built up out of the thousands of possible combinations, yet the one unique set of words studiously worked out by the Houdinis was brought through.

The Attacks

T was inevitable that attacks would be made on the veracity of the message. From the moment that Mrs. Houdini pronounced the message genuine, there began a flood of attack ranging from the ludicrous to the vicious. Any and all weapons from bribery to blackmail were thought legitimate and were brought into use.

It was hardly conceivable, however, that an incident having no remote connection with the message itself, with the medium, nor with the subject of Spiritualism, would be employed as the tool for the first and the most vicious of these attacks, emanating in this case from a certain tabloid newspaper.

Some years ago Mr. and Mrs. Houdini met and had befriended an elderly man, former city editor of a New York newspaper, then serving a life sentence in prison. These kindly attentions Mrs. Houdini had continued. Seeing the prospect of a series of sensational stories, a woman representative of the paper was assigned to call on Mrs. Houdini. The woman pressed her for copies of letters from the aforementioned man which the reporter believed to be of a romantic nature. The woman repeated her visits and her peladings. She came out again the day before Mrs. Houdini's sitting for the message. She begged for the letters which she said she had been instructed to get at all costs. She was again put off.

The matter uppermost in Mrs. Houdini's mind then came up, the letter she had received the day before with the ten words of the as yet undecoded message. The woman asked to be present at the sitting. Her request was granted, and she wrote a full and accurate account of it for her paper that evening, making no mention of the fact subsequently claimed, that she had the message complete 24 hours before. Instead, and in the presence of all the other sitters, she asked the only other press representative present to hold back his account for an hour, explaining that she had not yet been able to write up her story.

The day following, the woman came out again and teased Mrs. Houdini for the letters, and endeavoured also to get her to sign over the rights of her life-story as well. Becoming angry, Mrs. Houdini ordered the woman from her home, as a result of which the woman, on leaving, threatened to "get even" by writing the whole story of the message as a "hoax" the following day.

Frustrated thus far, she conceived the idea of the possibility of using Ford by a process of intimidation. She called him by telephone that evening on the pretext of having "important news" for him, and asked that he see her, which he declined, having a lecture engagement out of town that evening. Continuing, she told him that "Ress" Hondini had ordered her out of her house that day, and that she had promised her chief to get certain much-wanted letters that night. Expressing no concern in a matter not his, Ford asked the meaning of her threatening attitude. She replied that unless he exerted pressure on Mrs. Houdini to release the letters, she would "expose" the message as a "hoax" the next day. Unwilling to be intimidated or to become a party to a plan to blackmail Mrs. Houdini, Ford terminated the conversation with three short words.

In revenge, and true to promise, the tabloid printed a fictitious and lurid tale next morning to the effect that Ford had "confessed" the message as fraudulent before three of the paper's representatives the night before. Bold as it was, the story fell apart of its own weight and was ignored by the reputable press of New York, who had treated the news of the message itself with dignity and fairness, refusing altogether to print any of the offensive tabloid matter.

Four days later, a second attempt to blackmail was made by the same reporter, this time on a member of the Ford group. In other cases money was offered for false testimony that the code had been known by one person or another and was so divulged.

But not all of the attacks were of so sordid a nature. A note of humor was struck by a fish dealer being brought into the case with more haste than discretion by a local vaudeville mind-reader. The man's rehearsed story was to the effect that someone had told him that someone else had known the code and so had told the medium. The story was treated on all sides with just derision.

For the fraternity of magicians in general, be it said that from the beginning they maintained a notably discreet silence in the matter, which does them great credit.

Unbelievable as it may seem, there emerged from within the fold of Spiritualism itself a minor few who, whatever their motive, openly joined the ranks of the hostile newspaper. These few, three in number, were members of the United Spiritualist League of New York City, a local group organized, paradoxically, for the mutual protection of mediums. Working in cohort with their new-found friends of the press, they held a spurious meeting at which Arthur Ford's membership was annulled. In the meantime, the Board of Trustees of the First Spiritualist Church, of which Arthur Ford was leader, had met and heard the full story of the message at first hand, as well as the sensational newspaper story, and put on record their full confidence in him and his part in the matter.

Unrelenting, the leader of the League group who was incidentally a member of the First Church, decided to

carry his warfare into the Church itself. Enlisting the aid of the three anonymous members, formal charges were brought asking for Ford's dismissal as minister. The charges were entirely vague and unspecified, and the names of the signers were concealed and have remained so. In a situation which had thus become serious, and yet was absurd on the face of it, the Board of Trustees of the Church and the governing board of the United Spiritualist League, to whom Ford had appealed against the action of the minority group, decided to take joint action on the charges. Although Ford was on hand, as well as his attorney and many friends, to testify to the facts in the case, not one of the persons who had filed the charges was present, two of them being reported as out of town, nor were specific charges of any kind whatsoever made other than the fabricated newspaper story. The newspaper woman herself and the two supposed listeners were called, but their testimony was of so contradictory and conflicting a nature that it failed entirely to carry conviction.

Four days previous to this particular meeting, there occurred perhaps the culminating dramatic episode in what may justly be called the most vicious and revengeful journalistic attack on any movement, and on Spiritualism in particular, that modern newspaper history bears record of.

A man was found who confessed under oath that he had been hired to impersonate Ford at the alleged interview, under the pretence that he was thereby aiding Mrs. Houdini in some way and that he had been paid only part of the sum promised him.

By extending immunity to him against criminal prosecution for impersonating another, he gave full and substantiating details of the whole transaction, and his part in it.

The man's confession was read by Ford's attorney to the assembled boards, bringing the matter to a climax. At adjourned meetings both boards, acting separately, drew resolutions giving Ford entire clearance of any and all charges against him in connection with the Houdini message. At the following Sunday meeting of the First Spiritualist Church these resolutions were read to the assembled congregation by the President of the Board of Trustees.

Though hesitant to extend the telling of so sordid an episode as this in connection with but one of the attempts to vitiate the Houdini message, there remains only to add the significant item that the dismissal of the three persons in question being asked for by their fellow members in the United Spiritualist League, they each resigned before such action could be taken, in preference to facing the charges.

Mrs. Houdini

IT is altogether fitting that our attention be turned to the one person most of all concerned in the matter, her reactions to the message and her reflections upon it. The day after the receipt of the message, Mrs. Houdini issued the following statement at her home: "Regardless of all statements to the contrary, I wish to declare that the message, in its entirety, and in the agreed-upon sequence, given to me by Arthur Ford, is the correct message pre-arranged between Mr. Houdini and myself.

(Signed)

BEATRICE HOUDINI."

Witnessed:

HARRY R. ZANDER. MINNIE CHESTER. JOHN W. STAFFORD.

Mrs. Houdini's attitude has been that of an honest skeptic who had no alternative but to accept the message since it was the one agreed upon. She has stoutly maintained in the face of the cruelest opposition that no one but herself could possibly have known the contents of the message sealed in her vault. Even close friends urged that at any cost she deny the message as the correct one on the plea that it would undo all that her husband had stood for. To this she has replied, "It was what he wanted me to do, and I am doing it. Nothing will change my belief until it is proved some other way." She has affirmed conclusively that no one but her husband and herself could possibly have known the details of the code, that neither "overtly nor covertly could it have been gleaned."

The world in general, and the magazines that offered large sums of money for the correct message, had sufficient faith in the reliability and honor of Mrs. Houdini before this time to stake their all, and it is rather too late now to turn about-face and suddenly hurl all manner of loose charges of collusion, duplicity and worse at Mrs. Houdini. It is to her credit that she has borne with so much courage the brunt of these vicious attacks.

With reference to the considerable sums offered by magazines and others for the correct message, Ford has accepted no monetary consideration at all, small or large, and has declined to make claim of any kind for these prize moneys.

To those who have offered mind-reading and other similar explanations for the messages; Mrs. Houdini mentioned the fact that there are two more pre-arranged messages by Houdini. "They are in the same code as that received by me. One is to be sent to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the other to Remegius Weiss, of Philadelphia. I consider it a fit challenge to the magicians and psychics who doubt the genuineness of my message to bring either or both of these messages through."

Muscle reading, or motor automatism, has been brought forward as a possible explanation of the means whereby the medium might have obtained the code. An interesting suggestion but for the fact that during the transmission of the first ten words of the message, Mrs. Houdini was not present; her whereabouts indeed were not known. During the second part, the seance at her home, the medium sat apart from Mrs. Houdini, and did not as much as touch her hand during the sitting.

Of Houdini himself, Mrs. Houdini has stated that he always believed a little bit in his own heart, and more than she did, for the atmosphere wherein she was brought up disapproved of these things very much. Houdini is quoted as having said: "Gladly would I believe in Spiritualism if it could prove its claims."

Commenting on the fact that Houdini should have left a cipher behind which would be the test of his return, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said, very aptly, "This action in itself shows that his objections to Spiritualism were not very deep, since one does not propose to use what one really condemns."

Of the attacks in general Mrs. Houdini has remarked: "They accuse me of betraying the most sacred trust of my life, and of making a fool of the man I loved. There was no break in the happiness of our 37 years of married life."

It would be perhaps difficult to express Mrs. Houdini's attitude more completely than in the letter which follows, a letter appropriately enough written to and printed in the same attacking newspaper eleven days after the receipt of the message:

Dear Mr. Walter Winchell:

This letter is not for publicity. I do not need publicity. I want to let Houdini's old friends know that I did not betray his trust.

I am writing you this personally because I wish to tell you emphatically that I was no party to any fraud.

Now regarding the seance: For two years I have been praying to receive the message from my husband; for two years every day I have received messages from all parts of the world. Had I wanted a publicity stunt I could no doubt have chosen any of these sensational messages. When I repudiated these messages no one said a word, excepting the writers who said I did not have the nerve to admit the truth.

When the real message, THE message that Houdini and I agreed upon, came to me, and I accepted it as the truth, I was greeted with jeers. Why? Those who denounced the entire thing as a fraud claim that I had given Mr. Arthur Ford the message. If Mr. Ford said his I brand him a liar. Mr. Ford has stoutly denied saying this ugly thing, and knowing the reporter as well as I do I prefer to believe Mr. Ford. Others say the message has been common property and known to them for some time. Why do they tell me

this now, when they know my heart was hungry for

the true words from my husband?

The many stories told about me I have no way to tell the world the truth of or the untruth, for I have no paper at my beck and call; everyone has a different opinion of how the message was obtained. With all these different tales I would not even argue. However, when anyone accuses me of GIVING the words that my husband and I labored so long to convince ourselves of the truth of communication, then I will fight and fight until the breath leaves my body.

If anyone claim I gave the code, I can only repeat they lie. Why should I want to cheat myself? I do not need publicity. I have no intention of going on the stage, or, as some paper said, on a lecture tour. My husband made it possible for me to live in the greatest comfort. I do not need to earn money. I have gotten the message I have been waiting for from my beloved,

how, if not by spiritual aid, I do not know.

And now, after I told the world that I had received the true message, everyone seems to have known of the code, yet never told me. They left it for Mr. Ford to tell me, and I am accused of giving the words. It is all so confusing. In conclusion, may I say that God and Houdini and I know that I did not betray my trust. For the rest of the world I really ought not to care a hang, but somehow I do, therefore this letter. Forgive its length.

Sincerely yours,

BEATRICE HOUDINI."

A year and two months after the above was written, the press throughout the United States and elsewhere gave considerable notice to a statement attributed to Mrs. Houdini to the effect that she had renounced all belief in the possibility of communication with her dead husband.

When the facts were looked into, it appears that during luncheon at an hotel in Miami, Florida, a casual conversation in which Mrs. Houdini took part, had been considerably enlarged upon by a local newspaper reporter.

In none of the printed versions of this incident was trace to be found of any reference to the message from Houdini which his wife had accepted and vigorously defended a year or more before. Both the press and the general public were justly mystified.

The first light was shed on the matter through an interview with Mrs. Houdini printed in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle a short time after, April third, 1930. This interview was indeed the lament of Rachel, but this time for a husband who had gone, and the reality of whose survival she had hoped for continuing evidence of. Apparently this had been denied her. "If Houdini lives in a spirit world, he would have helped me. He loved me too much to see me suffer," she said. Whatever the cause of her sufferings, pressure from without or yearnings within, the way must indeed have been made hard for her since his passing. Doubt and despair hovered over all.

But whatever else, the message that had come to her a year before was not to be refuted. Again she made plain in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle interview that "the secret message we had agreed upon was finally transmitted to me by Arthur Ford." If a possible keynote to her mingled feelings were to be sought, it could best be summed up in her appealing question as to why he had not "brought more to me than the message."

Knowing as much, and yet so little as some of us do about these things, echo might well answer—why indeed should it be thus?

Conclusion

A S has been said, it is useless for the opponents of Spiritualism to belittle a message given to and accepted by the only one who could confirm it. It is totally wide of the mark and of no avail whatsoever for any other individual or for the public in general to pronounce judgment on its correctness or otherwise. At no time has the medium himself presumed as much. In his first public address following the message, he stated: "If asked to say on oath whether I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that I actually got the Houdini message, I could not do so except on the basis of Mrs. Houdini's statement, and you cannot do more." The same thought was repeated later writing editorially, "Frankly, I do not know whether I got the Houdini code message or not; Mrs. Houdini says I did, and the matter rests there."

Enough has happened in these latter years in the way of outstanding demonstrations of psychic phenomena to give anyone ample reason to alter any preconceived notions about these things, what with the clear-cut and as yet unassailable results in the "Margery" case alone, on which the whole argument for survival and communication may rest secure. In like category will the Houdini message stand. So far no shred of evidence, whatever, has been offered against its genuineness, and it must stand as genuine until such evidence, clear and incontrovertible, is forthcoming.

What we appear to be faced with is the fact that memory is persistent and immortal. The body of evi-



30328500373328

dence for survival is increasing at an important rate, and can only wilfully be ignored. Today, as never before, the burden of proof is on the skeptic.

Quoting a distinguished contemporary, it is a little curious that the thought of the probability of a future life should make some people so angry and sometimes terrified. "People demand evidence," says Dr. John Lamond. "What is the evidence they wish? It is not so much the evidence that is needed, as it is the courage to admit that the evidence exists once that evidence has been given."

Spiritualism no longer is the hidden study of the few, nor the pursuit of the fanatic. Instead, that future existence which very surely lies ahead for every mortal has increasingly become the serious concern of every one of us. The widespread interest in this message alone, and the very attacks upon it, bear sufficient witness to that.

This case should prove for all time the utter futility of any attempt at mass conversion of the fact of survival by any means whatsoever, so long as the human being must of necessity be the agent or participant in one way or another.

It is and shall remain a matter of individual experience. As has been said by that eminent scientist, Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, co-discoverer with Charles Darwin of the Origin of Species, "The cardinal principle of Spiritualism is that everyone must find out the truth for himself. It makes no claims to be received on hearsay evidence, but demands that it be not accepted without patient, honest and fearless inquiry."

LITERATURE FOR THE STUDENT.

Suggested by

ARTHUR FORD

EVIDENTIAL AND HISTORICAL.

They Shall Be Comforted Barbanell Station Astral Drouet Toward the Stars Bradley New Revelation Comm Doyle Torchbearers of Spiritualism St. Clair Stobart History of Spiritualism Comm Doyle Gate of Remembrance Bligh-Bond D. D. Home, the Medium Comm Doyle Why I believe in Personal Immortality Sir Oliver Lodge Materialization Schrenck-Notzing Drama of Life After Death Lawton (Holt and Co., New York)			
Edge of Etheric Findlay			
BIBLICAL AND RELIGIOUS.			
Ancient Lights			
MEDIUMSHIP.			
Key to Psychic Development Delta Samadhi Mediumship and Development Wellis Psychies and Mediums Tubby Psychology of Mediumship Leaf			
PHILOSOPHICAL.			
Secret Path Paul Brunton Spirit Teachings Stainton Moses Tertium Organum Ospensky Psychic Philosophy De Brath			

Order from

PSYCHIC NEWS PRESS, 144 High Holborn, London, W.C.1,

Or

ANGUS AND ROBERTSON, Sydney.



SUTTERFIELD & LEWIS LTD. PRINT, SYDNEY 70263