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THE NEW BLACK MAGIC

THE NEW
BLACK MAGIC
AND
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OUIJA-BOARD

BY

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PREFACE

IT SHOULD be pointed out that this book does not attempt to deal with abnormal phenomena which occur *spontaneously*—with apparitions or forms resembling the dead coming *unsought for,* such as have been recorded in all ages of the world's history and of which we have had accounts during the great war. Such phenomena follow some law which is quite unknown to us, or they are due to some act of God necessarily outside our knowledge and beyond our control. The evidence in favor of these phenomena is of a varied kind and is, in many respects, very conflicting. It is difficult, in most instances, to distinguish the objective from the purely subjective. In a variety of cases the phantom seen is manifestly the creation of the percipient's own brain. The dead, with few exceptions, present themselves, not in the form in which they appeared when last seen on earth, but in that in which the percipient best remembers them. Their statements respecting the other life and their new environment, too, vary considerably and are often quite contradictory.

It is admitted, however, that there are credible instances in which the departure from the body

of some member of a family or community has been intimated to some distant member by an apparently objective though fugitive appearance of the deceased. We have records of phenomena of this kind in the history of the lives of the saints and martyrs, and the Catholic Church has never denied their reality. On the contrary, she has maintained that reality when a skeptical world denied and ridiculed them. But she has also maintained that, since such phenomena may emanate from different sources, and since those produced by the act of God may be imitated by the enemy of God, it is not possible to speak dogmatically respecting them. She has, as a rule, tested their aim and character by the Apostolic test (see p. 141), or by their effects, moral and spiritual, upon the life of the percipient. She has always discouraged any seeking after them, and any attempt to regard their occurrence as an indication of a peculiar state of sanctity. In any case, it will be seen that such phenomena have nothing in common and cannot be said to be identical with those which are *invoked* and *induced,* for which a circle has to be formed, for which a medium is employed, and for which favorable conditions have to be created. It is with such phenomena alone that this book deals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	The Claim of Modern Science . .	1
II.	The Claim Specified	17
III.	The Evidence of History	29
IV.	The Evidence of Fact and Experience	47
V.	The Evidence of True Science . .	77
VI.	The Evidence of Christian Thought and Experience	109
VII.	The Evidence of Reason and Common-Sense	163
VIII.	The Inevitable Inference . . .	191
IX.	The Truth About the Ouija-Board	205
X.	Index	235

I

THE CLAIM OF MODERN SCIENCE

THE CLAIM OF MODERN SCIENCE

THE reading and thinking world has recently been startled by the publication of books and articles from the pens of eminent scientific and literary men in which the claim is made that reliable communications are being received from the spirits of departed human beings and that these communications are of such a character that they may not unfairly be regarded as a New Revelation.

Two of these writers, the English physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Conan Doyle, of Sherlock Holmes' fame, who may be regarded as the spokesmen of this class of innovators, boldly assert that, in view of these remarkable and, as they think, authentic disclosures, the traditional teachings of Christianity will have to undergo a radical transformation and that their reconstruction, in the light of the new knowledge thus obtained, will have to take place.

That large numbers of that class of persons who are always on the lookout for new developments in the sphere of Religion and who do not know that the new in Religion is seldom the true, and that the true is never the new, should wel-

come these bold assertions and should rejoice that they emanate from such eminently respectable quarters cannot take us by surprise. Such persons are always glad to welcome any so-called new religion, especially when it is seen to free them from obligations to which they have never submitted fully and willingly and which provides them with a more convenient and comfortable and, as they consider, reasonable philosophy of life. The multiplicity of the already existing "new" religions and new-thought movements is a striking illustration of this tendency of the modern mind. But that men of high intelligence who might be supposed to discern the fallacy of such contentions and whose outlook on the world might be expected to be of a very different character, should put forth such claims is a problem perplexing minds apt to think more deeply and seriously about such matters.

To those of us, however, who are more intimately acquainted with this subject and who are behind the scenes of the modern psychical research movement this problem does not present any very great difficulty. They know that these scientific researchers, constantly engaged in spiritistic experiments, and necessarily obeying the laws by which spirit-intercourse becomes possible, are themselves the victims of the intel-

ligences who are striving to impose these new teachings upon the world, and that their own mental apparatus is (imperceptibly to themselves) interfered with to such an extent that they lose the power of an all-round view of the matter and of forming a true and right judgment respecting it. The entire history of spiritism with its countless victims goes to confirm the truth of this statement, and numbers of disillusioned spiritists, in all countries, have acknowledged it. Indubitable spirit-messages, as is well known today, cannot be received without the cultivation of a certain degree of *mind-passivity,* and mind-passivity constitutes the open door by which the personality of the investigator is invaded and by which spirit-control is effected. The extent of this control necessarily depends upon a variety of conditions—mental, moral and physical—but it is never absent, and the last person conscious of it is often the investigator himself. It is here and here alone where the solution of the perplexing problem indicated above is to be found. I have known many of the men engaged in the effort to provide the modern restless world with a new revelation and I am persuaded that they would, years ago, have been the first to repudiate the absurd claim which they are now making and that they would have pro-

nounced it preposterous. I have already written so much on the subject of Spiritism, and my books are now so well known, that I do not propose to go again over the whole ground. My correspondents in all countries have acknowledged that I have not merely myself investigated the phenomena with care and patience but that I have, in the interpretation of them, weighed all the facts fairly and squarely and that I have left no vital consideration out of account. I propose, therefore, to address myself in this volume to the main contention put forth in these recent statements and publications: Is a New Revelation, by means of spirit-manifestations, in progress? Before entering upon an examination of this contention, however, I am anxious to say a few words by way of introduction. It seems to me that Sir Conan Doyle's loose and illogical mode of reasoning is already apparent from several things he says in his account of the progressive development of his own religious and philosophical ideas.

He tells us that, although strongly impressed by the materialistic philosophy, he had not ceased to believe in God. "I had never ceased," he writes, "to be a theist. . . . I believed then as I believe now in an intelligent Force behind all the phenomena of nature. . . . But when it came to

a question of our little personalities surviving death it seemed to me that the whole analogy of nature was against it. It seemed to me a delusion and I was convinced that death did indeed end all, though I saw no reason why that should affect our duty towards humanity during our transitory existence."

But is not this a wholly unphilosophical and illogical mode of reasoning? All true reflection and deduction must surely lead to the conclusion that belief in the existence of an intelligent creative Power and in a future life for man must stand or fall together. Our most elementary notions of intelligence demand this. Our moral feelings and instincts dictate it. The entire history of Religion bears witness to it. What are we to think of a Creator who calls a being into existence which has to pass through a long training and education, often carried on by means of pain and suffering and anguish, who endows it with longings and instincts emphatically pointing to a future life, in which the wrongs of the present life are to be righted, who provides for the foundation of the closest and most affectionate ties and relation, but who has nevertheless decreed that all these hopes and desires, all these longings and aspirations, shall end in corruption and the grave—in the entire extinc-

tion and disappearance of the personality? How can we associate the very idea of intelligence with such a Creator; how can we be expected to love and reverence him and to obey the heartless laws which he has made and which rob us of even the few transitory pleasures which we might enjoy? Does not our entire moral nature, that very nature which he has given us, rebel against such a notion? Would not all human life be a mockery and would we not be driven to the inevitable conclusion that the Creator is a monster who cannot, on any conceivable plea, claim our reverence and allegiance? Such an inference is according to the necessary and unchanging laws of human thought and no reflecting mind can evade it. How much more logical is the inference drawn from such a mode of reasoning by the Apostle St. Paul and expressed in the familiar words: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

But how little the philosophical vaporings of the modern scientific intellect can be trusted is surely evident from this one example. Again both Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle seem to be unconscious of the fact that a fundamental fallacy underlies the very notion of a "New" Revelation. They would surely be more consistent and logical if they spoke of these

spirit-messages as a *true* or *the true* revelation intimating that the old one has been found to be false and is therefore no revelation at all. For, since the so-called new revelation contravenes the old in all its vital characteristics the latter could never have been a revelation in any intelligible sense, and must therefore be regarded as a grievous imposition on the credulity of mankind.

It is here, be it carefully noted, not a question of a progressive disclosure of divine truth or truths such as we have in the records of the Old and New Testaments, God revealing Himself gradually: first by the promulgation of a series of elementary laws, then by means of inspired patriarchs and prophets and seers, and finally by the incarnation of His Only-Begotten Son, the later disclosures confirming and illuminating and adding to the earlier. It is here a question of a complete and utter revolution and upheaval, the new revelation contravening the old, and eliminating its essential and characteristic teachings and principles. For even such radical innovators and iconoclasts as Lodge and Doyle will scarcely dare to assert, in view of the indubitable facts of History, that the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God—of the Word made Flesh—in the historic sense, in the afterthought of theology and not a vital and integral part of

the primitive Christian Revelation. And since the spirits of the séance-room everywhere emphatically deny the truth of this doctrine, the old revelation could never have been true; but mankind must, for nearly two thousand years, have been laboring under a fatal delusion. Or are we seriously to consider the absurd suggestion that what was true in one age ceased to be true in another, and that the all-wise Creator stooped or consented to a deception which any normal human mind would unhesitatingly pronounce contemptible, seeing that in this very deception have centered the highest hopes and noblest aspirations and most painful sacrifices of the best of men and women throughout nearly twenty centuries of human life. And at what particular epoch, one is tempted to ask, did the old revelation cease to be true and the disillusionment of mankind become necessary? The utter absurdity of this scientific juggling with ideas and principles, which alas! passes muster in even intellectual and instructed circles, is very effectively exhibited in Mr. Gilbert Chesterton's books, especially in his *Orthodoxy* (p. 135), where he writes:

"An imbecile habit has arisen in modern controversy of saying that such and such a creed can be held in one age but cannot be held in an-

other. Some dogma, we are told, was credible in the twelfth century but is incredible in the twentieth. You might as well say that a certain philosophy can be believed on Mondays, but cannot be believed on Tuesdays. You might as well say of a view of the cosmos that it was suitable to half-past three but not suitable to half-past four. What a man can believe depends upon his philosophy, not upon the clock of the century."

What cannot be sufficiently emphasized, by way of introduction to a discussion of the subject, is the circumstance that we cannot here speak of a reconstruction or reinterpretation of Christianity. The use of such terms is mischievous in the extreme since they are only calculated to throw dust into the eyes of the public and to hide the real truth of the matter from the minds of sensitive persons. It is merely "an unloosening of the ropes one by one, gently and gradually," as the spirits would term it, and as they have counseled it in order not to disquiet the consciences of those still thinking along Christian lines, and hence likely to get alarmed at the character of these new disclosures. But there is no possibility of a reconciliation between Historic Christianity and Spiritism. The teachings of one are destructive of those of the other, and if one is true the other is necessarily false. Some

writers have attempted this kind of reconciliation and it has found favor with certain orders of minds. But the well-informed student of the subject cannot fail to see through the deception and discern the underlying fallacy. Such so-called reconciliations have only been possible, either by unduly emphasizing and falsely interpreting certain elements in Spiritism which bear some surface resemblance to Christian teachings and manifestations, or by stripping Christianity of all its essential and characteristic doctrines and reducing it to a mere system of ethics, such as the world knew of before the advent of Christ, and as it has grown familiar with in the present age.

That this is so will be clearly seen from the introductory statement to the following chapter in which I propose to summarize the essential contents of the "New Revelation," as they may be gathered from the writings of some of our reconstructionists and from the emphatic teachings and assertions of those "higher" spirits who manifested through the mediumship of the late Mr. Stainton Moses, and whose disclosures are regarded as a kind of Bible by spiritists and investigators.

Mr. Stainton Moses himself, who had been a clergyman of the Church of England, and who

was therefore well able to form a judgment as to what constitutes historical and essential Christianity, fully admitted that, if the spirit-disclosures were true, they meant *revolution* and not simply *reform,* and he was honest enough to face and proclaim that fact. He did not seek to evade the issues by attempting impossible compromises or reconstructions.

"Spiritualism," he wrote, "is revolution, not simply reform. It is no time for polite patching up; we are in the very dust and din of spiritual strife, in the thick of a great spiritual conflict, the effects of which we shall try in vain to escape, and it is no time now to go about deprecating noise and timidly sprinkling rose-water to quench the powder fumes of battle. The battle is upon us and it is waste time to grumble at its smoke and din."

Another writer[1] on this subject states the case equally emphatically:

"The religion of the future," he says, "is in our midst already with signs and wonders uprising like a swollen tide. . . . Christianity has spent its force and now another revelation has succeeded it—a revelation suited to the needs of the time."

When Mr. Stainton Moses first received these spirit-messages and realized that they violently

[1]St. George Stock in "Attempts at Truth," P. 128.

contradicted his Christian beliefs and habitual modes of thought he had the strongest possible misgivings as to the character and aim of the intelligences conveying them and, for a time, he shrank from a continuation of this intercourse. And it is evident, too, that, at this period, the answers to his questions furnished by the spirit Imperator did not at all satisfy him.

"I could not get rid of the idea," he wrote, "that the Faith of Christendom was practically upset by their issue. I believed that, however it might be disguised, such would be the outcome of these communications in the end. The *central dogmas* seemed especially attacked and it was this that startled me. . . . Then came a doubt as to how far all might be the work of satan transformed into an angel of light laboring for the subversion of the Faith." He addressed the following question to Imperator (one of the "higher" spirits): "It would help me somewhat if I could picture you as a definite individuality. But, on the whole, I wish you would leave me alone."

Imperator's answer was:

"The orthodox religionists of His (Christ's) time charged Him with association with Beelzebub. When you have had time to think we will answer."

But Mr. Stainton Moses was again and again urged to bring to the circle a patient and *passive* mind and, as this passivity increased, the normal operations of thought and reflection were interfered with, and the principles of the new spirit-revelation were accepted. He ceased to be a Christian and embraced the conventional spirit-creed and philosophy. But he retained sense enough to recognize that that creed is wholly and utterly irreconcilable with the doctrines of Historical Christianity.

II

THE CLAIM SPECIFIED

THE CLAIM SPECIFIED

ALTHOUGH there is, as the literature of Spiritism testifies, and as is universally admitted, the greatest possible divergence in the teachings given by the spirits in various countries, the essential principles of the "New Revelation" respecting which there is agreement may be stated as follows. I will quote Lodge's and Doyle's own words and the statements of those spirits in whose utterances the largest porportion of spiritists place confidence.

1. *The "New Revelation" is divine and authoritative.*

> "I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely the study of a force outside the rules of science but that it was really something tremendous, *a breaking-down of the wall between two worlds, a direct message from beyond,* a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. . . . A new revelation seemed to me in the course of delivery to the human race, though how far it is still in what I may call the John-the-Baptist stage and how far some greater fullness and clearness may be

expected hereafter is more than any man can say." (Doyle.)

"We claim our authority to be divine and await with confidence the acceptance of our mission when the times are ripe for our teaching." (The Spirit Imperator.)

2. *Man has not fallen.*

"So long as there was any question of the fall of man there was at least some sort of explanation of such phrases (redemption from sin), but when it became certain that man had never fallen—when with ever fuller knowledge we could trace our ancestral course down through the cave-man and drift-man back to that shadowy and far-off time when the man-like ape slowly evolved into the ape-like man—looking back on all this vast succession of life, we knew that it had always been rising from step to step. *Never was there any evidence of a fall.*" (Doyle.)

"The spirits reject as a baseless figment the story of a fall from a state of primeval innocence and perfection to a state of degradation in the person of Adam and Eve." (Stainton Moses.)

"For the present you may know that the theological story of a fall from a state of

purity to a state of sin, as usually detailed and accepted, is misleading." (The Spirit Imperator.)

3. *The Incarnation and Sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ were in no sense an atonement for the sins of man.* Christ was some higher created intelligence who came to reform the world by his moral teaching and his personal example.

"One can see no justice in a vicarious sacrifice nor in the God who could be placated by such means. . . . Too much seemed to be made of Christ's death. It is no uncommon thing to die for an idea. Men die continually for their convictions. Thousands of our lads are doing it at this instant in France. . . . In my opinion far too much stress has been laid upon Christ's *death* and far too little on His *life*. That was where the true grandeur and the true lesson lay. According to spirit-teaching, the Christ-spirit came down upon the earth at a time of great earthly depravity to give to the people the example and teaching of an ideal life and then returned to his own high station, having left an example which is still occasionally followed. *Nothing here of atonement and redemption.*"

"In such a view reason and faith would be reconciled. . . . Christianity must change or perish. Our churches are half-empty; women their chief supporters; both learned and poor, in town or country, are alienated from it." (Doyle.)

"It was not the eternal purpose of God that Jesus should die when the work of the Christ was but just commencing. That was man's work, foul, evil, accursed. . . . He came in the sense that all regenerators of men have been their saviours. . . . In the sense that the scene on Calvary was foreordained to occur when man consummated his foul deed he came not. And this is a mighty truth." (The Spirit Imperator.)

4. *Death is not a terminus fixing man's destiny.*

His education continues after death. The consequences of sin are never permanent. The imperfect or undeveloped soul passes, when separated from the body, into a temporary penal state which becomes a means of advancing its development and education.

"The spirit (after death) is not a glorified angel or a goblin damned, but it is simply the person himself, containing all his strength and weakness, his wisdom and his folly, exactly as he has retained his personal

appearance. . . . *Hell drops out altogether,* as it has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man. This odious conception, so blasphemous in its view of the Creator, arose from the exaggerations of oriental phrases and may perhaps have been of service in a coarse age where men were frightened by fires as wild beasts are scared by the travellers. *Hell as a permanent place does not exist.* But the idea of punishment, of purifying chastisement, in fact of Purgatory, is justified by the reports from the other side." (Doyle.)

"To suppose that the short period of earth-life is sufficient to save or damn a soul to all eternity and that the act of death has power to convert an ordinary man into either an angel or a demon, to make him happy in the society of the highest saints and able to associate with Deity, or to condemn him to fraternize with the lowest of the low, amid whatever physical or mental torments were imagined as likely to accompany and emphasize his fall from grace—all this was so repugnant to common-sense that as a matter of fact it was not believed." (Lodge.)

"We know of no Hell save that within the soul; a Hell which is fed by the flame of un-

purified and untamed lust and passion, which is kept alive by remorse and agony of sorrow; which is fraught with the pangs that spring up 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. In perpetually progressing the spirit finds its true happiness. There is no finality; none, none, none!" (The Spirit Imperator.)

As I am anxious to avoid writing a big book and to again traverse ground already covered in my earlier works, I have thus briefly and concisely summarized the main teachings of the "New Revelation" from which it will be seen that they are wholly subversive of Historical Christianity. There cannot manifestly here be any question of a reconstruction or reinterpretation in the light of the new knowledge. Such phrases are clearly utterly misleading, and are merely attempts to let the Christian down gently—not to alarm and disquiet him overmuch. If the disclosures of the higher spirits are true, Historical Christianity is false—the Apostles' Creed is based upon a misconception. If Christianity, on the other hand, is true, these new teachings harbor a perilous delusion and the higher spirits

are liars and deceivers. We have therefore to address ourselves to the question: What is the evidence in favor of their veracity? And, in attempting to answer this question, we shall have to examine the matter from various points of view—to seek for light in many directions. The subject is too serious, and too vital in its issues to dismiss it with a superficial consideration or to fall back upon our personal inclinations or preconceptions.

"The body of fresh doctrine," says Sir Conan Doyle, "comes in the main through automatic writing where the hand of the medium is controlled, either by an alleged human-being . . . or an alleged angel." "These," he goes on to say, "are supplemented by trance-utterances, verbal messages of spirits given through the lips of the mediums . . . sometimes by direct voice, occasionally through table-tilting."

To the question: "How do we know that they are really from the beyond, the answer must be that we require signs which we can test before we accept assertions which we cannot test. These signs are, as in the case of Stainton Moses, when the messages are accompanied by a number of abnormal gifts. If Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth-life of which he could not have had cognizance, and if these

things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also."

"If Raymond (Sir Oliver Lodge's son) can tell us of a photograph, no copy of which has reached England and which proved to be exactly as he had described it, and if he can give us through the lips of strangers all sorts of details of his home-life which his own relatives had to verify before they found them to be true, is it unreasonable to suppose that he is fairly accurate in his description of his own experiences and state of life at the very moment at which he is communicating?"

Now in order to simplify the matter, I will emphasize but two conditions which all reasonable and right-thinking men must regard as necessary conditions on which we can even consider the question of a new revelation.

1. Such a revelation must, in the first place, be consistent with our instinctive ideas of the dignity, justice, and holiness of God.

2. It must, secondly, both in its character and effects and in the mode of its delivery, be in accord with our religious feelings and the dictates of our reason.

As I feel confident that no reflecting reader, whatever his religious or philosophical attitude

may be, will find fault with this definition of the inevitable attitude of a mind seeking the solution of such a problem as this, I can but ask him to keep these two principles steadily in view throughout the enquiry. Looking at *all* the facts of the case then which our modern knowledge and our experience have brought to light, what is the evidence respecting the true origin and character of these spirit-disclosures?

III

THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

ALTHOUGH it is incidentally admitted by the scientific investigators of psychical phenomena that intercourse with the unseen spirit-world has been known and practiced in all ages of the world's history and by practically all races and nations, they nevertheless make statements from which they clearly desire it to be inferred that they have made marvelous discoveries and that the objective reality of this intercourse has been established by modern science.

Some years ago Sir Oliver Lodge declared that the wall which may be conceived to be dividing the two states of being was "wearing thin in places" and that, amid the roar of water and of other noises, we on our side (that is he and his fellow researchers) are beginning to hear now and again the strokes of the pick-axes of our comrades on the other side."

This statement, of course, exemplifies one of those many conceits and presumptions of modern science of which we have such striking evidence in our days. For a single glance at history goes to demonstrate the fact that, so far from making any new discovery in this sphere of research, scientific men have been the last to come to a

knowledge of facts with which even the savage man was acquainted and with which the man in the street has been long familiar. So far, therefore, as any claim to *newness* in the matter of the mode of delivery of the "New Revelation" is concerned, the claim absolutely falls to the ground. So-called revelations, by means of spirit-manifestations, have been made in all times of human history, and that hole in the wall or partition, of which Sir Oliver speaks, has been known to exist as long as man has lived on this earth. It was the materialistic scientist who so persistently denied it and who, as in many other matters, had "his facts all wrong."

And the very use of the word Necromancy indicates that these manifestations and disclosures were pretty universally believed to emanate from the spirits of the dead.

The first fact, therefore, which we have to recognize and keep in mind is that there is nothing new, either in these revelations or in the mode of their delivery. Spiritism and mediumship are as old as the world. It is merely in the *form* in which they have displayed themselves that they have varied in different ages and with different races.

Under the word *Necromancy* we read in the New International Encyclopedia:

"A method of divination by which the dead were supposed to be conjured up and to answer questions concerning the future. Its practice was certainly extremely ancient. It was condemned in the Old Testament, and among the Greeks it was familiar in Homer's day. In historical days necromancy was practiced by priests and consecrated persons at many shrines in Greece. It was also current among the Romans although banned by the Church under Constantine. It was also employed by the Northern peoples, and, in the mediaeval and later period, passed over into sorcery."

The Catholic Encyclopedia makes a statement to the same effect:

"Along with other forms of divination and magic, necromancy is found in every nation of antiquity and is a practice common to paganism at all times and in all countries, but nothing certain can be said as to the place of its origin."

All research goes to show that it was known and practiced in Persia, Babylonia, Chaldea, Etruria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Among the Romans Horace several times alludes to the invocation of the dead. Cicero testifies that his friend Appius practiced necromancy. In the first Christian centuries it was common among the pagans.

Sir Conan Doyle himself naively informs us that M. Jacolliot, an Indian Judge, "found among the Indian Fakirs every phenomenon of advanced European mediumship, everything which Home (the famous medium) had done. The Fakirs said that they were done by the Pitris or spirits, and that the only difference in their procedure from ours seemed to be that they made more use of direct evocation. They claimed that these powers were handed down from time immemorial and traced back to the Chaldees."

From the records of Old Testament two facts become abundantly clear:

1. The various known forms of mediumship and necromancy were commonly practiced.

2. The practice was condemned by the Jewish law-givers and prophets as being destructive of the true religious and moral life of the people.

In Leviticus XIX, 31, we read:

"Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God."

In Leviticus XX, 6:

"The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul and destroy it out of the midst of its people."

In Leviticus XX, 27:

"A man or woman, in whom there is a pythonical or divining spirit, dying, let them die; they shall stone them; their blood be upon them."

In Deuteronomy XVIII, 10:

"Neither let there be found among you anyone that . . . consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor anyone that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or *that seeketh the truth from the dead.*"

Isaias VIII, 19:

"And when they say to you: seek of pythons and of diviners, who mutter in their enchantments; should not the people seek of their God, for the living of the dead?"

In the records of the New Testament, we are confronted by the remarkable fact that the spirits speaking to Our Lord through the mouths of the possessed, or "controlled" as the modern psychical researchers would say, and using the language and thought-forms of ordinary human beings, were always denounced by Him as being devils. He did not parley with them; He did not inquire what they had to say for themselves, what revelation they might have to make. *He cast them out.* In no single instance does He, the spirit from the higher spheres who, according to the spiritists, might reasonably be expected

to acknowledge at least the legitimacy of this mode of communication and intercourse, display the slightest hesitation in the matter. Not once did He ask these obsessing entities to identify themselves, or to tell them something respecting their supposed past earth-life and the purpose of their return. From no single recorded instance can the modern spiritist derive the faintest measure of support for his contention.

And the obsessed, themselves, and the people who kept them, did not seem to entertain the slightest doubt on the subject. We read in St. Matthew IX, 33:

"After the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke and the multitude wondered," etc.

And this is characteristic of all Our Lord's dealings with the "controlled," which are so frequent and so well known that it is not necessary to quote them in detail here.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 16, we have the account of St. Paul's dealings with a woman who manifestly practiced what we would call today the art of mediumship. It was the case of "a certain girl . . . who brought to her masters much gain by divining." Adapting herself, like many mediums of our own time, to the situation and seeking, no doubt, to secure the favor of the Apostles, she acknowledged them to

be "the servants of the most high God." "And this she did many days." But St. Paul, too, displayed no manner of doubt as to the nature of the woman's "gift" or of the character of the entity operating by its means. He commanded the spirit "in the name of Jesus Christ to go out of her. And he went out the same hour."

When we trace the record further down to the early Christian centuries, we come upon evidence which is equally clear and conclusive. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church bear testimony that the spirits, speaking through the mouths of the "controlled," make assertions similar to those made by Doyle's spirits today; but the clear spiritual insight of those sturdy Christians, and the careful observation of accompanying phenomena, made it easy for them to discover and expose the delusion.

The philosopher St. Justin, who became a Christian in A.D. 135, and was martyred in 166, declared . . . [2]"that it is nothing else that the demons strive after than to draw away man from God the Creator and from Christ, His only-Begotten."

In a passage quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, writing in the fifth century, said of the demons that they sometimes learn with the

[2] I Apologia, 58.

greatest ease the dispositions of man, not only such as are expressed by words, but also such as are conceived in thought when certain signs are thereby expressed on the bodily organism of the soul.

St. Thomas himself, writing in the thirteenth century, says that "often the demons simulate to be the souls of the dead to confirm heathens who believe this in their error."

Impersonation, admittedly so frequently observed and practiced in our time, is clearly an ancient trick, but strangely successful in deceiving the scientific mind.

Now what are the practical lessons which we learn from the simple facts of history, pagan, Jewish and Christian; what are the inferences to be drawn from them?

1. They teach us, in the first place, that so far as the records of history go, it is evident that *a* mode of communication between the world's seen and unseen has always existed; that the wall dividing the two states has always been "thin in places." Science, therefore, has made no new discovery and, if we are to judge by the beliefs and practices of the pagan nations, it is equally evident that some kind of revelation from that mysterious world has always been in process of delivery.

2. We are, in the second place, confronted by the undeniable fact that the rulers and law-givers, under God's ancient covenant, always and without exception pronounced this intercourse to be evil and forbade it under the severest penalties. This fact, of course, can only be accounted for by the circumstance that it was not only contrary to the declared law of God, but that experience had proved these practices to be disastrous to the moral life of the people.

The Jews manifestly had acquired a knowledge of these practices in their contact with the neighboring pagan nations, and indulgence in them was known to estrange them from the love and service of the One true God.

And, strange to say, we have a modern scientific man,himself a confessed spiritist, recognizing and bearing witness to this fact, and confirming the reasonableness of the Jewish enactments on the ground of personal experience.

"These practices were condemned," writes Sir William Barrett, "in unmeasured terms by the Hebrew prophets. . . . They were prohibited, as a study of the whole subject shows—not only, or chiefly, because they were the practices and part of the religious rites of the pagan nations around, but mainly because they tended to obscure the divine idea and to weaken the supreme

faith in and reverent worship of the One Omnipotent Being whom the nation was set apart to proclaim. . . . Instead of the arm of the Lord beyond and above them, *a motley crowd of pious, lying, vain or gibbering spirits would seem to people the unseen;* and weariness, perplexity and, finally, despair would enervate and destroy the nation."

And, "the same peril," naively continues this spiritist professor, "exists today and through all time will continue to exist." Here, at any rate, we have a learned professor, intimately acquainted with the subject, who does not place any confidence in any new revelations emanating from this quarter or coming to us by means of these practices.

3. We are, in the third place, surely justified in asking the following questions:

How comes it to pass that, seeing the way of communication has always been open, the great departed teachers and exponents of Christianity have never made use of it in order to disillusion us respecting our supposed misbeliefs and our misinterpretations of the words of Christ? According to the new spirit-revelation, Christendom must, soon after the death of Christ, have lapsed into the grossest idolatry, worshipping a higher spirit as God, and building up upon his simple

teachings a so-called supernatural system of doctrine which is wholly without foundation in fact and inference.

These great Fathers and Teachers must surely have discovered this on their entrance into the spirit-world and must have conceived a burning desire to correct the error and to inform their disciples and followers of the fact. And we may surely add that God Himself might well be believed to be a willing party to such rectifying disclosures, for were not His own honor and truth and dignity involved? Indeed we may go so far as to say that if any *legitimate* and *lawful* means of communication, by way of mediumship, ever existed, we have, in view of so serious a matter, *a right* to expect such a setting right of mistaken ideas and beliefs.

But neither have such rectifying disclosures from manifestly verifiable and authentic sources, and by means of a safe and rational method of communication, ever come, nor is there the slightest evidence that the disciples of the great teachers named have received any impressions from the unseen world to that effect.

Telepathy, the power of one mind to impress another mind, is now universally acknowledged to be a phenomenon in constant operation in the universe, and it is fully conceded that if this can

be shown to be so in the case of incarnate minds, it may be presumed to be possible between minds *dis*carnate and minds *in*carnate.

And the doctrine of the Communion of Saints fully confirms all this. We pray to the Saints and ask their intercession because we believe that they can hear us and that they know, not only what is going on in our minds, but what is going on in the world with respect to the work in which they were keenly interested while on earth.

Now imagine St. Dominic, St. Ignatius or St. Alphonsus discovering in the other world that their teaching had been all wrong and that their disciples today are proclaiming to the world a most deadly error and superstition, and yet these great and wise men finding no means at all of conveying this fact to the minds of the living, either by direct communication or by means of unmistakable telepathic impressions!

If credible communications can be made by the derelicts of the spiritual world, they can surely be made by the spirits of great and intelligent and conscientious personalities who might reasonably be expected to devise means of proving to us the veracity and reliability of their statements.

Nothing of this kind has ever occurred. So far the disclosures of the "New Revelation" have

come from spirits whom we cannot identi
lie and cheat and contradict themselves, and
adopt a method of communication which op
the door to a hundred errors and misapprehe
sions and which, in most instances, prov
morally and physically disastrous to the recipien
Experience, moreover, establishes the fact tha
these anti-Christian exposures generally come to
those who, for one reason or another, have al
ready parted with belief in the supernatura
truths of Christianity, and their experiences are
therefore, examples of that well-known "adapta-
tion to existing states of mind" for which the
spirits of the séance-room are famous. These
adaptations are calculated to win the favor and
confidence of the recipient. We all know today
that the spirits, as the late Dr. Lapponi put it,
"are pious with the pious . . . learned with the
lovers of learning, thoughtless with the gay, vul-
gar and gross with the vulgar." Mr. Stainton
Moses himself, through whose mediumship the
most authentic spirit-messages are claimed to
have been received, was constrained to write:

"Some spirits will assent to leading questions and, possessed apparently with the desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness, *will say anything.* Such motiveless lying bespeaks a deeply

ture. . . . Such an impostor, acting with .r of sincerity, must be as "satan clothed in .it."[3]

This being the case, how can we ever be sure :at a credible and authoritative disclosure ema-.ates from this source? How can any sane man talk about a new revelation issuing from such quarters and coming by such means? Whenever, by God's permission, without any human initiative, and by the operation of laws wholly unknown to us, the soul of some saintly person has been allowed to make a communication, the aim has always been to *confirm* the truth of the Historic Faith and to implore the recipient to persevere in it. And, in my close intercourse with the clergy and members of Religious Orders in all parts of the world, I have never found that any telepathic impression, calculated to affect this Faith, has ever been received. On the contrary, I have always found their sense of the truth of the Historic Faith, and of their bounden duty to hold it in all its fullness, to be exceptionally strong. In individual instances the loss of this Faith can always be traced back to the neglect of prayer and to a loose and careless mode of life. Logical reflection, therefore, and the weighing of *all* the facts of the case, from the historic point of

[3] Spirit-Identity.

view, exhibit the utter absurdity of the claim that, by means of spiritistic practices, a new revelation is in process of delivery. This claim is wholly inconsistent with our ideas of the dignity and holiness of God, and is altogether contrary to the dictates of right reason. In view, therefore, of what is now going on in the world we can but exclaim with the Hebrew prophet:

"With desolation is the whole world made desolate because no man thinketh in his heart."

IV

THE EVIDENCE OF FACT AND EXPERIENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF FACT AND EXPERIENCE

In examining the subject under consideration in the light of actual experience and of those facts to which the modern reconstructionists of Christianity are strangely reticent in drawing attention, we concede, of course, the fundamental claim of Spiritism. The phenomena observed beyond all doubt prove the existence and operation of spirit-agencies independent of and apart from the observer. In view of the abundant and striking evidence which we possess today, and which is the result of long and severe sifting, we need not waste our time in any contention with the doubter. His doubt, for the most part, is not due to superior intellectual acumen but to *ignorance of the facts,* and all we can do is to refer him to the recorded facts. If he then continues to doubt he must either be afflicted with constitutional obtuseness, or because the facts established are seen to upset his accepted philosophy of life. We know that there are some persons who *do not want* to believe and whom no kind of evidence respecting the spirit-world would convince. Our Lord no doubt had such persons in mind when He said

that "they would not believe though one rose from the dead."

I have already gone over the whole ground in my other books; I will therefore here content myself with a single statement from the pen of Dr. Venzano, an Italian physician, and a cautious and experienced investigator of the phenomena of many years' standing. He sums up his detailed record establishing the independence and objectivity of the manifestations observed in these words:

"The duration of the apparitions, the perfect agreement of the experimenters observing them, the shadows they cast on the walls of the gas-lighted room, all serve to disprove every possibility of hallucination. One of the most striking peculiarities of the manifestations observed is that they appeared and remained visible for some time in such brilliant gas-light that it was possible, as Professor Morselli observed, to read even the small print of a newspaper." This surely is clear and should be conclusive.

It is a question, therefore, not of the reality and objectivity of the phenomena, but of their interpretation. What confidence can we be expected to place in the disclosures made by their means?

Sir Conan Doyle[4] tells us that "this body of fresh doctrine comes in the main through automatic writing where the hand of the human medium is controlled either by an alleged human being . . . or by an alleged angel. These written communications are supplemented by a vast number of trance-utterances and by the verbal messages of spirits given through the lips of mediums. Sometimes it has even come by direct voices. . . . Occasionally it has come through the family-circle and table-tilting. . . . Sometimes it has come through the hand of a child."

From this statement an inexperienced or partially-informed person might easily be led to conclude that these disclosures come to us unsought for and uninvited—perhaps by some impulse proceeding from God Himself, and by means of some gift bestowed upon chosen individuals, not unlike the revelations and inspirations imparted to prophets and apostles of old.

But this is, of course, an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case, as experience and observation have established them. These communications never come unsought for and by normal and natural means. They presuppose

[4] I am quoting his words, not because his statements have any specific value, but because they represent and sum up the contentions of that class of experimenters who claim that, in spiritism, a new revelation is in process of delivery.

the cultivation of what we term mediumship. And mediumship is not, as many writers would wish us to infer, a natural gift but a certain mental and physical condition which has to be diligently developed and cultivated, and which is really a morbid and abnormal state of the mind and the body. It is beyond all doubt true that any person can become a medium, provided he is willing to submit his will and intelligence unconditionally and systematically to the invading spirit, and allow his body to serve the ends which the spirit has in view. The *degree* of mediumship attained depends upon the frequency of the experiment and the mental and physical constitution of the subject. In some instances this development is very rapid because there is a natural tendency to pass into the passive state; in others the protecting barrier which nature has erected is only gradually broken down and the development is slow and labored. But, with entire willingness and patience, the end can always be achieved. This disposes of the absurd and wholly false assertion and belief that mediumship is a gift from God which must have been imparted for a wise purpose and which we are consequently justified in employing. To those who have witnessed the repulsive struggles of even a developed physical medium gradually "passing under control" there

cannot be any doubt on the subject. And all experimenters know that, in the case of mental and subjective mediumship, true spirit-messages, unadulterated by the subconscious activities of the medium's own mind, are only possible when the mind is entirely passive and its normal conscious operations are suspended. The familiar complaint of the spirits is that they can achieve so little because passivity is so imperfect. Mr. Stainton Moses himself, of whom Sir Conan Doyle tells us that he was the finest medium England has produced, and through whom the most credible spirit-revelations are believed to have been received, tells us that messages were written under various circumstances; "as a rule it was necessary that I should be isolated and *the more passive my mind the more easy was the communication.*" The first fact, therefore, which we have to recognize is the circumstance that the manner in which the "New Revelation" is delivered is

1. A Process Contrary to Nature

All right-thinking men will agree that mental health depends upon the unimpeded exercise of our will-power and of our intellectual faculties. The aim of all true education is to develop and cultivate these to the very utmost and to enable us to guard against anything in the least calculated to interfere with them. We do not think

much of the man characterized by a weak will and easily swayed by the ideas and feelings of others. The development of a strong personality is unthinkable wherever the latter is the case. Our very instincts warn us against the perils incidental to any invasion of our personality from without. This is most certainly true with respect to the ordinary conditions of life and our intercourse with our fellows—with the men and women regarding whose aim and character and disposition we are able to form some kind of judgment. But how much more is this the case with regard to agencies whom we cannot see, of whose nature and disposition we cannot form any adequate idea, and for the integrity of whose aim and purpose we have only their own statements. No man, thinking logically and correctly, would submit himself to any such invasion of his personality, and the very aversion of the normal man to the mediumistic process proves the existence of the barriers and safeguards which nature has erected. The circumstance that, in spiritistic practices, these barriers have to be broken down gradually, and in most instances, with disastrous consequences to the medium, is evidence that the process itself is against nature.

Now it is an indubitable fact that such an invasion of the personality, attended by the weaken-

ing of the sense of responsibility, and of the power to exercise the will and the judgment, is the necessary and inevitable accompaniment of the practice of mediumship. So certain is this that even professed spiritists are constrained to admit it and to utter warnings.

"It is this weakening of the sense of personal responsibility," writes Sir William Barrett,[5] "that constitutes, in my opinion, the chief peril of Spiritualism. Hence your gates need to be guarded with jealous care; even the level-headed should walk warily, and the excitable and emotional should have nothing to do with it; for the fascination of the subject is like a candle to moths, it attracts and burns the silly, the credulous and the crazy."

And with that naiveness and self-contradiction for which the scientific exponents of the new Christianity are famous, Sir Oliver Lodge[6] himself writes:

"Self-control is more important than any other form of control, and whoever possesses the power of receiving communications in any form should see to it that he remains master of the situation. To give up your own judgment and depend solely on adventitious aid is a grave blunder and may

[5] On the Threshold of the Unseen.
[6] Raymond Or Life After Death. P. 225.

in the long run have disastrous consequences. Moderation and common sense are required in those who try to utilize powers which neither they nor any fully understand and a dominating occupation in mundane affairs is a wholesome safeguard."

But how this self-control and preservation of the judgment are to be exercised by persons in an unconscious or semi-conscious state, and with respect to unseen agencies whose nature and aim they cannot possibly determine, these men do not tell us. And yet they would have us believe that a credible revelation can possibly be delivered to us by such a perilous and irrational method!

Sir Conan Doyle goes so far as to say that the gifts bestowed on some of the Apostles and spoken of by St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians[7] are identical with the phenomena of mediumship, and indeed boldly asserts that the early Church was "saturated with spiritualism." But can a more grossly dishonest interpretation of Holy Scripture be conceived? Can anybody imagine St. Paul or any one of the Apostles sitting en séance with a clairvoyant or writing medium? St. Paul does not say that the various powers referred to are by operation of *spirits* but

[7] Chapter XII, 11.

of the Spirit—this Spirit, according to the preceding verses, being the Spirit of God. The powers displayed in modern mediumship are certainly not gifts by which the Spirit God operates, but effects of a systematic development of a faculty by which created spirits can work certain marvels *in imitation of those worked by the Spirit of God.*

But we have to recognize the further fact that

2. The Systematic Practice of Mediumship Is Always Attended by Disastrous Consequences, Mental, Moral and Physical.

This effect does not always manifest itself immediately to the medium and the percipient, for the simple reason already stated that the process is a gradual one and that nature's barriers are removed one by one.

In the case of the *mental* phenomena, such as automatic writing, trance-speaking, etc., the steadily increasing degree of passivity, varying from a mere mind-impression to a state of complete unconsciousness, in the course of time completely paralyzes the will of the medium and makes him the helpless instrument and victim of the spirit dominating him, who then infuses his own ideas into the mind. The process is so subtle that it is often barely recognized in its initial stages, and the fact itself only becomes

apparent when the mischief is done and the spirit's work is completed.

To produce the available evidence, illustrating and confirming the truth of this statement, would require the writing of a separate book. It has been my painful duty, for the past twenty years, to endeavor to bring relief to and save the victims of modern scientific spiritism, and the cases with which I have had to deal are practically identical in their character. I can best describe the process at work in the words of a well-known scientific experimenter, who has the courage of his opinions and who cannot be charged with preconception on account of his religious belief. He is a purely scientific student of the phenomena. Dr. H. Carrington writes:[8]

"I know this progressive development well. I have so many different accounts sent me from different sources that I know each step of the process perfectly. First, slow scrawls or scratches obtained with difficulty and after long waiting; then the formation of definite letters, then the more rapid flow of the handwriting with intelligent connection; then personal remarks, answers, conversations, lies, impertinence; then the stage in which it seems hardly necessary for the subject to touch the board at all; then the board

[8] The Problems of Psychical Research. P. 333.

is discarded altogether and the pencil is substituted in its place. The writing now becomes still more personal, the subject believes that the hand writes, she comes to be dominated by it. Then, if the subject still continues, rapid, furiously rapid writing takes place; the desire to write is constantly present; pain develops at the base of the brain; then the pencil is discarded and writing is performed with any object which is handy—a fork, a paperknife, etc.,—or with the finger in the air; finally the subject seems to intuit the words before they are written out; this becomes more and more intense until distinct auditory hallucinations result; the patient listens to the internal voices and follows and believes what they say; she loses sleep; insomnia sets in; a strange light is seen in her eyes; all sense of proportion is lost, the subject is completely wrapped up in the internal voices and pays but little attention to external affairs; she is completely dominated or obsessed by the internal reverie; to all intents and purposes she has become insane.

"I doubt not that many hundreds of persons become insane every year by reason of these experiments with the planchette board, as the present subject would have done had she not stopped her experimenting in time. . . . The way in which the board swore on occasions was extraor-

dinary and on several occasions it called Mrs. C. and others names which they had never heard till they saw them spelled out on paper and are of such a nature that I cannot give them here." (p. 375 et seq.)

The editor of one of our weekly publications quite recently sent me the names and addresses of three persons in one locality who had had to be confined to the asylum by reason of spiritistic practices, and respecting whom the attending physician stated that "the use of the ouija-board had brought about a state of dementia."

I can, on the grounds of my long and intimate acquaintance with this aspect of the subject, confirm the literal truth of this statement and can but add that I doubt very much whether the protective barriers thus removed can ever be entirely replaced. The spirits are ready enough to come but *they do not go away quite so readily.* In all the cases which have come under my observation, the automatic process had proved a destructive one, the victim remaining subject to a recurrence of the invasion on the slightest provocation, and incessantly battling with the inclination to write. Where this impulse is systematically yielded to, as in the case of public automatic or inspirational mediumship, the invading spirit ultimately paralyzes the normal thinking powers, dominates the

will and the sensory organism, until the mental and moral powers of the subject decay and he becomes an imbecile.

"I have," writes Sir Wm. Barrett, "observed the steady downward course of all mediums who sit regularly."

One of the last cases of this kind which came under my observation in England was that of an intelligent young girl, into whose hands some of these recent "scientific" books had fallen and who, unaware of the peril and in all good faith, had practiced automatic writing. The usual fatal development had taken place. She appealed to me when all other efforts to obtain relief had failed. I did all I could to save her but, unfortunately, only very partially succeeded. In two of her last letters addressed to me she wrote:

1. "During writing I could not swear to being quite conscious, for the pencil moves rapidly and I lose the power of being able to stop it. Twice it came out in some peculiar language and, the last time, it was so disgusting that it was not fit to read and I was very violently sick after it. This makes me wonder if I am really conscious all the time. I have striven against it but to no avail. There come, at certain times, quick and violent jerkings of the hand and arm and then, as if by compulsion, I have to seize a pencil and

a bit of paper. It cannot be sin now as I have no wish to do it. I also find that every action of my life is controlled by one dominant spirit. Often I sit and my astral forms itself into a most hideous personality which sits in the opposite corner and grins and mocks me to distraction. I am sorry you know of even worse cases, though it is a little consolation."

2. "I am sorry and ashamed to report that automatic writing has become habitual—not through my fault, as I have struggled and struggled against it. I find you are quite right—obscene is scarcely the word to emphasize the terrible nature of the revelations. It is, believe me, quite against my natural inclinations when normal; but I will not excuse myself. Suffice it to say that I am really unable to help it."

Another correspondent writes:

"On the advice of a well-known authority on Spiritualism the writer and his wife, who were both told that they were mediums, attempted automatic writing. Almost from the first it was successful, and some very remarkable letters have been received from this spirit and another. But I think it only right to add that the language used, *though at times very intellectual and scientific,* was of such a character that we were compelled to cease all communications with him. Spirit-

ism is, alas! too true; but our present researches have convinced us that it by no means bears the angelic character ascribed to it by spiritists."

In *Modern Mystics* and *Modern Magic,* Mr. Lillie writes:

"Over and over again Mr. Stainton Moses (the great writing-medium) has told me that his mediumship passed through one very grave crisis indeed. Evil spirits assailed him. His days were perturbation and his nights were terror. Every sense was assailed. The foulest stenches spread through his bedroom. He tried the Indian Yoga so far as to give up fresh meat and wine. This only made matters worse. To an earnest clergymen all this created terrible doubts. Often and often Mr. Stainton Moses thought his guides devils from Hell."

If experiences such as these, of which one does not often find records in the official accounts of psychical research, were brought to the knowledge of the public by our scientific exponents of spiritism, would any sane man, I wonder, seriously consider the contention that, by means of so perilous a method a new Revelation is in process of delivery to the human race? It seems to me that only a person who has himself fallen victim to this method of operation, and whose

judgment is unbalanced and disordered, can advance such a claim.

With respect to the *physical* or objective phenomena it is only necessary to state the ascertained facts of the case and to let these speak for themselves. They are so utterly and hopelessly destructive of the popular interpretation of the phenomena that spiritistic writers seldom refer to them now, and when they do, they plainly intimate that the best evidence in favor of the spiritistic theory must not be sought for in that quarter. For the general public, however, the phenomenon of materialization has the greatest possible attraction and fascination and, in most circles, it is regarded as the one most to be desired and to be striven for. And the spirits themselves invariably encourage this desire and promise the phenomenon as a reward of strict obedience to instruction and of entire conformity to the conditions laid down by them. And as materialization, under good conditions, compels belief in the most skeptical mind, we cannot be surprised that physical mediumship is regarded as the summum bonum of all spiritistic practices.

I pointed out, years ago, in my earliest writings, that I was convinced that the spirits, in order to produce perceptible manifestations in the sense-world, withdrew from the physical

organism of the medium some kind of vital force or matter. In dark séances I had observed this subtle matter issuing from the body of the sensitive and I found traces of it on my earliest photographs. It was a notion, moreover, entirely in keeping with assertions which I found in some of the older books on Occultism. They speak of a kind of spirit-vampirism which is in active operation in these experiments and which, in its fully developed form, tends to endanger the very life of the medium. Science at that time, of course, dismissed any such statements as these with that contemptuous disregard with which it dismisses everything that does not bear the conventional scientific impress, but which is in reality the result of ignorance. That same science has now been compelled, not merely to admit the fact itself, but to put it on a true scientific basis. Experiments, carried on in private laboratories, under strict test conditions, and with the aid of photography and of scientific instruments, have established the existence of this force or fluid or matter beyond all possibility of doubt, and have shown clearly what the method is by which these spirits act and how they manage to produce such astounding phenomena.

This life-force or fluid or plasm as some experimenters term it (its nature and constituents

being at present unknown) is withdrawn from the organism when the medium has passed into a deep state of trance, and when it has become sufficiently separated, the spirits manipulate it in such a way that they are able, by its means, to produce all the desired effects—from the moving of a planchette or a chair or a table, to the shaping of a human face or form.

But this power, so far from being a gift, is the result of a peculiar morbid condition of the body which can only be achieved by a long and patient process of development and by a rigid obedience to all the rules laid down by the spirits. It is admitted by the latter that, the process being a complex and difficult one, all those present must be willing to aid the medium by yielding some of their own vitality for the success of the experiment.

That such an experiment would involve perils to the medium and the experimenters must be obvious to the least reflecting mind. How very great these perils are can only be appreciated by those who have witnessed the phenomenon and who have observed the physical and mental condition of the medium when recovering from the trance state. Yet our modern exponents of spiritism, knowing full well how these facts must damage their cause and compel an in-

terpretation of the phenomena very different from that which they advance, scarcely ever refer to it. We get the facts only from those experimenters who work on true scientific lines and who have, as yet, no interpretation of the phenomena to offer.

But I would present the facts and let these speak for themselves. Mr. Stainton Moses himself describes his condition during the process of writing[9] as follows:

"The hand tingled and the arm throbbed and I was conscious of waves of force surging through me. When the message was done I was prostrate with exhaustion and suffered from a violent headache at the base of the brain. Asking the cause, the spirits (the highly intellectual Imperator group) replied: Headache was due to the intensity of the power and the rapidity with which it was withdrawn from you. You could not write on such a subject without displaying eagerness, for it is of the most vital concern to those to whom we are sent."

A famous Italian medium makes the following statement:

"I have been asked many times for my own

[9] This writing being in his case of a "direct" character (without use of board or pencil held) partakes of the character of a physical phenomenon.

explanation, but I have none. I only know that I can feel the force; *that it seems to flow out of me* and that I obtain it in part from others. When the chain of hands is broken I can do nothing. Strong men give me added power. The movement of objects correspond to the movements of my body and to the director of my will before I have sunk into a deep sleep. After that, as I said, I know nothing."

Dr. Hereward Carrington, who was one of the scientific committee investigating the phenomenon of materialization in Italy, some years ago, reported as follows:

"During the experiments in Milan it was found that the medium lost weight in a manner that could in no way be accounted for. The medium and the chair in which she was sitting were placed upon the scales and their combined weight was carefully measured. She was then watched carefully to see that she threw nothing away and also to see that she derived no support from the surrounding surfaces—the floor, etc. Nevertheless, in the course of from twelve to twenty seconds, she lost about seventeen and half pounds of weight. At the fifth sitting a similar reduction was observed under conditions that the investigating committee considered perfect."

The late Professor Lombroso, who carried out

a series of scientific experiments, under the strictest test conditions, observed the same reduction of weight and stated that:

"Before the séance, she (the medium) weighed 176 pounds. With the appearance of a phantasm this weight diminished to 83 and afterwards to 54 pounds. And the phantasm weighed the difference."

Sir Wm. Crookes, the eminent chemist, and one of the earliest investigators of the phenomena of spiritism, makes a statement to the following effect:

"After witnessing the painful state of nervous and bodily prostration in which some of these experiments had left Mr. Home—after seeing him lying in almost fainting condition, pale and speechless, on the floor—I could scarcely doubt that the evolution of psychic force is accompanied by a corresponding drain on vital force."

But incontrovertible evidence of more recent date, both as to the existence of the "psychic plasm" and of the effect of its withdrawal from the organism of the medium, is now available. For a period of four years—from 1910 to 1914—Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing, a famous Munich physician, member of many learned societies and author of many standard treatises on criminal psychology and allied subjects, has carried on an

experimental investigation of the phenomenon of materialization under conditions in which the most skeptical and exacting mind can scarcely hope to discover a flaw. In view of the fact that Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing has had an acquaintance with the intricacies of mediumship extending over a period of 25 years, he must be regarded as well qualified to impose conditions which would constitute effectual safeguards against the very possibility of deception and hallucination. The Doctor, moreover, invited to this long series of experiments various persons of high standing, in whose judgment and powers of observation he had confidence. Amongst these sitters were medical, scientific and literary men and the well-known Dr. Richet, Professor of Physiology in the University of Paris.

The medium with whom he experimented remained to the end at the Doctor's exclusive disposal. She lived as a member of the family at the house at which the greater number of the séances were held and was therefore under constant and watchful observation. It subsequently became known that, at the instigation of persons hostile to the investigators, her movements outside the house, too, had been shadowed by detectives for a period of eight months.

In the course of his experiments, Dr. Von

Schrenck-Notzing discovered that by covering an electric light of 16-candle power with thin red material, it was possible to obtain the phenomena in fairly good light and to eliminate those well-known unsatisfactory elements which are known to attend the holding of dark séances.

Before each sitting the medium was subjected to a rigid physical examination at the hands of experts, and she had to exchange her ordinary dress for one provided and prepared for the purpose by the experimenters. The initial state of trance was then induced by means of hypnotism.

In connection with some of these experiments the Doctor employed no less than nine cameras, thus obtaining excellent photographs of the phenomenon *in its progressive stages of evolution,* enabling him to test and verify the accuracy of his personal observations. The plates on which these impressions were obtained were throughout manipulated by himself and were finally developed in his presence. Stereoscopic pictures, too, were obtained.

Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing's report shows his final conclusions to be in agreement with those of the earlier scientific experimenters. He tells us that he watched and photographed the issue of the mysterious life-plasm from the body of the medium, the formation of abnormal arms and

hands and faces, and that he was even able to do what, so far as I know, nobody has ever done before him—to secure a portion of the mysterious substance and to submit it to microscopic examination.

The result of this examination would seem to show that physical science has yet many problems to solve in connection with these extraordinary phenomena.

In my opinion the most interesting and evidently most conclusive of these psychic photographs are not those on which the fully materialized spirit-form is exhibited, but those which present various heads and faces and forms *in the process of evolution* and therefore imperfect and incomplete, the plate often having been exposed before the full degree of development had been attained. It is difficult to imagine how the evidence for the existence and objective reality of the plasm, and of the phenomenon of spirit-materialization by its means, could ever be made more perfect or the conditions of observation more rigid and conclusive.

But what is of surpassing interest to the serious student of the subject in this connection is Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing's account of the *effects* of these experiments on the physical and mental organism of the medium, and on this point the

Doctor does not leave us in any doubt; his statements are clear and emphatic, and they have about them that fearlessness which is the characteristic of all true science.

He writes as an unprejudiced investigator whose sole aim and purpose is to record facts, patiently and accurately observed and studied, and who has no particular theory or interpretation to defend or to establish.

He tells us that, "while the phenomena were in progress, the medium groaned and trembled and that when she was awakened after a protracted sitting, she was so seriously exhausted that she had to be brought to bed." On one occasion, the Doctor reports, "her loss of blood was considerable, she was tired and feverish, spoke with a hoarse voice and coughed a great deal." At the conclusion of another séance she fell from one fainting fit into another, from which she could only be awakened by the use of alcoholic stimulants, and these fainting fits recurred three times in the night. When the Doctor visited her the next morning she was still in a dream-like state, complained of pains in her breast and vomited quite a wine-glassful of blood. As a rule, the Doctor tells us, it took the medium two days to recover from the nervous prostration resulting from these sittings.

To what kinds of abuse the unfortunate victims of a misguided scientific curiosity are apt to be exposed is apparent from an incident recorded in this report. On one occasion, Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing tells us, while an ordinary manifestation was in progress there appeared suddenly a powerful and well-developed man's forearm with a hand attached, which brutally seized hold of the young woman and threw her with force into an easy chair. She screamed and was so dreadfully frightened and excited that the séance had to be discontinued and *it took her several weeks to recover from the shock which her nervous system had sustained.*

To these statements I would add that the fit-like shaking and trembling of the medium, as the vital energy is being withdrawn, is a sight repulsive in the extreme, and is an evidence that a process is at work which is against nature and which is a violent removal of the barriers which nature has erected. The depletion of the organism, resulting in utter physical exhaustion, necessarily leaves the medium defenseless and an easy prey to the spirit invading it. The entire process, therefore, is a disastrous and destructive one, as another student of the subject remarks: a robbery, a deprivation, a retrogression, a deterioration. It results ultimately in a progressive loss of

memory, in inability to fix the mind or the will consistently on any subject, in a steadily increasing loss of self-control and moral balance, and in that natural tendency to animalism which is so well known a characteristic of mediumship.

I consider this aspect of the subject of such vital importance, and bearing so strongly upon the interpretation of the phenomena that, at the risk of being tedious, I have quoted somewhat fully from recognized and responsible scientific authorities.

It is a suggestive circumstance that when Sir Conan Doyle speaks of the abnormal signs accompanying the delivery of the new doctrines from the beyond, he makes no reference at all to those here described. But from statements such as these, which certainly do not emanate from writers who have a particular religious position or creed to defend, it must surely be evident that the mediumistic process is an inevitably perilous and therefore an irrational and immoral one. And yet, we are asked to believe, that by such a process a New Revelation is being given to the world!

V

THE EVIDENCE OF TRUE SCIENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF TRUE SCIENCE

It is a matter for congratulation that we have amongst our modern scientific investigators of psychical phenomena a number of men who, although they are thoroughly convinced of the reality and spirit-origin of the phenomena, nevertheless strongly repudiate the conventional interpretation given of them and emphatically point out the objections which true reflection and a consideration of *all* the facts of the case must necessarily raise against them.

Their warnings and reservations will be seen to be indications of that truly scientific temper of mind which examines a problem from every conceivable point of view and which does not rashly jump to conclusions on the ground of mere surface evidence. It will be found, too, that the majority of these men have, in their study of the phenomena, remained *outside observers* of them, and have not themselves practiced mediumship in any definite form. They have thus been able to escape that subtle invasion of the mind by the operating spirits which we now know to attend all mediumistic practices, and which is so greatly calculated to affect and to unbalance the judg-

ment. Some of them, too, are no doubt men of such forceful and positive mental constitution that, in spite of their frequent assistance as psychical experiments, they have not fallen victims to this well-known spirit-domination. It is to such men alone that we can look for accurate and reliable information on this complex and thorny subject. It cannot be too frequently pointed out that mediumistic practices are calculated to enslave and pervert the judgment of even the most vigorous intellect, and that the subtle influences exercised by these spirits upon the habitually passive mind, account to a large extent for the wholly illogical and grotesque interpretations of the phenomena which some experimenters are placing before the public to-day. At a séance held in London not so very long ago, at which a spirit had been masquerading as a deceased friend of the family, but had finally been driven to admit that he had never inhabited a human body, the assertion was made that it was contrary to the aims of the spirits to allow scientific men to become convinced of the existence of evil spirits. "They might draw certain inevitable inferences," the spirit declared, "and become Christians, thus defeating our aims." Does this explain, one wonders, the vague answers to questions, the many tricks and contradictions which

cause the modern experimenter to be forever learning yet never to be coming to a knowledge of the truth, but meanwhile to be keeping the door of communication widely open?

My long and exhaustive study of this aspect of the subject has thoroughly convinced me that the victims of these spirit-operations are seldom fully aware of what is going on. They are apt to attribute their impressions to a sort of progressive enlightenment of the mind due to a knowledge obtained from a study of the phenomena, while, in reality, they are due to the circumstance that the mind and, of course, the judgment are all the while being tampered with by the very intelligences whose nature they are investigating, but who have made themselves the real masters of the situation in the process. It is thus that science is being led by the nose and that a credulous world is being imposed upon.

On page 57 I have given an account of the now available and reliable testimony as to the effects—mental, moral and physical—of all forms of mediumships, and the rightly thinking man can scarcely fail to recognize that this is in itself sufficient to demolish the claim that by such perilous means a just and all-wise God is imparting new and important religious truths to mankind. Such an assumption would, beyond doubt, lessen

our reverence for God and be offensive to our reason. But, as I know full well by what subtle feats of mental gymnastics the defenders of spiritism evade this difficulty and make light of it, I propose to go still more fully into the matter and to show what *true science* has to say when the problem is regarded from yet another point of view.

All serious students of psychical phenomena are fully aware that the real crux of the spiritist to-day is the question of identity—the necessity of validly establishing the fact that the communicating spirit is really the individual he claims to be —a person once known under such or such a name in this world. Sir Oliver Lodge admits that "the question of identity is a fundamental one and that the controlling spirit proves his identity mainly by the reproduction, in speech or writing, of facts which belong to his memory and not to the automatist" (medium).

Now, in weighing this statement in the light of the knowledge which we possess to-day, we have first of all to realize the fact that *impersonation of the dead by deceiving spirits is a well-known frequent and admitted phenomenon in connection with spirit-manifestations.* There are instances on record in which these cunning and crafty beings have maintained the deception for

months and even years; but have finally been compelled to admit and confess the deception. In the case of even the most accredited mediums, such as Mrs. Piper, reserved for exclusive use by the Society for Psychical Research, such impersonations were constantly taking place and had to be allowed for.

Some experimenters are strangely reticent in emphasizing the significance of these impersonations and their manifest bearing upon the interpretation of the phenomena, while the cool-headed observer who has no pet theory to defend, never ceases to draw attention to it. In speaking of his experiments with Mrs. Piper, Dr. H. Carrington reports to the Society for Psychical Research:

"I gained the distinct impression throughout the sittings that instead of the spirits of the personages who claimed to be present, I was dealing with *an exceedingly sly, cunning, tricky and deceitful intelligence,* which threw out chance remarks, fishing guesses, and shrewd inferences, leaving the sitter to pick these up and elaborate them if he would. If anything could make me believe in the doctrine of evil and lying spirits it would be the sittings with Mrs. Piper. I do not for one moment implicate the normal Mrs. Piper in this criticism."

Those more intimately acquainted with psychical literature are familiar with the spirit who called himself Dr. Phinuit and who, for many years, masqueraded as a deceased Marseillais physician through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper. Few doubted the fact that it was an intelligence independent of and apart from Mrs. Piper,—no secondary personality—since he possessed knowledge entirely outside the reach of Mrs. Piper's mind. But respecting the *identity* of this being with a deceased French physician, Mr. Leaf, of the Society, wrote:

"His own word does not, in view of his moral standard, apart from other considerations, carry even the presumption of veracity—nor has a single one of the numerous statements he had made as to his life on earth proved capable of verification. On the other side, his complete ignorance of French is a positive ground for disbelieving him and one which he has never been able to explain."[10]

I have, in my various books, given striking intances of this kind of spirit-deception which have come under my personal observation in the course of my researches and I will not increase the bulk of this book by quoting them here. I will but add that these impersonations are regarded by the

[10] Proceedings of the Society. Vol. VI, P. 560.

more mentally robust among psychical researchers in so serious a light that Dr. L. P. Jacks, LL.D., D.D., President of the Society for Psychical Research in 1917 and Editor of the *Hibbert Journal,* was constrained to make the following reservation in his Presidential Address:

"Take the question of imposture. Mediums are not the only impostors. How about the communicators? Are they masquerading? You can have no absolute proof that there is no imposture on the other side. I think that the whole meaning of personal identity needs to be very carefully thought out and considered before we begin to produce evidence in favor of personal identity."

In the writings of Sir Conan Doyle himself we come upon so singular an admission as this:

"Guessing on the part of the controlled there might be—there sometimes was—and occasionally there were *direct impersonations;* but that is part of what we might expect—*at any rate it is part of what we got.*" But if this be so, what becomes of the "New Revelation" of which these masqueraders claim to be the transmitters?

Now these remarkable and admitted instances of spirit-imposture lead to two necessary and inevitable inferences.

1. They demonstrate the fact that these spirits

have access, under certain conditions, to a great deal of information respecting the characters and lives of deceased personalities.

2. They make it abundantly manifest that we can never, in view of this circumstance, be certain that the spirit communicating is what it claims to be and that its disclosures are of any value.

Mr. M. Maeterlinck, in the effort to discover the source of the information possessed by the spirits, has conceived the notion of a kind of "cosmic mental storehouse" in which the records of all human lives are preserved and upon which spirits, getting in touch with the right kind of vibrations, may be able to draw for the purpose of these impersonations.

"We are compelled to recognize," he writes, "that there must exist somewhere in this world or in others a spot in which everything is known, in which everything is possible, to which everything goes, from which everything comes, which belongs to all, to which all have access, but of which the long-forgotten roads must be learned again by our stumbling feet."[11]

My own experiments and observations led me, years ago, to the conclusion that, whatever may be said of Maeterlinck's cosmic storehouse, the main sources of information drawn upon by the

[11] The Unknown Guest. P. 82.

spirits are the subconscious minds of the medium and of the sitters. Recent psychological research has definitely established the fact that "the subconscious mind of man is a kind of vast storehouse wherein are preserved, seemingly without time limit and in the most perfect detail, memory images of everything we have seen, heard or otherwise experienced through our sense organs. It is also a kind of workshop for the facile manipulation of ideas including even the elaboration of complicated trains of thoughts."[12]

Or, as Dr. Morton Prince, another psychologist, puts it:

"We should not overlook the fact that among mental experiences are those of the inner as well as of the outer life. To the former belong the hopes and aspirations, the regrets, the fears, the doubts, the self-communings and wrestlings with self, the wishes, the loves, the hates, all that we are not willing to give to the outer world and all that we would forget and would strive not to admit to ourselves. All this inner life belongs to our experience and is *subject to the same law of conservation.*" [13]

But experiment has also established the indubitable fact that, in the passive state, when the

[12] Psychology and Parenthood, by H. Addington Bruce.
[13] The Unconscious. P. 85.

conscious normal activities of the working mind are suspended, this subconscious storehouse is thrown open and its contents become accessible to spirit-intelligences. And the extent to which it can then be drawn upon by them and its contents manipulated, depends upon the degree of passivity attained and upon the experience of the particular invading intelligence.

With these facts clearly before the mind the thoughtful reader will have no difficulty in realizing the vast possibilities which are at the service of these crafty intelligences and to what an extent the investigator can be deceived and tricked. In some instances the manipulation of these mind-images or phantasms is so ingenious that the most critical observers are completely taken in, and it is only when the most searching tests are applied and every statement made is rigidly scrutinized, that the trick is discovered and the imposition is exposed.

In this respect, too, however, nature would seem to have erected certain barriers and to have provided for the venturesome student of the subject certain safeguards which are to be found in the circumstance that there are limitations to the powers of these spirits. They can do many wonderful things, but they cannot do everything and the cloven hoof can always be

detected if one remains on the alert and preserves a rigidly critical attitude of mind. I discovered this many years ago and my own conclusions were confirmed by those of the late Professor Wm. James, of Harvard, which he expressed to me in the course of a most interesting conversation which I had with him a year or so before his death. "It seems to me," he said, "that these strange spirit-beings are under some kind of *inhibition* and that, wonderful though their powers are, they are certainly limited." This limitation or inhibition consists in the circumstance that they cannot always read and interpret these mind-images accurately and that, in their manipulation of them, they are apt to make disastrous mistakes. They will here or there draw a wholly mistaken and impossible inference from a clearly discerned fact or incident, or they will misread or misplace the phantasm—attributing an event read in the mind-record to one life while in reality it belongs to another. I will give two actual occurrences in illustration of the truth of this statement.

When I was engaged, years ago, in a series of experiments carried on in the family circle and without the employment of a public medium, a being manifested at our séances who claimed to be the spirit of a person whom I had known inti-

mately in life. The accompanying phenomena could leave no possible doubt that it was the case of an individuality wholly independent of and apart from the young lady acting as a medium. He referred to events and circumstances which could not by any chance be known to her and once or twice to matters of which I too could have no knowledge. He came to us night after night, each time bringing proofs of his identity of his own devising, and these were, in various respects, so startling and convincing that the most skeptical members of the circle became convinced of his identity. In fact they became irritated at my own mental attitude which was that of patient scrutiny and observation. For some reason which I could not explain myself I was not convinced and again and again demanded fresh proofs of identity. One never-to-be-forgotten night I caught him in a manifest misstatement the bearing of which I alone could appreciate. It related to an event which could not possibly have happened in his life. In reply to further carefully constructed questions, the truth of the statement made was insisted upon, and the statement itself still more fully elaborated. When I felt sure that the spirit could no longer evade his statements or, by any of the well-known tricks, attempt a plausible explanation, I

pointed out the manifest falsehood of the statement, and unexpectedly charged him to tell me, in God's name, whether he was in reality the spirit of my deceased friend. My question was followed by an ominous silence and, upon being repeated, yielded an emphatic No!—a reply which, I need not say, left all the circle gasping. Upon my promise not to send him away and cease the inquiry he declared his willingness to tell us how he had effected so marvelous an impersonation. *"I obtained all the needed information,"* he declared, *"from your own silly thought-boxes. You sit there like a set of fools, in a passive state of mind, by which I am enabled to read your minds as you read your New Testament."*

It was this remarkable occurrence which put me on the right track in my search for the main sources from which these spirits draw their information, although it must be admitted that the subconscious minds of the sitters could not, in this case, be the sole and only source of information.

When I landed in New York, a few years ago, I was invited to an interview with the late Dr. Funk, of the publishing firm of Funk & Wagnalls. He had read my books and was impressed with the evidence which I had presented, but, as a

confirmed spiritualist, he made light of my warnings and reservations and thought, no doubt, that they were largely due to my religious beliefs and convictions. Still it was evident to me that he, too, had his misgivings. He maintained, however, that he had established the identity of his deceased wife to his entire satisfaction. She communicated with him, he told me, through all the mediums he visited, proved her identity by certain signs agreed upon, and spoke intimately of the most private affairs of her supposed past earth-life. Dr. Funk and I parted excellent friends who agreed to differ. A year or so later, on my return to New York, I rang up my friend. He expressed his great delight at the opportunity of meeting me again, and begged me to visit him at once as he had a great deal to tell me. I found him in a state of great depression, quite ready now, however, to consider *my* view of the matter. His story was as follows: He had visited a medium who could not possibly know him, and who had most certainly never seen him before. His spirit-wife had communicated at once and had given the usual sign of identification, continuing a conversation which had been broken off elsewhere. In the course of this conversation she had had occasion to refer to her death, but in a *manner* which startled Dr. Funk, and, for the first

time, aroused his suspicion. He inquired cautiously: "Tell me again under what circumstances did you leave your body." She replied, "Why this question? You surely know"; and she then proceeded to describe what she claimed to be the manner of her death, but what in reality corresponded to that of his deceased *mother,* his wife having died in an entirely different manner and from quite a different complaint. Here too manifestly the masquerading spirit had "tapped" the subconscious mind of poor Dr. Funk but had, in the manipulation of the phantasm secured, made the most startling mistake.

So far as the evidence obtainable from spirit-photography is concerned, we have it on the high authority of the late Mr. Traill Taylor, for years president of the British Royal Photographical Society, that "psychic pictures" *can* be obtained under the strictest test conditions. Mr. Taylor gave to the Society an interesting account of his own experiments in which he detailed the method of operation adopted and the precautions taken by him. I have myself obtained such pictures and have given illustrations of the safeguards employed in my book, "The Dangers of Spiritualism." But Mr. Taylor agrees with me that such pictures are quite worthless as aids to establish spirit-identity. He calls them thought—

or mind—or memory—pictures or projections, and traces them back to the sub-conscious mind of the medium or of the experimenter.

He states, in confirmation of the correctness of this view, that pictures have been obtained of the conventional *angels* with wings, as the ordinary mind has been led to imagine them.

It is further confirmed by the circumstance that on some of these pictures there appear, with the spirit-form of their departed owners, deceased *pet dogs* and *cats* and *parrots,* for whom a continued existence is claimed in the other world, but which are manifestly images drawn from the memories of the medium or of the sitters and manipulated by the spirits.

Striking evidence in support of this contention is given in the great work of the German physician already referred to, in which he presents us with a detailed and illustrated account of his experiments extending over a period of four years.

"Spirit-photographs" were obtained by him which, upon examination, were found to be slightly modified presentations of pictures which the medium must have seen and which had certainly appeared in a popular French newspaper.

Some years ago the deceased British Cardinals were very much in evidence in London séance-rooms. The late Cardinal Newman especially

was believed to appear regularly at a house well known to me and I have seen several post-mortem photographs of him. But I found that they all differed very considerably and that this difference could be traced back to the image of the late Cardinal which the individual observer had in his mind, or to a published photograph of him which he had seen.

We have, furthermore, photographs on which the materialized spirit appears as he existed at various ages in his physical body, in one case as a child or youth, in another as a grown-up person, the presentation evidently corresponding with the peculiar mind-image which the experimenter had retained of the deceased.

I have in my possession a photograph obtained in a city which I had never visited before and on which there appears by my side a fairly good picture of a deceased member of my family; but, alas! for Sir Conan Doyle and his theories, there is on the same photograph also the image of a person well known to me *who is still living,* but not as she is now, an elderly lady, but as I knew her years ago and as I best remember her—a young married woman. Proof positive this, surely, that these images are not photographs of the living dead as they now exist in their new spirit-bodies, but materialized phantasms taken

from the subconscious memories of surviving relatives and friends. The masquerading spirits clearly cannot always distinguish the mental phantasms of the dead from those of the living, and it is here where the critical and experienced investigator gets on the track of the deception.

It will be seen from these occurrences alone what is possible in this direction and how utterly worthless all this material is as evidence of the fact and nature of the new spirit-body or of spirit-identity. But, as I have said before, it is practically demonstrated that the passive subconscious mind is not the only source from which these spirits draw that information which enables them to pose so successfully as the spirits of the dead. I am convinced that any fact or incident or human characteristic which has in any wise become extant—either by way of writing, or verbal expression, or photography, or indeed by any outward sign or manifestation—is accessible to spirit-intelligence and can, under certain conditions, be made to serve the end in view. Indeed, so well is this recognized by serious students of the subject that they admit that *we* know today of nothing that could establish the identity of a communicating spirit. It is seen that if such identity is ever to be established, it is for the spirits to furnish the evidence

in a form and by a method of their own devising and which can leave no doubt in any mind.

"Do they" (the spirits) "not yet know," writes Mr. Maeterlinck,[14] "that the sign which will prove to us that they survive is to be found not with us but with them, on the other side of the grave? Why do they come back with empty hands and empty words? Is that what one finds when one is steeped in infinity . . . ?"

"All things considered, as in other attempts and notably those of the famous medium Stainton Moses, there is the same characteristic inability to bring us the veriest particle of truth or knowledge of which no vestige could be found in a living brain or in a book written on this earth. And yet it is inconceivable that there should not somewhere exist a knowledge that is not ours and truths other than those which we possess here below."

"The spirit Grocyn, for instance (communicating through Stainton Moses), furnished certain information about Erasmus which was at first thought to have been gathered in the other world, but which was subsequently discovered in forgotten but nevertheless accessible books."

On one occasion Mr. Stainton Moses received a

[14] *Fortnightly Review*, Sept.-Oct., 1913.

series of messages from musical composers, giving the principal data of their respective lives as they may be found in every biographical dictionary, with hardly anything more. Their peculiar nature excited his surprise and, on inquiry, he was informed by his guides, "that these were in fact messages from the spirits in question, but that *they refreshed the memory of their earthly lives by consulting printed sources of information.*" In commenting upon this incident the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers wrote: "It is obvious that this is to drop the supposed proofs of identity altogether. If any given spirit can consult his own printed life, so also presumably can other spirits, and so perhaps can the still incarnate spirit of the automatist himself. In one of his more recent works[15] the spiritist Professor Sir Wm. Barrett naively remarks:

"If we had no other evidence than automatic writing (the chief means of delivery of the "New Revelation," according to Sir Conan Doyle) we might conclude that the manufacture of puzzles and enigmas is the sole faculty and employment of discarnate spirits."

There are many forms of mediumship, too, in which extraneous spirit-action need not be assumed, and where telepathy may conceivably ex-

[15] Psychical Research. P. 245.

plain the phenomenon. It is evident from cases on record that we are here, too, confronted by vast possibilities, not only on the part of the subconscious mind-activities of the medium, but also on that of the spirit-operators. But they also show us to what an infinite amount of self-deception and misinterpretation these phenomena are liable.

In a recently published book[16] the following very interesting and suggestive incident is recorded: A lady, Miss A., on her way to a clairvoyant medium, called on Mrs. B., whose mind at the time was very much occupied with some important matter, of which, however, she made no mention to her visitor. Miss A.'s séance was so unsuccessful that, on her way home, she again called on Mrs. B. to tell her of her disappointment. Mrs. B., on asking for particulars, found to her amazement that, while all the visions given by the clairvoyant medium had absolutely no meaning for Miss A., they had unmistakable reference to the matter occupying her (Mrs. B.'s) mind. The visions had, moreover, been ushered in by a Chinaman in gorgeous apparel, and Mrs. B. had that morning, on passing the Chinese Embassy, observed a Chinaman, gorgeously arrayed, coming down the steps. Does not an incident of

[16] Immortality.

this kind throw a vast amount of light on the nature and origin of these phenomena?

Now with these well-established and incontrovertible facts before the mind, we shall be in a position to rightly estimate the value of the evidence adduced by Lodge and Doyle in favor of spirit-identity. It will be seen at a glance that it is wholly and utterly worthless.

Let us first of all take the case of Miss Julia Ames, "who told Mr. Stead things in her own earth-life of which she could not have had cognizance," but which were shown "when tested to be true."

There is, in the first place, the more than probability that many of these things, if not all of them, were really embedded in Mr. Stead's subconscious mind but wholly forgotten by him. (Miss Ames was a personal friend of Mr. Stead for many years.) In their reproduction, therefore, they would appear to Mr. Stead's normal mind as new matter.

But, in the second place, the very circumstance that the truth of the matter produced could be tested by inquiry is evidence that it was in some form extant, i.e., contained in some book, or record, or article, or in some other living mind and was therefore accessible to spirit-intelligence. We have seen from the instances cited above that,

as such, it has no value whatever as a proof or evidence of identity.

In the case of *Raymond* recorded by Sir Oliver Lodge, the same argument applies respecting "all sorts of details of his home life which his own relatives had to verify before they found them to be true." Such details could easily have been drawn from the subconscious mind of some member of the Lodge family or from some distant mind, or from information extant in one form or another. I am persuaded that, years ago, Sir Oliver Lodge would himself have rejected any such disclosures and communications as reliable evidence of spirit-identity. And I may add that very few of the well-informed members of the Psychical Research Society would be found to accept it today.

As regards the photograph of his son, "no copy of which had reached England," the act of its impression on the sensitive plate was an occurrence not only manifestly extant, but also known to a number of persons retaining this knowledge in their minds. For the spirits surrounding Sir Oliver Lodge, who was constantly sitting in séances and who was known to be incessantly searching for evidence of identity, it was probably an easy thing to obtain this information from the mind of one of his son's fellow officers

who was one of the group photographed, and to convey it to the medium in London and thus to Sir Oliver Lodge. Again, hosts of spirits were, beyond doubt, witnesses of the taking of the photograph, any one of whom would have been able to impress the mind of the London medium with the fact. And a public man like Sir Oliver Lodge, whose picture has appeared in a hundred newspapers, could never claim to be wholly unknown to any particular medium.

I have, in the course of my own researches, found repeatedly that intimate conversations, carried on in the open air and at some distance from the séance-room, had been overheard and were intelligently commented upon on our return and before we could ask any questions. While in Australia, some years ago, some of my doings and movements were made known to a lady in England who was then deep in spiritistic researches, and whom I have since been able to save from the asylum.

On one occasion, when a fog detained me in London and the members of our circle were anxious to ascertain whether I would be able to be present at the sitting, I was accurately located by the spirits, and the arrival at and departure of my train from the various stations and the mo-

ment of my arrival at the house were given with the most astonishing correctness.

It will be seen, therefore, what extraordinary possibilities are within the reach of these spirits and that incidents such as those cited by Doyle and Lodge cannot by any possible chance be taken as proofs of identity.

One is astonished to find at this hour of the day serious-minded men, acquainted with the intricacies of the subject, citing as evidence of identity communications from a spirit wholly unknown to them, but whose actual existence and the mode and place of whose death have been verified by inquiry. We are daily reading in the newspapers of the lives and deaths of persons unknown to us and, whether interested or not, these incidents are absorbed by our subconscious minds and become permanent possessions of our mental storehouse. We have no *conscious* recollection of them and do not recognize them when they are presented to the working mind. What is easier for a spirit than to extract them from the subconscious storehouse and to dramatize them in a form that has the most vivid appearance of reality. One would imagine that the most superficially informed student of the phenomena would discern the clumsiness of the trick, and would refuse to accept that kind of thing as evidence of

identity. But it is wonderful what men will get themselves to believe when the mind is predisposed in some particular direction or fascinated by some plausible theory.

There is a further consideration which I should like to submit to the thoughtful reader. It is well known today that, for the production of true manifestations, a considerable amount of intelligence and experience are called for on the part of the operating spirit. Subtle forces have to be manipulated, barriers have to be broken down, and mental and physical obstructions on the human side removed. The spirits admit that they themselves are learners and experimenters in a region bristling with difficulties and that it is by no means an easy thing for them "to get a message through" to our plane of life, as they put it.

Now is it not a remarkable circumstance that while many of the "higher" spirits claim to have been long at work at this kind of thing with admittedly limited success, a young officer who, in his earth-life, had taken no interest in the subject, should so readily and so soon after his death have found the means of easy communication with his people. One wonders how and where he learned to manipulate the subtle and complex forces which made such communication possible.

But it seems to me that I cannot better sum up the entire argument of this chapter than by quoting a striking paragraph from the pen of the late Dr. Orestes Brownson, who had himself experimentally observed and studied the phenomena and whose book, *The Spirit Rapper*,[17] is perhaps one of the best we have on the subject.

"Undoubtedly the supposed dead bring pretended proofs of their identity, but these proofs are in no wise conclusive. They remind you of peculiarities which the dead and you alone knew; the mysterious pencil imitates his writing. But the devils were invisible witnesses of those peculiarities; doubtless they can skilfully counterfeit handwriting, they that can work prodigies much more extraordinary. And they know enough of the human heart to know that, in persuading you a loved one is there conversing with you, they will secure a better hearing, when, with pretended simplicity, they boldly declare that Catholic teaching is deceptive. These invisible interlocutors take the most august names, such as that of St. Louis and even of St. Paul, and under these names, they contradict the faith of St. Louis and the teaching of St. Paul, and repeat, like parrots, the humanitarian phrases of our modern philosophers. But history shows that there have been

[17] P. 360.

authentic apparitions of the glorious dead attested by miracles; not one of them declared that he was mistaken when he believed and taught Catholic dogma during his mortal life. What matters it, then, that these late comers, who, taking at random the names of our saints and those of the heroes of free-thought, emphatically proclaim some errors resuscitated before them by a dozen scribblers notoriously unbelieving."

In a work[18] by the French astronomer, Professor Flammarion, who has devoted years of study and research to this subject, we meet with this significant statement:

"As to beings different from ourselves—what may their natures be? Of this we cannot form any idea. Souls of the dead? This is far from being demonstrated. The innumerable observations which I have collected *during more than forty years,* all prove to me the contrary. No satisfactory identification has been made. That souls survive the destruction of the body I have not a shadow of doubt. But that they manifest themselves by the processes employed in séances, the experimental method has not yet given us absolute proof. Up to this day, I have sought in vain for certain proofs of personal identity through mediumistic communications."

[18] Psychic Forces.

I have thus placed before the reader the recorded results of true and unbiased research in the sphere of psychical science, and from these it will be evident to all reasonable minds that there is not a shadow of ground for placing any confidence in the statements and claims of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle.

VI

THE EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE

THE EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE

I HAVE on pages 19 et seq. briefly summarized what may be regarded as the essential principles of the "New Revelation," so far as they can be gathered from the statements of Lodge and Doyle, and from the more or less vague utterances of the "higher" spirits of the séance-room. I now propose to examine these principles somewhat more closely—in the light of the teachings of Historic Christianity and of Universal Christian experience. It will also be necessary to quote, by way of introduction, a few scientific authorities whom we can scarcely regard as the champions of Christianity.

With the implied claim that there is anything new about disclosures of this kind, or about their mode of delivery, I have already dealt in the preceding pages. It will have been seen from the facts and arguments there adduced that the mediumistic process and mediumistic communications are in no sense a recent breaking-down of a dividing wall between the two worlds, seeing that such a wall, in the spiritistic sense, has as a matter of fact never existed. all nations and

races having, from times immemorial, been acquainted with modes of communication between the worlds seen and unseen. It was all along "the man in the street" who possessed the right kind of knowledge and the scientific who was the ignoramus. "It came to be recognized," as the late Professor Alfred Russel Wallace justly observed, "that the belief of the uneducated and unscientific world rested on a broad basis of alleged facts which the scientific world scouted and scoffed at as absurd and impossible." It is mere arrogance, therefore, which makes these men pose before their fellows as the discoverers of new and wonderful psychic laws and secrets. And the implication that

1. The *"New Revelation" is* (in any sense) *divine and authoritative* will be seen to be equally absurd and fallacious. So long as those who make this claim are themselves constrained to admit "that all the accounts of the life beyond the grave differ in detail," that opinion is not always uniform over yonder any more than it is here, and "that we have unhappily to deal with absolute coldblooded lying on the part of wicked and mischievous intelligences," they cannot possibly talk about a Revelation. That can never by any chance be a Revelation which comes by messengers whom we cannot identify, who lie and cheat

and contradict themselves, and who leave us, with respect to those matters on which we most desire light and information, in a state of hopeless perplexity and bewilderment—to say nothing of the numerous moral and physical evils attending its delivery. We can, therefore, safely dismiss this silly claim with the contempt which it deserves.

When Sir Conan Doyle and the "higher" spirit further state that it has become certain—with ever fuller knowledge—that

2. *Man has never fallen* because he has always been evolving, through the man-like ape, and the ape-like man, we are brought face to face with another of those bold pronouncements which are paraded before the half-educated as the certain findings of modern science, but which are in reality nothing but assumptions and, at best, wholly unproved and unprovable theories.

I do not in the least claim to possess any specific knowledge on a subject admittedly bristling with so many difficulties and presenting so many varied and complex problems even for the specialist. But I do claim to have that acquaintance with it which is within the reach of all who keep in touch with our current literature and who follow the trend of true scientific thought respecting these matters. But all this current scientific literature goes to show that, in recent years, a

great reaction of ideas has taken place with regard to the evolutionary theory and that, where it is accepted at all, it has undergone such modifications that its original characteristics can scarcely be recognized. There is, in any case, so much diversity of opinion on the subject amongst the most renowned scientists that nothing can be asserted with any degree of certainty, and that consequently the notion that the body of man has gradually risen through evolutionary processes out of the animal world cannot be spoken of as the necessary result of fuller knowledge. I submit the following statements to the reader's serious consideration:

Dr. Bumueller, a recognized specialist in anatomy, declares:

"The testimony of comparative anatomy is decidedly *against* the theory of man's descent from the ape." (Mensch oder Affe., p. 59, Ravensburg, 1900.) And he goes so far as to add: "Even the possibility of a connecting link is disproved by the tendency of apes and semi-apes to diverge more and more in the course of their higher development in anatomical structure from the human type." (Op. cit., p. 91.)

Commenting on Klaatsch's views expressed at the Anthropological Congress of Lindau in

1899, Johannes Ranke, the great biologist, justly observed:

"Whilst a charming picture of the past and possibly of the future is being shown us, and whilst a fanciful design is being carried out in all directions, we are as a rule in quest of *facts, not theories.* The facts, however, upon which Herr Klaatsch claims to base his ingenious theory, *do not at present exist,* and I must protest against his assuming that they have been furnished by zoology and palaeontology any more than by anatomy. . . . All else is still a matter of hypothesis, and if anyone attempts to use it in order to produce a finished picture the result is a work merely of the imagination."

In the closing address delivered at the Fifth International Congress of Zoologists, August 16, 1901, Professor W. Branco, Director of the Geological and Palaeontological Institute of Berlin University, speaking on the theme "Fossil Man," set forth the following conclusions:

"1. No human remains of the tertiary period have been discovered. 2. Man appears *suddenly* in the quaternary period unheralded by transitional forms. 3. Diluvial human remains abound, but *diluvial man* appears at once as a true human being, possessing in most cases a cranium that would do credit to the most intellec-

tual of modern men, without long ape-like arms or long ape-like canine teeth, a genuine man from head to foot."

What the great Rudolph Virchow said some twenty years ago is as true today as it was then:

"According to the studies that have been made prehistoric men did not resemble monkeys any more than men of the present day. . . . We cannot teach, nor can we regard as one of the results of scientific research the doctrine that man is descended from the ape or from any other animal."

One of the most eminent of present-day biologists, Dr. Hans Driesch, writes:

"If new species came into existence by the process of gradual and imperceptible transformations covering periods of thousands and millions of years . . . nature would contain numerous intermediate types . . . bearing the structural characteristics partly of the new and partly of the old species. . . . My most careful investigations and study of the forms of extinct and extant life have led me to the conclusion that *intermediate types never* existed. No such types have been found in nature. The classes and families of plants and animals have always been distinctly separated as they are now, and they have always formed distinct systems as they do today. There never was a class or family of plants or animals

which bore the characteristics of two different species. The Darwinian theory of Organic Evolution is therefore in open contradiction to reality. . . . " (Philosophy of the Organic, vol. 1, p. 268.)

Dr. Driesch is positively scathing in his criticism of Darwinism, regarding it as already *scientifically dead:*

"It (Darwinism) is," he says, "a matter of history, like that other curiosity of history, Hegel's philosophy. Both are variations on the theme 'how to lead a whole generation by the nose,' and neither is very likely to give ages to come a high opinion of the latter part of our century."

"For men of clear intellect, Darwinism has long been dead and the last argument brought forward in support thereof is scarcely more than a funeral oration in accordance with the principle de mortuis nil nisi bonum (say nothing but good of the dead), and with the underlying conviction of the real weakness of the subject chosen for defense." (Biologisches Zentralblatt.)

Many more authorities, expressing similar views, might be quoted; but these will suffice to show what Sir Conan Doyle's assertion is worth and what good grounds we have for challenging its legitimacy. As in the psychical sphere of investigation, so here, too, his wish or natural lean-

ing is manifestly father to his thought, and his cool assumption as scientific fact of what is mere speculation is but one of those well-known maneuvers with which so many of our pseudo and amateur scientists have made us familiar. "I am absolutely convinced," writes a French scientist,[19] "that a man is, or is not, an evolutionist, not for reasons drawn from natural history, but by reason of his philosophical opinions."

But even if the development of the human body out of preceding animal forms of life could ever be shown to be an established fact of science, it could in no wise touch or invalidate the truth of the primitive doctrine of the Fall. It is a truth which belongs to man's soul, or spirit-life, and the soul begins where evolution ends. Spirit cannot grow or be evolved out of matter, and evolution can only take place in the sensitive powers of man—in his organs. But the soul is above the organs and no animal, however closely approaching the form of man, can be called man unless there be in it a spiritual and immortal soul. And this soul, as all accurate thinkers agree, must be God's special and independent creation. It will thus be seen that there is not, and never can be, in this part of Doyle's arguments, any valid objection to the Christian doctrine of Original Sin

[19] Prof. Yves Delage.

and the Fall of Man, since the doctrine belongs to a sphere in which the physical scientist is not competent to pronounce judgment. "There might have been ten Falls and the thing would have been quite consistent with everything which we know from physical science." "Nothing," forcibly observes Mr. Chesterton, "can be, in the strictest sense of the word, more comic than to set so shadowy a thing as the conjectures made by the vaguer anthropologists about the primitive man, against so solid a thing as the sense of sin. Science knows nothing whatever about prehistoric man, for the excellent reason that he is prehistoric. . . . There is no tradition of progress; but the whole human race has a tradition of a Fall. Amusingly enough, indeed, the very dissemination of this idea is used against its authenticity. Learned men literally say that this prehistoric calamity cannot be true because every race of mankind remembers it. I cannot keep pace with these paradoxes."[20]

When we turn to the authoritative Christian doctrine of the Fall and to the facts of confirmative Christian experience, we are met by evidence in its favor which is simply overwhelming. But unfortunately in this respect, too, modern scientists and philosophers are apt to make the wildest

[20] Orthodoxy.

possible misstatements and to display an amount of ignorance which would cause amusement were it not that it is so often attended by such direful consequences to serious and truth-seeking souls. A single reference to a primer on Catholic dogma would dissipate such ignorance. I am not writing a book on Christian doctrine and cannot, therefore, go very deeply into the matter; but I will, for those seriously interested in the subject, briefly quote from a standard work[21] what the Church's teaching is on this point:

"All the evils and all the harm done to the human soul through the Fall and through Original Sin are evils by *comparison with a higher good.* Original Sin cannot be discussed in itself; it has to be stated by comparison, and the term comparison is the high and privileged state in which man was created originally; we must keep our eyes fixed on that ideal state if we are to understand Original Sin. . . . When God created man he put into the human soul a gift called technically the gift of original justice. . . . That gift (whose supernatural psychological value could not be overstated) made the human will perfectly subordinate to the will of God, established it in perfect harmony with God; the loss of it brought about a falling back of the soul into itself, which

[21] The Human Soul, by Dom Ansgar Vonier, O.S.B.

need not be positive rebellion against God, yet which, by comparison with that adhesion of the will to God, looks like rebellion. . . . It is a *privation* because God meant the soul to have this gift. It is in a state of enmity to God (again by comparison) because without this gift the human will cannot rise above itself with an unselfish preference for God.

"The absence of this gift is truly called sin because the absence is owing to the free act of the human will, the will of Adam. . . .

"Death of the body, the flesh that wars against the spirit, and the spirit that wars against the flesh, the infirmity of the will-power, and the ignorance of the mind, that make temptation so dangerous, all that dismal condition of human nature bewailed so eloquently by St. Paul and St. Augustine, are not Original Sin. They constitute the Fall; for we know that Baptism which destroys Original Sin, does not alter the sad conditions of our nature. . . .

"Thus Baptism is the end of Original Sin and yet it is not the end of the fallen condition of man.

"Now the spirit part of man does not fall under heredity. The mode of transmission, then, which alone is recognized by St. Thomas and Catholic theology generally is simply the fact of

one human being coming from another human being through the laws of generation, or more simply the fact of our being the children, through successive generations, of Adam."

Now we may surely assert with confidence that the entire moral history of man and the very existence of Religion today bear witness to the truth of this doctrine. The very circumstance that a teaching so hateful to human pride and self-conceit, and so unpleasantly opposing itself to our natural cravings and inclinations, should be found in all human races, and that it should have resisted all efforts to eradicate it, can only be explained by the fact that it is one of the earliest inheritances of the human family. It has, of course, found different modes of expression in different races and in different systems of religion; but only the deep underlying sense of its truth could have caused it to survive all the corroding influences of human passion and all the antagonistic forces of human science and philosophy. Man believes in the Fall, not merely because he finds it difficult to overcome certain animal propensities, but because he has in himself the distinct consciousness of a higher, but lost, and yet recoverable good, and because he knows that *he sins in view of a clearly recognized higher obligation.*

It is, as a matter of fact, on the scientific, not on the Christian and theological side that the real difficulty of the matter lies; for no unchristian scientific theory has yet satisfactorily explained how this universal and persistent consciousness arose and how we are to account for its survival. And that it does survive, even in the modern scientist, we need not doubt for a moment. His constant occupation with the problem is evidence of that fact. We do not trouble ourselves to incessantly refute an assertion which we thoroughly believe to be groundless. God never anywhere leaves Himself without a witness, we may be sure. The modern man may ignore and slight and obscure the witness; but he cannot possibly succeed in permanently silencing it. De Maistre wisely observed: "I do not know what the heart of a villain is like. I only know that of an upright man and it is frightful."

It is interesting to observe that, in this respect, the true philosopher and student of human nature is on the side of the Catholic theologian, even though he may not himself profess the Catholic faith and use a theological phraseology. In the last of his interesting lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," delivered in Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902, the late Professor W. James went to the very root of the matter when he

inquired: "Is there under all the discrepancies of creeds a common nucleus to which they bear their testimony unanimously, and ought we to consider the testimony true?" And he replies "that there is a uniform deliverance in which all religions meet—namely, an uneasiness which is a sense that *there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand and that this experience is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.*" And, "the solution," he continues, "is a sense that *we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers.*"

It is difficult to conceive of a sounder scientific basis for the Christian doctrine of the Fall of Man and of his redemption through Jesus Christ.

But I may not linger over this deeply interesting aspect of the subject. There is no writer who has so forcibly summed up this universal witness of the human heart to the truth of this Christian doctrine as the late Dr. Brownson. I feel confident that his words will find an echo in every mind that has still the power of thinking accurately and of judging rightly. "No man," wrote Dr. Brownson,"[22] can analyze the facts of human experience without finding them prove incontestably that our destiny, whatever it be, lies above the level of our present natural powers. Our

[22] *Necessity of Revelation,* Brownson's Review, 1848.

race then must have once possessed powers, natural and supernatural, which it does not possess now, and therefore powers which it must have lost or forfeited. All facts of experience as well as universal tradition bear witness to some great catastrophe, to some terrible revulsion, which man at some remote period must have suffered. The soul appears to every nice observer to retain traces of a lost grandeur, and to be filled with an undying regret for what once was, but is no longer hers. She appears to be tortured by her reminiscences. Even before illumined by faith, she regards herself as expelled from her early home, as an exile from her native country and a sojourner in a strange land. She bears with her the secret memory of a lost paradise, for which she sighs, and with her recollections of which, dim and fading though they be, she contrasts whatever she finds in the land of her exile. What is the poetry of all nations but the low wail or wild lament of the soul over her lost Eden—the music in which she expresses the wearisomeness of the banishment and her longing to return and dwell again in the sweet bowers of her early youth, of her childhood's home?

"Hence, also, the universality of sacrifice proves the universality of the belief in the primitive Fall, that man has fallen from his original

state, and now lies below the level of his destiny, without the ability to attain it."

The "scientific" objection to the truth of the Christian doctrine of the Fall having thus been shown to be wholly groundless, and the doctrine, on the contrary, to be resting on a secure and impregnable foundation, it will be seen that Doyle's contention that

3. *The Incarnation and Sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ were in no sense an atonement for the sins of man* is equally fallacious and untenable. Indeed, we may assert the very contrary and maintain that, granting the truth of the former, the presumption is altogether in favor of the truth of the latter. If man has fallen and become separated from God, and if he cannot, by the powers of his own nature, raise himself to that union and friendship with God for which he was destined, it is reasonable to conclude that God would furnish a means by which this can be effected and the destiny achieved. And, since that destiny is *above* nature, it is equally reasonable to conclude that the means of restoration would be above nature—*supernatural.*

One cannot warn sufficiently against those systems of Christian thought which claim to be essentially "rational," against these "perfect reconciliations between science and religion." Such

systems harbor a fundamental fallacy and indicate their purely human origin—the man-made article in religion. There must manifestly be mysteries in a divine revelation. Truths appertaining to the supernatural order, although not contrary to reason, can scarcely be expected to be fully within the reach of reason. If we could discern them by the conclusions of the intellect we would be within the sphere of science, not of religion, and the best educated man, however base his character and unsatisfactory his life, would then have the clearest perception of divine truth. And, what injustice this would be to the poor and handicapped and illiterate amongst men!

It is indeed Divine Wisdom which hides the mysteries of the spiritual world from the proud and arrogant, and reveals them to the poor in spirit—to those of humble faith and of a penitent and contrite heart!

Now one would imagine that if there is anything certain in this world, it is the fact that the dogma of the Incarnation and Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, as an atonement for the sins of man, is a fundamental and integral part of the primitive Christian Revelation. All Scripture, all history, all Christian experience, bear witness to it, and with it Christianity itself must

certainly stand or fall. It would surely be an utterly hopeless task to seek to prove that this dogma is the result of later theological speculation. How could we account for the preparatory sacrificial system of the Old Covenant, for the remarkable prophecies having their fulfillment in the death of Christ, for the implicit and explicit statements of Christ Himself, of all the Apostles, for the belief and teaching of the earliest professors and saints and martyrs of the Christian faith, of the entire Christian world in all ages. If human evidence and testimony can establish any fact at all this fact surely is established.

"The Person of Jesus Christ," writes a thinker of our own time,* "is the central idea of Christianity and the most precious object of its faith. Whence arises the unique value of this idea? Is it as the preacher of an elevated morality that Jesus is dear to his followers? Plainly not. The Love of God and of one's neighbor, compassion for every living creature, has been preached with much eloquence by other religions; not in these things shall we find the *distinctive* feature of the religion of Christ. What renders it unique is *its conception of Salvation* personified in one who was both divine and human—Jesus. It is the idea of the God-man."

*Prince Eugène Troubetzkoy in the *Hibbert Journal* of April, 1918.

To quote, by way of confirmation, the teachings of Christ and of his Apostles would mean quoting the better part of the New Testament. I will here confine myself to but a few statements which summarize these teachings and which, with any other interpretation than that stated above, will be seen to be wholly incomprehensible and meaningless.

We read in St. Matthew, xx, 28:

"Even as the son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a redemption for many."

In St. Matthew, xxvi, 28:

"For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins."

And the Apostolic testimony is equally clear and may be summed up in these references:

Coloss. 1, 19 and 20:

"Because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on the earth and the things that are in heaven."

I. St. Tim. ii, 5-6:

"For there is one God and one mediator of God

and men, the man Christ-Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all."

I. St. Peter, i, 18-19:

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."

And equally clear and unequivocal is the witness and profession of the earliest confessors of the Faith, of the saints and martyrs and doctors of the first two centuries of the Church.

St. Ignatius calls himself *Theophorus*—that is, God-bearer, because he bears Jesus in his heart.

St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, says to his judges: "How shall I hate Him whom I adore, my King and my Saviour?"

St. Vital exclaims: "Lord Jesus, my Saviour and My God, vouchsafe to receive my soul."

In the writings of Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, St. Irenaeus, St. Justin, etc., we find such testimonies as these: "Everywhere Christ is believed, Christ is adored. Believe Him, O man Who is God and Man, Who suffered and is adored as the Living God."

But literally endless would have to be the quotations if one were to attempt to deal with this aspect of the subject in anything like an adequate manner. Works, specifically presenting the evi-

dence, must be consulted for this purpose. So overwhelming, indeed, is the evidence that perverseness and blindness of mind, or crass ignorance, can alone account for the attempt to circumvent it, or to explain it away, and, with entire justice, writes a distinguished medical confrère of Sir Conan Doyle[23]:

"Now this (Christianity as a moral system only) I hold to be as pernicious as it is absurd. If Christ was only a great human teacher, what did He know more about God or morality than any other man who might have arrived at his knowledge by ordinary processes? What could He know more than you or I? He may have inferred or have guessed, but what knowledge had He? . . . It is not in the moral teaching of Our Lord that the great power of Christianity lies, but in the belief that He did for men that which man could not do for himself—the belief that He died for you and me and in some mysterious manner made God and man at one. I have no power to theorize on this great fact, but I am sure that history teaches that it is faith in Christ, a personal Christ, who died for us men and for our salvation, that has given the power to Christianity and has moulded the life of the world. Would men have gone to the stake, or

[23] Sir Russell Reynolds, Bart, M.D. Essays and Addresses.

to the lions, or the dungeon, for a moral teaching? Would they have sung psalms in dying agonies for a moral teaching? Would crusades have been made for a mere idea? No, it has been for the belief in what He did and is doing at the right hand of God that men have been willing, nay, eager, to die."

It is abundantly clear, then, that it is to Christ as the Divine Saviour and Redeemer, not to Christ as the moral teacher or exemplar, or higher spirit, that the marvelous transforming effects of Christianity are due. And what are these effects, briefly stated, as history and experience display them before our eyes:

1. Christ saved the decaying Roman world from corruption.

2. He laid the foundations of a new and true civilization.

3. He created numerous works of charity.

4. His doctrine enabled the best and wisest of men to attain to the highest and noblest life.

5. It created saints and martyrs innumerable.

6. It was, and is today, man's one true source of consolation in life and in death.

These facts, this transforming effect in the world's life of the belief in Christ's redeeming death, no sane man can possibly deny; but the problem which presents itself to the reflecting

mind is: how are we to account for it; how came this belief to be so firmly and persistently established in the human heart?

Very little reflection will show that few of those who first professed this belief after the death of the Apostles, and who laid down their lives for it, had seen or heard Christ. They learned the doctrine from the oral teaching of others, or from written documents. But documents were costly and not plentiful in those days; few, moreover, could have been able to read and decipher them; the *collected* records which we possess today and which we call the New Testament did not as yet exist. Towards the close of the Apostolic age, when most of the witnesses of Christ's miraculous works had died, verification must have been extremely difficult, and, at best, such verification would only have been human and therefore, in itself, imperfect and fallible testimony. And yet, century after century, in uncounted numbers, strong men and delicate women, indeed mere children, gladly and willingly died as witnesses for the truth of this doctrine—submitted themselves to the most extreme forms of suffering and of pain. Whence was their belief, their unwavering and unfailing assurance? We have but the choice between two alternatives. Either God Himself, in a miracu-

lous way, and in fulfillment of the promise that the Holy Spirit would lead into all truth bore divine and confirming witness which could leave no doubt, or the best of men, in spite of the action of the Holy Ghost, fell, immediately after the disappearance of Christ, into the grossest error, misunderstood and misinterpreted His teachings, and committed the sin of idolatry—adoring and worshipping as God a mere created being and teacher.

And God, Who by a single operation of His power, could have prevented this lapse, allowed this thing to be done, looked on while the best and noblest of His creatures shed their life-blood for a monstrous misconception, and, mark it well, by means of this misconception regenerated and saved a world!

If this be conceivable, we might well ask with a learned Catholic psychologist[24]: Is it a rational universe if the moral life of mankind be founded on an illusion? Can the holiness of the world's saints, the virtues of its best heroes, the moral life of the mass of mankind, have had their source and origin, their never-failing food and support, in one huge hallucination?"

Or, as another writer puts it: "There is no God in Heaven if man could conceive and exe-

[24] Rev. M. Maher, S. J. Psychology. P. 536.

cute, with full success, the gigantic design of appropriating to himself supreme worship and usurping the name of God—if he could, while plunging the world into idolatry, at the same time regenerate it!"

Are we not here face to face with an insuperable difficulty and is it not an infinitely greater one for these innovators and reconstructionists than for us who firmly hold and profess belief in Christ the Divine Redeemer and Saviour of the world? Is it not for them to solve this strange problem if they can? Would not acceptance of their view, rightly considered, undermine the very foundations of all religion and destroy, in the logical and seriously reflecting mind, all belief in an all-knowing and all-wise God? For if Doyle and Lodge and the "higher" spirits are right, is not God daily and hourly continuing to tolerate a terrible delusion, allowing the best of men to find solace and comfort and hope in a palpable lie—in a gross error and misconception? Or will any man presume to say that dying soldiers and sailors and the sin and sorrow-stricken of the world derive comfort and consolation from a perusal of the records of the *life* of Christ—from His moral teachings? Is it not the Crucifix for which they clamor—the sign visibly embodying the fact and truth of that redeeming

death which alone has made the forgiveness of sin, the union of the soul with God, the hope of a happy immortality, peace of mind and true consolation, here and now a living reality and certainty?

Fancy reading the beatitudes and the moral precepts of Christ to a man who is dying, whose life is spent, who cannot possibly carry those precepts into practice, but who regrets his misspent life, is contrite and penitent, and craves to be reconciled to God! Would it not be mere mockery to show such a man what his life might and should have been?

How very clearly and conclusively does human experience, the instinctive perceptions of the awakened human soul, confirm the truth, nay, the burning need of this primitive Christian doctrine, and demonstrate the fatal error in which these New Revelation men have entangled themselves and in which they are striving to entangle the world!

"There is," wrote the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone, "a fairly long history behind the orthodox interpretations, and we cannot, in modesty, suppose that the tendencies of thought in our own generation necessarily outweigh the experience of the centuries."

And if Christ be divine, how can any man pre-

sume to be able to estimate the real nature and degree of His sufferings, and put them on a level with the sufferings of any ordinary human creature. All human estimates must surely be at fault in such a matter as this. We know how keenly sensitive natures can suffer, not only on account of their own sins and the consequent pangs of conscience, but on account of the sins and miseries and sorrows of others. Intensify this sensitiveness of nature a thousandfold, and the amount and complexity of such suffering and you will get a good deal nearer to the truth. It is just conceivable that the *physical* sufferings of Christ, of which Doyle speaks so lightly, great though they were, were not the greatest part of the anguish which He endured on the Cross. Mind and soul-suffering, as all the world knows, may be much keener and much more hard to endure than pain of body. But, if we once grasp the thought that, in some way not understood by us, there were concentrated in Christ's consciousness, and in the fullest form, all the manifold sins and vices of mankind, and the agonies and miseries of human life consequent upon them, we can form some slight conception of what those sufferings were, and how widely they must have differed from the sufferings of any individual human being.

We have, as a matter of fact, some faint analogy to this in certain well-established facts which recent psychical research has brought to light. We know today that a spirit can become conscious, not only of the life-history, but also of the thoughts and emotions of a number of people assembled in a room at a given time, can intelligently comment upon them, and thus give proof of the possession of this knowledge. And if this be so in the case of a created and limited being, whatever its nature, how much more can it be conceived to be so with One Who was uncreated and unlimited and, in this respect, so different from ourselves.

But, quite apart from these considerations, it was surely possible for God, for the accomplishment of the Divine Redemption, and for that expiatory work for which Christ appeared in the world, to cause Him to experience in His human nature all those agonies of mind and body to which our fallen and shipwrecked race is subject. How can any man presume to pass judgment on a matter so utterly beyond our limited human perception and understanding? The human intellect manifestly becomes very cloudy as soon as it touches on the portals of infinity.

Sir Conan Doyle's assertion that "our churches are half empty, women her chief sup-

porters, both the learned and the poorest classes, in town and country, largely alienated from her," need not detain us long. It is, of course, an obvious and palpable untruth—so far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. The churches which are more than half empty, which have become mere entertainment bureaus and cheap variety shows—in which not even many intelligent women are supporters—are those in which Sir Conan Doyle's or similar kinds of Christs are preached.

The buildings of the Catholic Church in all countries, in which, as every Catholic knows, the true Historic Christ, the Divine Saviour of the World, is preached, and in which His sacraments are validly administered, are so crowded that it is often difficult to provide adequate accommodation and that additional provision has to be made in various ways. And any man can at any time convince himself that these crowds are composed of the learned and unlearned, of rich and poor—in many instances of men far in excess of women.

I can, in this respect, speak from an extensive and unique personal experience. I have, in the course of my lecturing work, visited many countries, have had opportunities of studying Catholic activities in Europe, in the Australian Colonies, the West Indies, and in South America. I have

three times crossed the North American continent, staying in many cities, both large and small; never have I fulfilled my duties in a half empty church. Wherever the congregation was a small one, it was due to the circumstance that the local Catholic population was small, or that the church had not long been built.

I am writing these lines at a Religious House in the heart of the city of Chicago, and adjoining a large and beautiful church, of which the lower portion is also used for divine services. There are ten Masses celebrated in these two churches every Sunday, commencing at five o'clock A. M. At each of these Masses more than eight hundred persons are present, so that between eight and ten thousand people hear Mass in this church alone every Sunday. And the clergy tell me that this applies proportionately to the churches of the city and indeed to those of all the States.

And who has not heard of the marvelous and steadily growing activities of the Church, in an endless variety of forms, and in every direction? Consider, on the other hand, the utter barrenness and impotence of the unitarian church in all countries.

One is simply amazed at the unblushing impudence with which responsible men impose their falsehoods upon the ignorant masses, and with

which they seek to bolster up their wholly illogical and impossible theories.

When we now turn to the Apostolic Writings themselves and see whether they throw any light on this aspect of the problem, we come upon information which is quite startling and which is certainly calculated to make even the most ardent spiritist pause and reflect. For, even if we for the moment disregard the claims to inspiration of these Apostolic Writings and go the full length with the New Revelation men, the import of these statements assumes but a greater significance—at least for every serious student of the subject and every really reflecting mind. Indeed, on the assumption, as Sir Conan Doyle maintains, that the early followers of Christ practiced Spiritism and received intimations from the other side, the case is so strong against him that he has literally not a leg left to stand upon. For what spirit could it have been that caused these Apostolic men to prophesy that this denial of the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation would surely come one day and that, so far from its being a higher and truer conception of things, it was to be regarded as the very spirit of anti-Christ?

Twice in his book Sir Conan Doyle tells us that mischievous and lying spirits no doubt exist, and

that we must therefore *test* or *try* the spirits; but, like all these text-mongers, he does not quote the text in its entirety, for it goes on:

"Because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this is the Spirit of God known. Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And very spirit which dissolveth Jesus (or that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, as the authorized version has it) *is not of God;* and this is anti-Christ of whom you have heard that he cometh and he is now already in the world."[25]

What the Apostle means by "coming in the flesh" is abundantly clear from the Apostolic Writings and cannot be disputed by any man. This prophetic utterance and warning, therefore, is a condemnation, root and branch, of all that Doyle and his co-reconstructionists contend for, and of all that the "higher" spirits of the séance-room assert. But can a more flagrant misuse and misapplication of a text be conceived?

In another part of Holy Scripture the condemnation is equally clear and the warning equally emphatic. In the first epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy, we read:[26]

"Now the spirit manifestly saith that in the

[25] St. John IV, 1-3.
[26] Chap. IV, 1-2.

last times *some shall depart from the faith,* giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, etc., etc."

"If you believe not that I am he," exclaims Christ Himself, "you shall die in your sin."[27]

Again, "The son of man when He cometh shall he find, think you, faith on earth?"[28]

The Apostle St. Paul writes to the Galatian converts:

". . . There are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ, but though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that (or any other than that, as the authorized Protestant version gives it) which we have preached to you, let him be anathema (accursed).[29]

With these remarkable utterances, I can well leave this part of my argument to the judgment of those whose minds are not wholly blinded by fundamental misconceptions and who are still accessible to the appeals of fact and of truth. And, by way of a very earnest and personal appeal to all into whose hands this book may fall, I would say in the words of the Apostle St. Paul:

[27] St. John VIII, 24.
[28] St. Luke XVIII, 8.
[29] Chap. 1, 7, 8.

". . . Keep that which is permitted to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of *knowledge falsely so-called* which some promising (or professing) have erred concerning the faith.[30]

The teaching of the "New Revelation" finally is that.

4. *Death is not a terminus fixing man's destiny,* but that his moral education and evolution continue indefinitely, and that all that can be asserted is that there is a *temporary* penal state which becomes the means of development and progress, etc.

This statement, it must be admitted, is the very trump-card of the "New Revelation," as it is indeed that of many forms of modern non-Catholic and non-Christian religious thought and philosophy. However much the disciples of these new cults may differ on other points of teaching, they are always in remarkable agreement on this point—"that Hell drops out altogether"—that there is really nothing much to be feared respecting the soul's destiny after the death of the body. But should not this very consensus of opinion, in the midst of so much divergence, arouse our suspicion? Do we not here trace the workings of the Zeitgeist—of the unrestrained and mis-

[30] I St. Tim. VI, 20, 21.

directed human intellect which is forever beating its wings against walls of brass? The arguments urged against the true Christian doctrine of Hell invariably base themselves upon the supposed claims of human reason and upon the want of proportion between the shortness of life and the eternal duration of punishment—upon the love and justice of an all-merciful God. But it is in reality the craving of the modern man to be free from a law which he instinctively perceives to be at work in the moral universe, and which alone effectively restrains his intellectual pride and arrogance, and puts a check upon the indulgence of his perverse appetites and passions.

In order to abrogate this law, therefore, he resorts to the most cunning feats of mental gymnastics and empties the clearest and most emphatic pronouncements of Christ of their obvious and legitimate meaning. Indeed, there is probably no dogma of the Catholic Church of which such foolish and frivolous things have been said and written and on which there is such loose and illogical thinking as on that of Eternal Punishment.

The remarkable thing is that no one has ever been known to find fault with the eternity of Heaven—with the unchanging happiness and

bliss of the Good, of the Saints and Martyrs of Christ's church. The very men who denounce the eternity of Hell would be offended if we merely suggested the idea that the joys of Heaven are *not* eternal. They would certainly declare it to be a defect in God's moral government of the world, and in His provisions for the true happiness of man, if the Saints could be conceived to be in a state in which it is still possible for them to change their minds, and from which they may lapse some time or other. For true happiness is necessarily associated with the notion of a goal reached—of an end attained—of a victory permanently won after the long and arduous conflict of life. But, as St. Augustine very logically remarks:

"To say in one and the same sentence life eternal shall be without end, punishment eternal and Hell have an end were too absurd; whence, since the eternal life of the saints shall be without end, punishment eternal too shall doubtless have no end to those whose it shall be."[31]

One is here reminded of the witty remark of a great French statesman (M. Thiers) who said: "Catholicism may certainly hinder thought, but it can only hinder it in those who were not made for *accurate* thinking."

[31] De Civitate Dei, XXI, 23.

Now this is a subject with which it is difficult to deal adequately within the space of a few pages —the only thing possible in a work of this kind. But I happen to have given a good deal of thought to it and to have written a book, specifically dealing with the arguments commonly urged against the truth and reasonableness of the Catholic doctrine of Hell. It has passed through several editions in England and a cheap American edition has recently been published.[32] I venture to commend it to any reader who is seriously interested in the subject. Many of my correspondents, and indeed the entire non-Catholic press, have admitted that I have dealt with the subject fully and fairly and that I have not shirked any objection that can reasonably be urged against the doctrine.

Several of them have entirely changed their viewpoint after perusing the book, and have returned to their obedience to the Church and the practice of their religion.

What I therefore propose to do here—and indeed all I can do—is to set forth, in a few brief and concise paragraphs, what right reason has to say about the matter, and what some really great and accurate thinkers have said about it. From these alone it will be seen how very far Sir

[32] *Hell and its Problems.* Published at 682 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y. Thirty cents, including postage.

Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge are from the truth when they assert that "Hell has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man."

Now we have first of all to fix in our minds the wholly incontestable fact that no honest man can, by any feat of gymnastics or any trick of exegesis, get rid of the plain and clear teaching of the New Testament. If that Book teaches anything at all, in concise and emphatic terms, explicitly and implicitly, it is the doctrine of Hell —of an enduring penal state for the perversely and obstinately wicked. It is, it should be borne in mind, not a question of an isolated text here and there which, as Doyle says, may be oriental imagery, but of a teaching underlying the entire thought-structure of the New Testament and which meets us on practically every page of the book. With its omission, without the conception of a future and permanent state of punishment, consequent upon a life of sin and rebellion against God, the Christian scheme of Redemption has neither consistency nor coherence, and its most central doctrines become unreasonable and incomprehensible.

It is instructive and significant to observe that this transparent fact has never been questioned by the skeptic and the unbeliever, however

strongly he may have opposed the doctrine itself on *moral* grounds. "It has been reserved for the accommodating shallow Christians of modern days, who wish to reject it without abandoning their belief in Christianity, to throw dust in other people's eyes as well as their own, by obscuring what is really a very simple matter with ingenious —though it may be unconscious—sophistries."

Such words as are employed by Christ Himself in St. Matthew, XXV, 41-46; in St. Mark III, 29 and IX, 46-47; and Apoc. XIV, 10-11; and XXI, 8, remain, as the late Sir James Stephen rightly said, "The most terrific words which have ever been spoken in the ears of man."

But "what Christ teaches is the truth. It is unthinkable that He should have told us of horrors of the future life, for our good, and the horrors not really there. . . . We may distrust any view of their meaning that conflicts with the justice and mercy of God, or we may distrust our judgment that the meaning does so conflict. But the Revelation we must not dare to refuse or reconstruct."[33]

Man's moral nature can, of course, with a certain amount of manipulation be made to witness falsely. But his unperverted instinct, his normal natural conscience, testify in favor of some grie-

[33] The New Pelagianism, by J. H. Williams.

vous punishment consequent upon sin and final impenitence. The doctrine of Hell, therefore, underlies the beliefs and sacrificial practices of all heathen races.

"Menace as well as promise," wrote Mr. W. E. Gladstone, "menace for those whom promise could not melt or move, formed an essential part of the provision for working out the redemption of the world." And he continues:

"To presume upon over-riding the express declarations of the Lord Himself, delivered from His own authority, is surely to break up Revealed Religion in its very ground-work, and to substitute for it a flimsy speculation, spun, like the spider's web, by the private spirit, and about as little capable as that web of bearing the strain by which the false is to be severed from the true."

We know for certain that God is good, but we also know that God, in spite of His goodness, is capable of hurting us very severely and even permanently in this life, and that He rigidly and unerringly punishes sin. Is it not conceivable, therefore, that the severity of human suffering here is God's method of saving us from possible greater suffering hereafter?

It is possible that could we understand what eternity really is the notion of the reversal of the

soul's condition—the necessary and final effect of many acts and habits—would be seen to involve an absurdity.

Any being to whom has been given that wonderful power of will with all the consequent responsibilities of a state of probation, must be able to fail as well as to succeed—the very term "probation" implies a risk of failure. What are we to deem probable as to the consequences of such failure? Reason unaided can tell us very little of the soul after death. Certainly we have no evidence that it will then be able to undo what it has done during life, but rather the contrary. The doctrine of the persistence of force does not favor such a view and there is nothing which contradicts the Church's assertion that the state in which the soul finds itself at the close of life's trial cannot be reversed. If so, the man who dies in a state of aversion from the highest light and the supreme good must remain in such a state with all its inevitable consequences.

Some will say those consequences need not be eternal. But if the cause should be unchangeable, how can the consequences change? Moreover, we are contemplating what relates to eternity when time shall have ceased to be.

Again, the term, Eternal Punishment, may be

an imperfect and inadequate term; it may not nearly contain the truth as it actually is. It may be a term conveying the nearest possible equivalent to a state or condition of which we cannot, with our present limitations, form an accurate idea. Language, capable only of expressing and explaining finite things, can scarcely be expected to adequately express the infinite. May not the difficulty, therefore, be in the term rather than in the idea and principle which underlie it, and which the term is meant to convey? May it not be due to the fact that our power of thought is limited, and that our understandings are finite and therefore imperfect?

"Man cannot help erring; but lack of solicitude for his eternal welfare, and for the means of bringing it about is *moral deformity.*"[34]

"Mortal sin is an essential disorder; it is a breaking of the universal harmony." "Nature is terrible in its consequences. If the human spirit, after doing evil and not repenting, or more clearly still, after rising against God and not humbling itself before God, were restored to perfect spirit-integrity through the simple act of its being separated from the body, the human spirit would be the only exception to the law of continuity and consequence."[34]

[34]The Human Soul, by Dom A. Vonier, O.S.B.

"We all expect this law of consequences to be operative in our soul for happiness, i.e., we expect that our present efforts at sanctity shall make our soul holy for eternity. It is illogical not to apply the law when it is a case of moral warping and of defilement of the will.[34]

"Temporal losses may not be through one's fault, may be caused by mere incapacity; yet nature is unsparing. Spiritual losses cannot but be the act of *deliberate free will* and of clear knowledge."[34]

We have a certain analogy to the divine law of punishment in our own human and imperfect modes of measuring out punishment. It is not, and cannot be, a question of time. A single act, such as a theft or a murder or a forgery, is committed in a moment of time, yet the punishment inflicted may extend over many years. The law does not determine the amount of punishment by the time occupied in committing the offense, but by the nature of the offense and the moral state and character to which it points. Now if this be so here, in this present life, where change is still possible, and where a transformation can still be effected, how is it to be there where a terminus of life is reached, where the character, by reason

[34] The Human Soul, by Dom A. Vonier, O.S.B.

of the nature of the new life, is no longer capable of change, and where it is a question of a permanent moral state and condition? Not a single passage can be cited, either from the Old Testament or from the New, which even hints at a continued or second probation after death.

A further test of will, moreover, can surely only be conceived to exist where two conflicting attractions exist. But, in the other state, the earthly life and its fascinations will have ceased to be; the bodily senses will no longer be alluring the will; all mundane attractions will have passed away. The spiritual end will be seen to be the only rational end of life and the only end now possible. Can a Godward choice, under such conditions, even if it could be conceived, be of any moral value? Could it be called a choice at all? It must be clear, too, upon reflection, that if, in accordance with a law of God, man's trial-time were prolonged indefinitely, additional agencies being constantly brought to bear upon him, it would be within man's power to defy God. He would, in a sense, be compelling God to endure his sin and to bear with the manifestations of his perverse and rebellious will. Such a law would be putting God at the sinner's mercy. The very knowledge that a return to God is possible when-

ever he should begin to weary of his deliberate opposition, would tend to confirm a hardened nature in that opposition, and would fill the spiritual universe with beings whose ultimate destiny would be forever trembling in the balance.

The familiar plea that the time allotted to us as the period of our probation is too short, in view of the consequent eternity, is a subtle self-deception. It is not, let it be borne in mind, a question of certain acts and things done or left undone, but of *a character formed*—finally formed perhaps in a moment of time. This moment may come early in life; it may come late. No mortal man can tell when the decisive crisis in the soul's life is reached from God's point of view. "He to whom a thousand years are as one day can, if it so please Him, as infallibly test the entire bent and purpose of the will by a single trial as after a course prolonged through countless ages."

No right-thinking man will be disposed to deny that with the light, the opportunities and the aids vouchsafed to him, he might at any given moment be a much better man than he really is. Life, broadly speaking, is long enough to enable a man to achieve his aims in the *temporal* order. It is not too short to enable him to achieve his end or purpose in the *spiritual* order.

"The Thomistic explanation[35] of reprobation is to be found, not in the direct pronouncement and act of God; it is to be found in the *condition* of the human soul irreparably spoiled by sin."

"Eternity of pain does not correspond to the *gravity* of the guilt; but it corresponds to the irreparable *nature* of the guilt. . . . Its endlessness is not so much a *punishment* as a *condition* of the spirit."

"God has made spiritual nature so perfect, that a wrong use of their powers will bring about results as permanent as the right use of them."

"As long as man can be saved, God will assist him in the work of salvation. After death, his spirit-nature does not allow of salvation, because it does not allow of *change*."

"A second existence for man must, of necessity, be an existence totally different from all our human experience. A second existence could never mean this, that we should then do the things we have neglected to do during the first existence. As all our sensitive life will be gone, we cannot do or undo anything of the first, the mortal existence."

"Man, having no other *human* life, through the

[35] See *The Human Soul.*

fact of death, cannot be said to have another chance; another chance means another human life."

"How much," wrote Mr. Gladstone, "do we know of the lot of the perversely wicked? They disappear into pain and sorrow; the veil drops upon them in that condition. *Every indication of a further change is withheld,* so that if it be designed it has not been made known, and is nowhere incorporated with the divine teaching. Whatever else pertains to this sad subject is withheld from our too curious and unprofitable gaze. The specific and limited statements supplied to us are, after all, only expressions, in particular form, of immovable and universal laws—on the one hand, of the irrevocable union between suffering and sin; on the other hand, of the perfection of the Most High—both of them believed in full, have only in part been disclosed, and having elsewhere, it may be, their plenary manifestation in that day of the restitution of all things for which a groaning and travailing creation yearns."

The problem why God created beings whose future misery we must be able to foresee, we cannot hope to solve with our limited understanding. We can but reason from the known to the unknown. The mystery, most probably, has its

explanation in the fact of *our moral freedom.* In any case, physical and mental suffering, grievous sickness and pain, declining health and the discomforts of old age, are, in one form or another, the lot of all men. And, although God foresaw all this natural suffering, He yet created man. His foreknowledge respecting a world of anguish and woe did not prevent His calling that world into being. But if God's manifest action, in the matter of our present state, is in the end reconcilable with our intuitive belief in His goodness and love, why should it not be equally so in matters pertaining to the future life? If, in passing into conscious existence, terrible risks respecting the present life are incurred by the creature, why not equal or conceivably greater risks respecting the future life? Bearing in mind the unity of nature and of nature's laws, is it not more than probable that the law pertains to both states? The risks incurred may, for all we know, be the necessary adjuncts to the gift of conscious life and of free-will. In any case, "If there is one thing that is certain it is this: that no one will ever be punished with the positive punishment of the life to come who has not, with full knowledge, and complete consciousness, and full consent, turned his back upon Almighty God."

It must finally be evident that if everyone is

to go to Heaven finally, whether they choose it or not, then life is only a kind of game and men mere pawns that are all put into the box at the end.

And is it credible, we may ask, that the Son of God should have become man and have died on the Cross, merely to save men from the short and temporal consequences of sin? Does not the infinity of the Sacrifice imply an infinity of misery as that from which the Sacrifice was intended to deliver those who would accept it?

It is a curious thing that a denial of the doctrine of Hell, as a necessary element in the scheme of Redemption, is almost always followed by a denial of some other important doctrine connected with the incarnation and redemption of Christ. It inevitably leads to what is termed "advanced" or "liberal" views, and what is this but another name for disbelief or rejection of truths, which the natural and limited human reason cannot square with its dictates and surmises, and against which the unaided intellect rebels.

It is also a significant thing and worthy of note that to the Martyrs and the Saints, who lived very close to God, Christ's teaching respecting Hell and the punishmnet of sin has never presented any moral or intellectual difficulty. It has

never caused them to love God less, to be less willing to die for Him, or to entertain less noble or elevating ideas of His character. It is chiefly to the easy-going man of the world, to the child of the modern age, who often does not himself know what he really believes, that these difficulties occur. It is he who waxes eloquent as to the unreasonableness of the doctrine of Hell.

When the aged Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, was put to the torture he said to his torturers: "You threaten me with the fire which only burns for an hour and is then extinguished. You do not know the fire of the judgment to come and of the eternal punishment reserved for the wicked."

One thing we may surely regard as certain: A correct estimate of the truths of the supernatural order cannot be formed by the natural human reason, least of all by the reason which is not in some degree in "rapport" with God and with that other-world-order. "The natural (or sensual) man receiveth (or perceiveth) not the things of the Spirit of God.[36] They are foolishness to him. A higher light is needed to perceive them; that light is the gift of God, and it is by that light alone, responded to by a certain soul-culture and

[36] I Corinth. : 11, 14.

soul-development, that he can see rightly and judge justly. "Everything grows clear," said Pasteur, "in the reflections from the Infinite. "The more I know, the more nearly is my faith that of the Breton peasant. Could I but know all, I would have the faith of the Breton peasant woman."

But I cannot here pursue this subject any further. Sufficient has been said to show that it would be wholly inconsistent with our ideas of the dignity and holiness of God and repugnant to human reason to assume that Christ, whom even Lodge and Doyle regard as a teacher come from God, should have misled mankind on so great and momentous a matter—"should have told us of horrors of the future life, for our good, and the horrors not really there."

VII

THE EVIDENCE OF REASON AND COMMON SENSE

THE EVIDENCE OF REASON AND COMMON SENSE

It is scarcely necessary to state at length what true and Historical Christianity has done for the world in the past—what the Church and her Sacraments mean for millions of intelligent and serious-minded men and women today.

The evidence lies all around us—in an endless variety of forms. The daily increasing stream of converts into the Catholic Church in all countries—in many instances highly intellectual men and women who have passed through various phases of religious thought and found them wanting—her admitted triumphs and victories during the war; the admission of failure of their own communions on the part of Anglican Bishops and of Heads of other non-Catholic organizations—all these constitute a mass of such significant and incontrovertible testimony that none can afford to disregard it. A feeling is perceptibly gaining ground everywhere that the Historic Church, and the Historic Faith, can alone face and deal with the grave problems which are perplexing us today, and that upon them alone the reconstruction of our shattered and shipwrecked civilization can be attempted.

We have heard much in these days of the supposed failures of Christianity; but it would be more in accordance with the facts, as I have shown, if those who use such expressions spoke of the failures of a certain *kind* of Christianity. Catholicism manifestly is far from being a failure. And, indeed, if we would form a true and just estimate of matters it is but necessary to endeavor to realize what the world would be without it today.

The true Catholic Faith has brought us the only rational solution of the mystery and meaning of life; it has placed us in a right and true relation to God; it has solved for us the riddle of suffering and endowed it with a noble and exalted significance; it has brought us the forgiveness of sin and the means of union with God; it provides us, in its sacramental institutions, with treasures of grace by means of which we are able to bear life's burdens and to fight its battles. It is a source of never-failing consolation to us in sorrow and sickness and in the hour of death. Millions of men and women, of all nations, are ready to bear testimony to the reality of these facts and experiences.

But it must be evident that if the "New Revelation" be true, if Christ is not what we have believed Him to be, if there never was an Atone-

ment for Sin and a consequent means of reconcilation and union with God, our whole outlook on life will have to be changed, and the testimony of the best and noblest of men will have to be regarded as untrustworthy and worthless. We shall have to reconstruct our entire moral and spiritual life.

God, we are told by Sir Conan Doyle and his spirit-instructors, is so infinite that He is not even within the ken of the "higher" Spirits; as to Christ, the ideas respecting Him are so vague that it would be difficult to say who and what He really is. He cannot, in any case, be said to possess that divine authority which we attribute to Him. We cannot, therefore, be sure that He hears our prayers and is able to answer them. The good angels do not give any perceptible signs of their presence in connection with these manifestations and cannot, therefore, be supposed to be aiding us. We must, therefore, hereafter "seek the truth from the dead"—the very thing so strictly forbidden us in both the Old and New Testaments—we must resort, for light and guidance, in earthly as well as in spiritual matters, to tipping tables and the automatic pencil, to the spirits of the ouija-board and the séance-room. This, it will and must be admitted, is the necessary and inevitable inference, for any logical

mind that accepts the terms of the "New Revelation," and that thinks the matter out to its last and fullest conclusion.

But can a greater piece of folly and of hopeless and utter absurdity be conceived? Are there really intelligent men and women so utterly devoid of common sense that they can face such an inference with equanimity? Has the world gone so hopelessly mad that it has lost all sense of the true meaning and proportion of things? Let us try and picture to ourselves a world hereafter in which the séance, with the entranced medium, and the tipping table, is the ordinary and serious mode of seeking after truth and of obtaining guidance and direction in the affairs and complexities of life—where we are to learn what the aim and purpose of life really is, and how it is to be achieved. To those of us who are familiar with what goes on in the séance-room; the physical and moral effects on the medium and the sitters, the wearisome process of establishing "conditions," the lies and contradictions of the spirits, the frivolous waste of precious hours, the insatiable craving for further evidence and *more* séances, the neglect of all true and wholesome spiritual exercises—the picture is one to literally appall the imagination.

One cannot find words strong enough to warn

the unwary and to put them on their guard against the perils of such a cultivation of "the lure of the unseen." The path along which this "New Revelation" has so far travelled is strewn with the wrecks of happy homes, of ruined constitutions, of miserable and blighted lives. But, lest any one should imagine that I am overstating the seriousness of the situation, I will quote what an eminent English writer[37] has quite recently said on the subject in his comments on Doyle's and Lodge's books:

"Let them (the public) beware; for three of my friends, men of eminence who really believe in Spiritualism, have told me that they have forbidden the very name of it, or any allusion to it, to be mentioned in their homes, have forbidden their wives and children to touch it, as if it were a thing accursed. And why? Because not being really known and explainable, it puts their minds on a rack; and by the 'Black Magic' which is always part of it, so often leads to insanity and death."

In the preface of his book, Dr. Crozier writes:

"Another revolution which the war has effected is that the Religion of Christ and the doctrines of the Church which were still sufficient to meet the

[37] Dr. John Beattie Crozier, LL.D., in "Last Words on Great Issues."

needs of sorrow-laden souls, are now giving place to a spiritualism of 'spooks' and 'mediums,' on whose scraggy and beggarly shake-down, not merely the bewildered, the stricken, the bereaved, are content to lie down in peace, calmly awaiting their death—but even the intellectuals as well. Is this not a strange topsy-turvydom? And would it not indeed be a theme for comedy, were it not so pathetic a tragedy? For consider—that the very Christianity which when it came into the world, occupied itself largely in casting out these 'spooks' and 'mediums,' these sorcerers and necromancers—that this Christianity, I say, should, in its decadence, have so lost itself and its hold on the minds of men, that these mediums from their superior pose and elevation, can now actually condescend to patronize it—going even so far as to suggest that if its old moribund leaves and branches could only be sprinkled by their healing waters, it would revive in all its pristine vigor; and, like the old and 'wappened widow' in Shakespeare's 'Timon' be spiced to the April day again! Is this not monstrous in this 'so-called' twentieth century? No wonder that Father Vaughan, representing the Roman Catholic Church, should in his disgust on seeing Protestants lying low under this degradation, feel in his cheek a blush of shame! To me, as an out-

sider, there seems, I confess, something in the continuous tradition of the old original Church after all!"

Other leading and sensible men of our time, who may be credited with knowing something about the matter, have expressed themselves in a similar manner. Professor H. E. Armstrong, F.R.S., is emphatic in his condemnation. In a postscript to Mr. Edward Clodd's work, "If a man die shall he live again?" written in refutation of "Raymond," the work by Sir Oliver Lodge, which is largely responsible for the present recrudescence of necromancy, Prof. Armstrong says:

"It appears to me to be a cumulative and forceful gravamen against a movement every aspect of which is pernicious—pernicious alike to the prime movers and to the public; one which, at all costs, in support of sanity of human outlook, we should seek to stamp out with every weapon at our command. . . . That neither the Church nor educated opinion should have had the courage, the sense of duty, to take real exception to its promulgation, cannot well be regarded otherwise than as a proof that we are living in a period of intellectual decadence."

By "The Church," says Fr. Hudson, "Prof. Armstrong understands, of course, the Church of

England. If he were better informed he would be aware that almost simultaneously with the appearance of "Raymond" *the Church* renewed its condemnation of the movement which he rightly considers pernicious and so vehemently condemns."[38]

Professor Percy Gardner of Oxford, a non-Catholic like the two authors quoted, writes:

"The necromancy of today depicts a future state of things as colorless and meaningless as are the lives of many comfortable Christians, without spiritual passion or ambition."

But, looking away for the moment from the definitely religious and moral aspect of the matter, while bearing in mind certain facts connected with spirit-intercourse which cannot very well be ignored, is there anything of solid value which the disciple of the new cult is likely to derive from the practice of his new religion?

1. If the practice be indulged in with a view to securing scientific certainty respecting the immortality of the human soul, the seeker will most certainly be disappointed. Such certainty cannot, logically, be deduced from the evidence furnished by spiritistic phenomena. In the first place, we can never be absolutely sure, from the very

[38] The text of the decree referred to will be found on page 203.

nature of the case, that the communicators are really the spirits of the dead. I have shown on what grounds grave doubt must be, and is, entertained by the most experienced experimenters on this point. The best evidence conceivable could never yield more than a mere probability, and such probability is attainable on other and far better grounds.

But even if this were not the case, if it could be proved that the spirits of a certain low order of deceased human beings are, in some instances, the communicators, their manifestations could not prove more than *survival* of death. It could then still be urged that such survival might terminate after a time, when the vitality of the life-principle which has managed to escape the destruction of the body has spent itself and is exhausted. I had this forcibly brought home to me, some years ago, when a materialistic scientist, who had heard of my researches, called upon me in London and asked me to make him acquainted with my evidence. He maintained, after considering this evidence, that even if all the facts presented had to be accepted, they would not affect his scientific position. "It is not inconceivable," he said, "that the life-principle in man, carrying with it certain mental impressions and even a kind of individuality, survives the body for a time and

is then reabsorbed in the universal or cosmic life." And I did not see, and have never seen since, how this contention can be satisfactorily controverted.

It is to be admitted, moreover, that certain facts which psychical research has brought to light, could be made to support this theory. The spiritists admit that it is difficult for them to get in touch with spirits who have been many years on the other side. Sir Conan Doyle himself says:[39] "Communications usually come from those who have not long passed over and tend to grow fainter, as one would expect." This, of course, is interpreted by him as implying that the spirits, in the course of time, reach higher stages of development and proportionately lose touch with the earth-life; but it will be seen that it also admits of the other interpretation. For a skeptically inclined and cautious mind, therefore, even an established communication from the spirit-world is not likely to bring the certainty and consolation so eagerly desired.

Immortality—an endless conscious existence of the individual soul—is the inevitable postulate of reason and reflection, when put to a right and proper use. With few exceptions it is the universal and instinctive belief of mankind—a be-

[39] The New Revelation. P. 72.

lief all the more remarkable since it persists in spite of its being opposed to all sensible appearances. The simplicity and immateriality of the human soul which leave it unaffected by the process of corruption, the preservation of personal identity in spite of incessant bodily change, the craving for knowledge and happiness never fully attained in the present life, the circumstance that the universe is rational and that there must be underlying it a purpose and an aim which would not be obtained if the soul were annihilated and if the wrongs of life were not righted—virtue not rewarded and vice and sin not punished—all these are far more solid and substantial grounds for believing in the immorality of the soul than those which could possibly be furnished by the fugitive and deceptive phenomena of Spiritism. All true and accurate thinkers, in all times, have acknowledged this, and it is for this reason that the spiritistic phenomena, observed in the past, have never been given any prominence in the various scholastic arguments in defense of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It is evident, therefore, that, in this respect, the "New Revelation" does not provide the reflecting mind with any really additional or superior evidence. It can only satisfy those who do not think very deeply about the matter and who are easily im-

pressed by the appearance of things. "It may well be asked," writes Dr. John D. Quackenbos,[40] "if communications with the dead be lawful and fraught with satisfaction, would God have concealed from men so innocent a means of gratifying the most intense longing of human nature? The answer is—No! . . . The proof of immortality is not to be sought for in the vaporings of spiritism."

2. If spiritistic practices be resorted to in order to ascertain the conditions and character of the other life, the inquirer will find himself equally disappointed. I have shown from actual experiences and from the statements of the spirits themselves that nothing certain and reliable can be ascertained in this respect. We look in vain for any kind of agreement or oneness of idea, on any single point of teaching, emanating from the spirit-spheres. All is confusion, and the inconsistencies and contradictions with which we meet are sometimes altogether ridiculous in their character. The communications conveyed through the respective mediums would seem to reflect and to express some latent belief or subjective impression of the sensitive himself, rather than any objective truth, universally known and understood in the world of spirit and disclosed for the

[40] Body and Spirit.

enlightenment and moral advancement of mankind.

Sometimes these messages are nothing but the familiar jargon of the séance-room, delivered with a certain air of superior knowledge and insight, but wholly inconsistent in character and devoid of all credibility. Sir Oliver Lodge suggests that some of the lengthy communications of "Feda" (his medium's spirit-control) may have their origin in the medium's dream-consciousness; but he overlooks the fact that they come with the same credentials as any other message from Raymond or other discarnate spirits, and that if they are unreliable and imaginary, we have no reason for placing confidence in any spirit's description of the other life.

"These wild utterances," wrote the critic of a similar work in the London *Times*,[41] "do not seem, as a rule, like revelations of the secrets of the prison-house, but rather like gibberings from a lunatic-asylum, peopled by inmates of vulgar behaviour and of the lowest morals; creatures that lie and cheat, give false names and unverifiable addresses." And even the spirits, communicating with each other in the spirit-spheres, do not seem to be of the same mind. A truly comical illustration of this fact is given us in an incident re-

[41] July 9, 1908.

corded in a recent work by Dr. Carrington. It is the case of a soldier who had been killed by a German shell and who is taken by his spirit-brother to one of the "rest-halls," specially prepared for newly arrived pilgrims. He had been somewhat of a recluse in his earth-life and now reflects upon the mistakes made in that life. He describes the conditions and environments of his new life by means of automatic writing. But on returning to the rest-hall "a very decided cold douche" is awaiting him. He meets a messenger from a higher sphere who says to him: "Do you know that most of what you have conveyed to your friends at the matter-end of the line is *quite illusory*"? And he then suggests that the spirit-soldier had better live a little of the new life first before he talks about it to his friends on this side of the barrier. Can anything more grotesque and absurd, I would ask, be conceived?

Commenting upon these spirit-messages and upon the utter impossibility of picking even the smallest grains of gold out of such a mass of worthless rubbish, Mr. Maeterlinck writes:[42]

"Beyond our last hour is it all bare and shapeless and dim? If it be so, let them (the spirits) tell us; and the evidence of darkness will at least possess a grandeur that is all too absent from

[42] Life after Death. *Fortnightly Review*, Sept.-Oct., 1913.

these cross-examining methods. Of what use is it to die if all life's trivialities continue? Is it really worth while to have passed through the terrifying gorges which open on the eternal fields in order to remember that we had a great-uncle called Peter, or that our cousin Paul was afflicted with varicose veins and gastric complaint? . . . Without demanding a great miracle one would nevertheless think that we had a right to expect from a mind which nothing now enthralls some other discourse than that which it avoided when it was still subject to matter. . . . Why do they (the spirits) speak to us so seldom of the future? And for what reason, when they do venture upon it, are they mistaken with such disheartening regularity?"

And in his work, "The Unknown Guest," Mr. Maeterlinck writes: "They (the exponents of the spiritistic theory) see the dead crowding around us like wretched puppets, indissolubly attached to the insignificant scene of their death by the thousand little threads of insipid memories and infantile hobbies. They are supposed to be here, blocking up our homes, more abjectly human than if they were still alive, vague, inconsistent, garrulous, derelict, futile and idle, tossing hither and thither their desolate shadows which are being slowly swallowed up by silence and oblivion,

busying themselves incessantly with what no longer concerns them, but almost incapable of doing us a real service, so much so that, in short, they would end by persuading us that death serves no purpose, that it neither purifies nor exalts, that it brings no deliverance and that it is indeed a thing of terror and despair."

3. Again if these occult practices be indulged in in order to obtain counsel and guidance in the ordinary affairs of human life, the inquirer will here, too, meet with disappointment, and indeed with worse than disappointment. I happen to have an exceptionally wide experience in this respect, by reason of the many communications from disillusioned spiritists which have been made to me in the course of the years, and from cases with which I have come in personal contact. *Not the slightest reliance can be placed on any advice coming from this quarter.* I have seen the most disastrous consequences resulting from following such advice. I know of two families in London, lifelong and ardent spiritualists, who were practically ruined by instructions respecting money investments which were given them by their spirit-friends—these friends being in daily communication with them, and claiming to have made every possible inquiry before tendering the advice.

It is true I also know of one case in which the advice given resulted in the gaining of a very large sum of money; but it ended in the person, thus enriched, ruining his constitution soon after by the excessive use of alcohol and luxurious living.

I also know of instances in which the advice given to young and inexperienced girls would have ended in moral disaster, had it been followed. It was their womanly instinct, happily remaining intact, which saved them from that disaster. But those of us who are acquainted with these occurrences have no difficulty in finding the true explanation of many a mysterious and inexplicable happening in our day. Most confessors in the larger cities know what an amount of mischief is caused in the family life by obedience to directions received from these spirit-guides and by visits to the clairvoyants and writing-mediums. But a book would have to be written were one to collect and present the numberless cases with which current literature and the records of the law-courts furnish us. A single application of common-sense should be more than sufficient to destroy the very foundation of the entire edifice of theories and illogical deductions which has been erected upon these phenomena, were it not, as Mr. G. Chesterton says, "that

there is nothing so uncommon, nowadays, as common-sense."

It must be evident that if it were really within the power of these spirits to communicate to us information of real help and value in our social and family life, the spiritists and their mediums would be the first to benefit by it. We would expect to find their family life to be the best regulated in the world, their daughters happily married and their sons well placed; we would expect to find the mediums prosperous or at least in comfortable circumstances. But, as a matter of fact, the very opposite is the case. I will quote what a disillusioned spiritist,[43] whose own life was a noted American trance medium for many years, has to say on the subject. In his work, *Spiritualism Unveiled,* he writes:

"The extensive opportunity which I have had, and that, too, amongst the first-class of spiritualists, of learning its nature and results, I think will enable me to lay just claims to being a competent witness in the matter. I am afraid that what I have to say will offend many who are less acquainted with the phenomena than myself . . . but I write that the experienced may more fully comprehend the dangers attending it. I am frequently asked if I still believe in the phenomena

[43] Dr. B. F. Hatch.

of spiritualism. I answer Yes. I should deem it more than a waste of time to write about what does not exist. . . . I have heard much of the improvement in individuals from a belief in spiritualism. With such I have had no acquaintance. But I have known many whose integrity of character and uprightness of purpose rendered them worthy examples to all around, but who, on becoming mediums and giving up their individuality, also gave up every sense of honor and decency. A less degree of severity in this remark will apply to a large class of mediums and believers. There are thousands of high-minded and intelligent spiritualists who will agree with me that it is no slander in saying that the inculcation of no doctrine in this country (America) has ever shown such disastrous moral and social results as the spiritual theories. . . . With but little inquiry I have been able to count up over seventy mediums, most of whom have wholly abandoned their conjugal relations, others living with their paramours called 'affinities,' others in promiscuous adultery, and still others exchanged partners. Old men and women, who have passed the meridian of life, are not unfrequently the victims of this hallucination."

"The subject," says another writer,[44] "strange

[44] Hubbel: Facts and Fancies in Spiritualism.

to say, seemed to have the power of introducing discord in every family into which it entered, of arraying husband against wife in the divorce-court, and of producing all manner of domestic infelicity and sexual irregularities. This is a rather strange result of the belief that we are surrounded by the spirits of our beloved dead who see all we do."

Those of my readers who are familiar with my earlier works will be acquainted with the abundant mass of evidence on this subject which is available, and a great deal of which is the result of personal experience and of a study of the published writings of spiritists and of scientific men of the saner sort. In its collective character it is overwhelming and should be sufficient to deter the most stable and well-balanced of minds from touching the unclean thing.

Again it is known to all the world that all public mediums (except perhaps the few who have independent sources of income) are poor. They compete with one another, in their advertisements, in commending their gifts at the most moderate charges, business mediums claiming to have been the means of providing their clients with great wealth, while they themselves remain poor and are compelled to eke out a miserable existence by these precarious means. They claim

to foretell the future and to guard their devotees against clearly-discerned bodily perils and sickness, but they cannot prevent so noted a defender of their cause as the late Mr. Stead from losing his life in a shipwreck, or to save numbers of their followers and consulters from unhappy alliances, from suicide, and the asylum. Must we not conclude that those who, in spite of these obvious inconsistencies, believe in these spirits, and look to them for true guidance and enlightenment, have parted with every fragment of right judgment and common-sense?

If it be asserted that the arguments which I have adduced tend to deprive sorrowing hearts of that consolation and assurance which spiritistic phenomena are affording them at this time of anguish and pain, I reply that they are, on the contrary, calculated to save them from a disillusionment which is infallibly awaiting them. All my experiences go to prove that this disillusionment is bound to come sooner or later, and that then "their last state will be worse than their first." I have seen too many instances of this kind to entertain any doubt about the matter. I have the records of a case before me, in which the deception was successfully maintained for a period of *five years,* but in which the masquerading spirit finally himself confessed that he was not

the person he had claimed to be. Such instances, in any case, are ample proof that *certainty* in this matter is never possible for the sorrowing heart. But these very contradictions, so characteristic of all spirit-messages, constitute one of the greatest perils for the infatuated spiritist and one of the greatest triumphs for the intelligences at the back of them. They result in a ceaseless consultation of all kinds of mediums, and in a running from one séance to another, in an incessant questioning of the oracles, in the vain hope that better "conditions" will be secured, and that the flagrant inconsistency will be explained. This accounts for the fact that the number of public mediums is increasing and flourishing to such an alarming extent that, in some of the big cities like London the police have been compelled to interfere. But, by this means, an increasing number of minds are rendered *passive,* the door of communication is being more widely opened, and these spirits are afforded facilities of more effectually invading and dominating the life of the world and of mankind. Never probably in all the history of the world has a greater danger threatened our moral and social life!

The habitual consultation of the spirits on questions of life and death, finally, is a source of

endless mental unrest and disquietude. The very circumstance that the "higher" spirits give conflicting accounts of the conditions of the other life and of man's present duties and obligations in this respect, prevent the mind from arriving at any settled religious conviction. And, as all men know, a true spiritual life cannot be built up on permanent doubt and uncertainty. We must have some fixed idea as to our true relation to God, and as to the duties which we owe to Him if we are to construct our life aright and if our prayers are to have any value and meaning for us. It is surely utterly absurd to maintain, in the words of Doyle,[45] that so far as Religion is concerned "the southern races will always demand what is less austere than the North, the West will always be more critical than the East," and that, on this principle of adaptation, a great stride can be made "toward religious peace and unity." Truth surely is truth, and if it has been given at all, it is authoritative and must be truth for one race as well as for another. Its acceptance or rejection, or its modification, cannot be made dependent upon peculiar national characteristics and mental requirements and tendencies. It cannot be true in the West, and untrue, or only partially true, in the East. It must be true always

[45] "The New Revelation." P. 52.

and everywhere and, indeed, it exists in order that the nations may conform themselves to it, not that they may make it conformable to their particular whims and fancies and their likes and dislikes.

But have we not, in this lack of finality and certainty in the matter of all these new religions, in this "ever-learning yet never coming to a knowledge of the truth," the explanation of all the mental and religious unrest, and all the moral disorders which are so characteristic of our age and of which the disastrous consequences confront us on every side? The "higher" men and women of our day are like ships without rudder and compass, tossed hither and thither by the turbulent waters of the ocean of life, lacking all character and stability, and utterly devoid of any clearly recognized aim and purpose in life. Man, clearly, was made for God and for a supernatural end, and the present life has no meaning at all unless it be the training ground on which he is to qualify for the attainment and enjoyment of that end. But this is utterly impossible, as all experience proves, if he has no fixed and permanent truth on which he can construct his life, and no settled principles by which his actions are to be guided and directed. "A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun; but the fool is changed as

the moon.[46] He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind . . . a double-minded man is inconsistent in all his ways."[47]

Now let the reader compare all this mental tight-rope dancing, all this chasing after new and higher truths, all this vain seeking after light in quarters where it can never be found, with the clear and concise teachings of Christ Our Lord which admit of no compromise and toning down, which the best of men, in all ages and nations, have instinctively recognized to be the truth, and which, unless purposely distorted and perverted, infallibly introduce order and harmony, and peace and restfulness, into every human soul. Let him compare these mutually contradictory and conflicting systems of religion with the unchanging and unchangeable doctrines of the Historic Church, which are daily bringing unspeakable peace and consolation to millions of souls in every part of this wide earth, which sustain and stay the soul in life and solace it in death, and on which alone a true and enduring spiritual life can be built up. Can an intelligent man, who has weighed the matter fully and carefully, in all its bearings—can he hesitate in his choice? Must

[46] Eccles.: XXVII, 12.
[47] St. James I, 6-8.

not common-sense and reason unite in declaring that these new revelations so-called are wholly inconsistent with our instinctive ideas of the dignity, justice and holiness of God, and offensive to our religious feelings and our common-sense?

VIII

THE INEVITABLE INFERENCE

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If we now sum up the evidence which has been gathered together from many sources and from various points of view and consider it fully and fairly, as a whole, and in all its bearings, we are literally driven to the conclusion that the "New Revelation," ushered in by spirit-messages, by the entranced medium, the tipping-table, and the automatic pencil, is a gigantic delusion imposed upon a world which has become estranged from Christ and lapsed into paganism. It is a reversion to practices and beliefs which are as old as the world, and which inquiry has shown to be a *characteristic* of the pagan civilizations. The highest probability is that these spirits, who come to us in the forms and with the voices of our dead, are not really spirits of the dead at all, but are some of those fallen angels[48] of which the true Revelation speaks and which are known to have come with similar pretences and under identical disguises in pre-Christian times. They are representatives of that hostile spirit-world which has, from the beginning of time, opposed itself to

[48] See the interesting work on this subject, by Rev. A. M. Lépicier, O.S.M. "The Unseen World."

man's highest interests and to the true moral and spiritual progress of the human race. Their activities were checked and paralyzed when Christ appeared in the world, and wherever His Divine authority was acknowledged and obeyed —where men continued to live under the protecting power of His true Church and her Sacraments.

The phenomena, attending the ushering in of this "New Revelation" and, in some respects resembling those recorded in the New Testament, are not identical with them in their origin and character, but are really travesties or caricatures of them—bad imitations, staged, beyond doubt, with the intent of deceiving and misleading the unwary. The circumstance that these phenomena and teachings meet with such ready acceptance and belief is due to a variety of very obvious causes, the chief of which is the state of disorder and anarchy which reigns in almost every sphere of our modern life, and which is causing the distressed mind of man to be thrown hither and thither in its search after truth, and in its effort to find some sort of convenient resting place for the soul. Man, somehow, cannot get on very long without some kind of religion, and when he rebels against and ultimately rejects the one authoritatively revealed to him, he goes on a

search for some attractive-looking substitute and fashions a religion for himself and after his own heart.

In the non-Catholic *religious* sphere, therefore, the outlook is a peculiarly distressful and disheartening one. The conflict of creeds, the incessant wrangling over disputed points of doctrine, the bold negative assertions of rationalistic Bible critics have undermined belief in the truth and authority of the Sacred Scriptures and have estranged thousands from the religion of Jesus Christ—driven them into the arms of one or other of those many man-made religions which have sprung up like mushrooms all around us. With numerous others the effect has been to create that state of crass indifference to all matters of Religion which is destructive to any kind of exalted moral or spiritual life.

In the *scientific* and intellectual sphere, similar disintegrating influences, as we have seen, have been and are at work. On the materialistic side, the speculative theories of individual minds, boldly put forth as the sure findings of science, have shaken the very foundations of revealed, and indeed, of natural Religion, and have undermined any lingering belief in the supremacy of the human conscience and in the responsibility of the soul before God. On the spiritistic side

there is, as we have likewise seen, a reversion to pagan practices and a substitution of the teaching of spirits for the teachings of the Spirit of God.

In the *social* and material sphere, forces are in operation which are fatal to all religious belief and practice, and to the cultivation of any kind of soul-life. The interests and energies of the mind are solely and exclusively directed to the achievement of material or social success, to victory in that struggle of life which is daily becoming fiercer and more absorbing, and to the securing of a *mode* of life which tends to crowd out all higher considerations and all nobler interests.

And even though it be abundantly manifest from the existing state of the world that the civilization which has been built up upon these material forces has broken down utterly and is in a state of decadence, there is as yet no very perceptible indication that the fact is fully recognized and that the true causes are discerned.

It is in this world of conflicting beliefs, of antagonistic forces, of ceaseless material effort, that the doctrines of spiritism meet, as we might have expected, with ready acceptance. They adapt themselves, in a marvelous manner, to the prevailing tendencies of thought—to the Zeitgeist, and, while retaining some semblance of the

Christian Religion, they make it possible for a man to gratify all his desires and ambitions, and to eliminate from his life the inconvenient and hindering claims of God and of the soul.

They enable him to make that judicious compromise between the world and God which is so dear to the human heart, and to rest content in the assurance that, however perverse and unsatisfactory his life may have been, there is nothing much that can happen to him in the after-life, since there all wrongs can be righted and all the crooked things be made straight.

Now when we realize the fact that the true Historic Christ and the true Historic Church constitute today the one loud and living protest against this anarchical state of things and against these perverse views of life, we come to understand why it is that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is so strenuously and universally denied by the spirits of the séance-room and of the "New Revelation." With the rejection of this truth the world, strictly speaking, ceases to be Christian, separates itself from the supernatural order, and reverts to a state of pure nature. And, in this state of pure nature, there is provided for these spirits a wide and fruitful field of operation.

When the ancient Roman world was in a state of decadence, it was the divine impulse, emanat-

ing from the Divine Christ, which infused new life into that world and transformed and regenerated it. It was the Divine Christ Who laid the foundations of a new order, deep and strong, in the awakened souls and consciences of men. It was from Him—from God Incarnate—that the new life-forces flowed into that corrupt and decaying world. It was for this truth, clearly discerned by illumined souls, that the best of men suffered, and bled, and died. It was by means of His Church and her valid Sacraments that Christ continued to act upon the world throughout the long succeeding ages of struggle and of conflict. These are facts of history which no right-minded man and no rightly instructed student of history can deny. But if this be true, it must also be true that the forces which would remove this truth from the life of man must be forces antagonistic to God, and inimical to the highest interests of mankind.

Some may comfort themselves with the reflection that they mean to honor and obey the Christ which the "New Revelation" is substituting for the Christ of History—that they will not cease to be Christians. But they fail to take account of what this historic doctrine really means and what human nature has been, and will most assuredly become again, without it. Man can never be

made permanently obedient to a teacher who, in spite of his admitted perfections, is purely human—a created being of some kind like ourselves. He will, sooner or later, throw off his allegiance to him and assign him a place such as he assigns to all other great world teachers. He will find his laws inconvenient, and will ask himself: What, if he is a created being like myself, does he after all know more than I know—why should I conform myself to his law? He will cease to be a disciple and become a critic. All experience amply demonstrates this.

The Historic Christ comes with divine and therefore binding authority. His laws are the laws of God. They cannot, without imperiling the soul, be disobeyed. He comes as the Source and Author of a new and supernatural order, in which divine and supernatural forces are in operation, by means of which the soul is regenerated and elevated and spiritualized and made fit for a life *above* nature and union with God. It will be seen that these respective views lead to mutually conflicting conceptions of the world-order and of Christianity, and that they cannot by any chance be reconciled.

To some people the contention that these mysterious spirits are not the spirits of the dead but fallen angels may at first sight seem bizarre and

far-fetched; but I would draw their attention to the fact that even thoughtful spiritists, regarding the matter from a purely experimental point of view, have come to this conclusion and have uttered words of warning to the public.

"For my own part," writes Sir Wm. Barrett, a former President of the Society for Psychical Research, in a work already mentioned, "it seems not improbable that the bulk if not the whole of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritistic séance are the product of *human-like but not really human* intelligences. . . . It seems to me that the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, points to a race of spiritual creatures—but of a *malignant* type when he speaks of beings, not made of flesh and blood, inhabiting the air around us and able injuriously to affect mankind."

In his criticism of a work on psychology by a foreign *savant,* Dr. Hereward Carrington, of whom the late Professor James, of Harvard, spoke to me with keen appreciation and whom he regarded as one of the best-informed and most open-minded of psychical researchers, wrote as follows: "When I wrote my book, *The Coming Science,* some years ago, I contended (pp. 59-78) that there was really no good *first-hand* evidence that spiritistic practices induced abnormal and

morbid states and conditions to the extent usually supposed. Further experiences have caused me to change that opinion. I now believe that the danger of spiritistic practices is very great, and I think that this aspect of the problem is one that should be more widely discussed and more attention should be given to it by members of the Society for Psychical Research. The recent writings of Viollet and Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert should be more widely known. But it is probable that all these books would not have influenced me had I not seen several examples of such detrimental influence myself—cases of delusion, insanity and all the horrors of obsession.

"Those who deny the reality of these facts, those who treat the whole problem as a joke, regard *planchette* as a toy and deny the reality of powers and influences which work unseen, should observe the effects of some of the spiritistic manifesations. They would no longer, I imagine, scoff at that investigation and be tempted to call all mediums frauds, but would be inclined to admit that there is a true terror of the dark, and that *there are 'principalities and powers,'* with which we, in our ignorance, toy, without knowing and realizing the frightful consequences which may result from this tampering with the unseen world."

"There are more plausible reasons than many imagine," wrote Mr. Dale Owen, a spiritist,[49] "for the opinion entertained by some able men, Protestants as well as Catholics, that the communications in question come from the powers of darkness and that we are entering on the first steps of a career of demoniac manifestations the issues of which men cannot conjecture."

These are weighty and significant words when we bear in mind the quarter from which they emanate. They are surely calculated to arrest the attention of even those who are most infatuated with the plausible and seemingly reasonable contentions of the "New Revelation."

I cannot, then, in conclusion, and in full view of *all* the facts of the case, better sum up the entire argument of this book than in the form in which I have summed it up at the end of my recently published pamphlet:[50]

The occult Phenomena, evoked and observed and studied in modern times, are no discoveries by science of hidden but normal powers in man which may be legitimately utilized and cultivated,

[49] Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World. P. 38.

[50] Spiritistic Phenomena and their Interpretation, published at 682 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y. Incl. postage, 25 cents.

and by means of which the spirits of the dead can be made to furnish proof of their survival, and by which they can impart useful knowledge to the world. Their induction is a revival, in modern form, of that ancient Necromancy and Black Magic, which was and is today practiced by most uncivilized or partially civilized races, and which, both the legislators of the Jewish race and the teachings of Christ and of the Christian Church, in every age, and in the most emphatic terms, rigidly condemned.

It is a movement of thought, in violent and bitter antagonism to the Revealed, Supernatural Truths of Christianity, tending to separate the human soul from the supernatural order and reducing it to that state of helplessness and naturalism from which Christ came to set it free.

Its appearance, in our time, is a literal and startling fulfillment of remarkable words of prophecy and warning, uttered nearly two thousand years ago.

The text of the Decree of the Holy Office, dated April 27, 1917, runs as follows:

"Question.—Whether it is allowable to assist at spiritistic communications or manifestations whatsoever, even though they bear the appearance of being honest and pious, through a medium as

he is called, or without him, and whether hypnotism is used or not, either by interrogating souls or spirits, or hearing their answers, or else by simply looking on, although one tacitly or expressly protests that he does not wish to have anything to do with evil spirits. The answer is in the negative all round."

IX

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OUIJA-BOARD

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OUIJA-BOARD*

THE recent revival of spiritistic practices in all parts of the world is leading increasing numbers of persons to try experiments with the ouija-board—a simple and seemingly harmless contrivance, by means of which messages are often obtained which have all the appearance of coming from the spirits of the dead. So rapidly has this practice spread in this country that there are few families today who have not come in touch with these experiments in one way or another and who have not at least heard of the startling communications which, in many instances, have been elicited from the little board.

The consequence is that reflecting persons everywhere are asking questions respecting the matter which are calling for an answer, and those of us who, by reason of prolonged and painstaking investigation, are more intimately acquainted with the subject, cannot but feel that it is of the utmost importance that the answer which is given to these questions should be an adequate and correct one.

For practical purposes we may divide the ex-

*In order to make this essay a separate and consistent whole, the repetition of a few references was unavoidable.

perimenters with the ouija-board and similar contrivances into two classes of persons. Those of the first class look upon the little board purely as a toy, and as a means of amusement and entertainment. While fully admitting that the messages obtained under their hand are often very strange and surprising and quite contrary to what might be expected, they nevertheless hold that a natural explanation can and will no doubt be found for them. Such persons have observed how often a message received is foolish and silly, how frequently the answer given to a question is false or at least highly improbable, and in how many instances the statements made by the board are manifestly mere echoes or reflections of their own thoughts, or the presentation of incidents long forgotten but nevertheless stowed away in their memories.

To the second class belong many intelligent persons who have studied the matter more closely and who have become entirely convinced that the natural explanation does not cover all the facts of the case, and that in many instances at least an external and independent mind must be admitted to be at work in connection with the transmission of the messages. In confirmation of this belief they point to the nature and content of some of the messages: the display of informa-

tion, often intimate and accurate, which is known to be only in the mind of the experimenter and of some person deceased, a knowledge of events and circumstances connected with persons and places at a distance and on inquiry found to be correct, the incessant emphatic assertion of the board itself that it is moved by the surviving spirit of some deceased human being.

Now the question which is everywhere being asked is: "How are these conflicting views and experiences to be reconciled? What is really the truth about the matter?"

In reply to these questions it may be said at once that both views are correct in a sense.

The scientific experiments of many years, in many countries, and carried on under strict test conditions, have shown conclusively what the process is which is at work in the eliciting of these mysterious messages and how their source and origin can be determined.

We have to recognize two clearly established facts:

1. Recent psychological research has demonstrated that the human mind is a far more complex and intricate organism than was at one time supposed. A very great part of its operations is what is termed subconscious, lying below the threshold of the ordinary conscious working

mind. This subconscious part of the mind may be regarded as a kind of mental storehouse or registry, for in it are stored up and recorded, accurately and permanently, all the complex and many-sided experiences of our life. There is, strictly speaking, nothing, from our childhood upwards, no impression received, no word heard or uttered, no picture looked at, no occurrence or incident, no feeling or emotion, of which a record is not preserved in the secret recesses of the subconscious mind, however unable the normal working mind may be to recall them. It is only in dream states, or in abnormal conditions of mind, such as hypnosis or trance, that there occurs what is called a subconscious "uprush" and that we become aware of the complexity of our mental nature and of the extent of our possessions.

"We should not overlook the fact," writes the Boston psychologist, Dr. Morton Prince, "that among mental experiences are those of the inner as well as the outer life. To the former belong the hopes and aspirations, the regrets, the fears, the doubts, the self-communings and wrestlings with self, the wishes, the loves, the hates, all that we are not willing to give to the outer world and all that we would forget and would strive not to admit to ourselves.[51] All this inner life belongs

[51] The Unconscious. P. 85.

to our experience and is subject to the same laws of conservation."

2. The second fact which we have to recognize and keep in mind is that experiments have shown that in proportion as the activities of the conscious working mind are moderated and a state of passivity is induced, this subconscious part of the mind begins to act more freely and, after a time, automatically, and without the conscious co-operation of the experimenter, to yield up some of its contents. And the normal mind, having in its state of passivity no power of selection or control over the material thus projected by the subconscious mind, the latter acts in a most haphazard and disorderly manner, in many instances projecting things most amazing and unexpected and unrecognizable by the normal mind. Carefully conducted experiments, however, and a rigid scrutiny of the life-history of the experimenter and of the contents of the messages received have also shown that, as this passive state of the mind is increasingly developed and cultivated by frequent experiments, a door is gradually opened through which it is possible for an *external* intelligence or spirit to invade the mind and to gain access to the contents of this well-furnished subconscious storehouse.

It would not be possible, in a brief paper of this kind, to give all the evidence in support of this assertion. I can but state here that all the best experimenters have come to this conclusion and that the fact can today only be doubted by those who have no accurate knowledge of the subject, whose own experiences have never carried them beyond the subconscious stage, or who are predisposed against belief in a spirit-world. The most skeptical person, least inclined to believe in spirit-activity in connection with these experiments will, on reflection, be constrained to admit that an external mind *must* be admitted to be at work where an incident is related by the board which is taking place at a distance and the truth of which is established on inquiry, or when a message is conveyed in a language which the experimenter has never learnt and which, on being translated, is found to be consistent and intelligible. And, needless to say, many such messages, some of them far more wonderful, have been received by means of automatic writing in all parts of the world.

Now it is in the clear recognition and application of these two facts stated that the solution of the problem presented by the ouija-board is to be found.

All depends on the peculiar mental condition of

the experimenter. At the beginning of the experiment, and before the mind has attained any great degree of passivity, the messages may be wholly normal, the slightly awakened subconscious mind becoming active and automatically and disconnectedly communicating some of the contents of its storehouse through the little board or pencil. It may even falsely claim to be an independent personality—the spirit of a deceased friend or relative, especially if the experimenter strongly inclines to this belief and unconsciously suggests it to the subconscious mind. By far the larger proportion of the amusing messages and answers to questions with which we are all familiar are received where this moderate degree of passivity has been attained and where, as a consequence, the experimenter has no suspicion of peril or of being on dangerous ground. The board may make a flippant joke, consistent with the peculiar temperament of the experimenter, it may cause surprise by telling the age and other particulars, unknown to the others, of a person present; it may perform a variety of feats causing the greatest possible amazement. And an independent intelligence may, of course, be connected with the production from the very beginning. But so long as the statements made contain no matter foreign to the mind of the experi-

menter and no answer to a question which might not have been projected from the subconscious storehouse, there is no *valid* reason for assuming the presence of an outside intelligence.

In proportion, however, as these experiments are continued and as the mind becomes more passive and lethargic, the phenomenon begins to change its character and imperceptibly to pass from the natural into the preternatural. While subconscious automatic activity still continues, a message is jerked in here and there which is of a startling character and which is often seen at once to be no part of the experimenter's own mental outfit. Events taking place at a distance are accurately reported and commented upon. Disclosures are made respecting the character and doings and intimate personal affairs of persons not known to the experimenter. Messages are given, clearly and conclusively indicating knowledge and information wholly beyond the reach of the writer's own mind. And they are conveyed in a form and manner suggesting the presence of a critical and observant mind and of a judgment quite at variance with that of the experimenter.

When, in view of such astonishing communications, further questions are asked, the answer is generally to the effect that the spirit of some de-

ceased friend or relative of the experimenter is present, that he has discovered this simple means of communication and that he is anxious to cultivate the intercourse thus established for the benefit of the experimenter and the human race at large. For is it not a blessing of the highest order, it is urged, to obtain evidence that the dear departed dead are certainly alive and are all around us, and is it not perfectly lawful for us to receive from them advice and direction, not only as regards some of the greater problems of life, but also respecting our more immediate temporal concerns and anxieties? After a while instruction is generally given how a greater degree of passivity can be attained and how this mode of intercourse between the worlds seen and unseen can be made much more perfect and profitable.

The experimenter, fascinated by these communications, and convinced that he has come upon a great and valuable discovery, readily adopts the advice given and resorts to the ouija-board habitually and systematically. Any doubt expressed by others as to the *true* source of the messages or the character and integrity of the spirits operating, is brushed aside with a smile of contempt, seeing that the messages breathe nothing but kindness and benevolence and that

harm cannot be expected to be worked by a deceased mother or sister or friend.

It is admitted, then, that while much ouija or planchette writing is automatic and natural, intercourse with spirits is and can nevertheless be established by these means. Difficult as this conclusion may appear to some minds, it is nevertheless certain that, in view of the abundant evidence, any other explanation would present greater and indeed insuperable difficulties. The further and all important question, therefore, which presents itself is: Is the claim justified and tenable that the spirits thus communicating are in reality the spirits of the dead? May we accept and credit the testimony which they give respecting themselves?

My reply to this question is that all the facts, so far ascertained, not only go to disprove this claim, but that there are in this belief and in these practices grave dangers, mental, moral and physical, for the experimenter.

In support of this statement I would urge upon the reader the following consideration:

Long-continued and carefully conducted experiments have shown that:

1. It has never been found possible to conclusively identify the particular spirit communicating.

The inexperienced experimenter will, of course, jump to the conclusion that a deceased mother or sister is present because the spirit making the claim is in possession of knowledge of an intimate character, can speak consistently and familiarly of the deceased mother's past earth-life, can mention little peculiar incidents or traits of character and of temperament not known outside the family circle. But all such display of intimate knowledge cannot be regarded as evidence of identity today. The very circumstance that such facts are recognized by the person to whom they are presented proves that they are contained in that person's memory and that they are therefore accessible to and at the service of a spirit invading the passive mind. And the same applies to handwriting, to peculiarities of expression, to anything and everything that the experimenter recognizes as characteristic of the person who claims to be present. Experiments have shown that even a hypnotized person can accurately imitate any handwriting with which he may have become acquainted during his life, even though he may be unable to accomplish this in a normal state. And, in automatic writing, the process is identical except that the operator is not the subconscious mind but a spirit. Instances are often recorded in which some deceased person, quite

unknown to the experimenter, announces his presence and for the purpose of identification, gives the name he bore in his supposed past earth-life, the mode and place of his death, and other similar and striking particulars. And it is often found that such a statement is correct even in detail. But this, too, is no evidence at all of identity, since we read in the newspapers of strangers dying in certain places and under certain conditions every day, and even though our interest be of the most superficial and passing character, the subconscious mind registers the fact. And the records of spiritism testify that it is an easy thing for these mysterious spirits to extract such information from the subconscious mind and thus to dramatize and impersonate such deceased personalities. There is abundant proof, too, to show that they can, under given conditions, extract information from *distant* minds, with whom the experimenter is in some kind of rapport, and from books and letters and other extant sources of information. But that these spirits are not the individuals they claim to be is evident from the fact that, in the manipulation of the information thus gathered, they are apt to make the most disastrous mistakes, fitting into the life-history of a wife what belongs to that of a mother, exhibiting ignorance of matters which the deceased person

would above all other things have cause to remember, and involving themselves, upon being questioned, in the most hopeless contradictions.

We have cases on record in which they have boastfully admitted their trickery when found out, and in which they have declared that they have by means of this "mind tapping" of foolish persons been able almost to work miracles.

Some years ago I had myself a striking experience of this kind, the spirit for many months claiming to be a deceased friend of mine and furnishing many remarkable proofs of his identity. Upon being discovered in a manifest contradiction and falsehood, however, and charged in the name of God to reveal the *true* source of his information, he declared that he had got it all out of our own silly "thought-boxes," it being possible for him to read the contents of the passive mind with the same ease with which we read a book or a newspaper.

It will be seen that, with such facts before us and with such possibilities on the part of the spirits, one could not under the most favorable circumstances be sure that the spirit communicating is what it claims to be. Many high authorities, confirming the accuracy of this statement, might be quoted. I will here, for brevity's sake, content myself with only one, the French astron-

omer, Professor Flammarion, who has been a painstaking student of the phenomena for many years. He writes[52]: "As to beings different from ourselves—what may their nature be? Of this we cannot have any idea: Souls of the dead? This is far from being demonstrated. The innumerable observations which I have collected, during more than forty years, all prove to me the contrary. No satisfactory identification has been made."

That the spirits of the ouija-board are not our departed relatives and friends, is, secondly, evident from that fact that

2. Their messages are for the most part frivolous and contradictory and intellectually worthless.

There is in the minds of all men a natural and instinctive awe of anything relating to the afterlife of the departed. Whatever our religious views may be, we know that their trial time is past, that, with the loss of the body, they have entered upon a state of life in which the little trivialities of the earth-life cannot count any longer, but in which they are inevitably reaping the fruit of their moral and spiritual achievements or neglects. In view of this fact one is amazed to find that these spirits, claiming to be our surviving

[52] Mysterious Psychic Forces. P. 436.

friends, either tell us nothing at all of any value respecting the after-life, or involve themselves, when they attempt to do so, in the most hopeless contraditions, one spirit denying what the other emphatically asserts. We find them concerning themselves chiefly with the most silly and foolish affairs of the present life, telling us that John is probably suffering from kidney trouble, that Mary has lost her old brooch and that aunt Emma's husband is not very kind to her, and similar childish twaddle in which the deceased was never known to indulge while in the body.

In many instances they presume to give advice on the conduct of the affairs of our public or family life, sometimes displaying an amount of accurate and intimate knowledge which is astonishing, and there are instances on record in which such advice has been found to be good and acceptable in the *initial* stages of the experiment. But, in the course of time, and when confidence and obedience have been secured, such counsel is apt to change its character, causing, if adopted, terrible disorder in the home and family life. In many instances it is given by hint and suggestion rather than by definite and explicit statement, the spirit thus cautiously providing for himself a way of escape from possible entanglements. I have the report of numerous cases in which the

directions drawn from the contemptible little board have separated husband from wife, a mother from her children, friends from friends, causing an endless amount of misery and suffering. It is, alas! in most instances only when it is too late, when the mischief is done, that the real mischief-maker is discovered and the truth is recognized. It is a most difficult and sometimes quite a hopeless task to reason with a mind which has passed under spirit-control and which, by reason of that control, has lost the power of judging fairly and squarely.

And it need hardly be pointed out that the messages bearing on matters of religion are equally worthless and unreliable. For the most part they are clothed in stately language, implying the presence of a superior and exalted mind, but their contents are either empty platitudes or adaptations to the thoughts and leanings which the spirit perceives to predominate in the mind on which it is operating. They are manifestly never true presentations of the real state of things as it is on the other side of life.

A spirit, striving to gain the confidence of his victim, will be Catholic with a Catholic, Unitarian with a Unitarian, even a Nihilist and Anarchist where such leanings are seen to prevail. It will defend and declare the reasonableness of any

absurd fad or belief that may be characteristic of the inquirer.

When trust and confidence have been secured the spirit will slowly begin to undermine any true Christian foundation that may exist, deny the divinity of Christ, the authority of conscience, the responsibility of human life, and the reality of a judgment to come. It will feed the mind on empty platitudes, very acceptable to the natural man, but ultimately contradictory of the very fundamental truths of the Christian Religion.

The very circumstance, known to all the world, that those who embrace Spiritism always cease to profess Historic Christianity, in any form, is in itself ample proof in support of this statement.

"The cultivation of these entities to religion," writes a thoughtful student of the subject,[53] "includes the practical abolition of the Ten Commandments, the introduction of revolting heresies into Christianity, and the propagation of heathenism and atheism. All that we know of disembodied intelligences is that they are intellectually contemptible and that their influence makes for the destruction of religion and morality."

But perhaps the most conclusive proof that

[53] Occultism in Psychical Research.

these spirits, communicating by automatic writing, are evil and not what they claim to be is, thirdly, to be found in

3. The effect, physical, moral and mental, which these practices are known to have upon the experimenter. It would be necessary for one to write a book were one to attempt to present the conclusive and abundant evidence which is available on this point. Striking testimony has been given in recent years by many scientific students of the subject of the saner sort, and this testimony is confirmed by the statements of numbers of disillusioned spiritists. I can here but briefly state the facts, but what I am stating is based upon the observations and personal experiences of many years and upon communications, often of a private and delicate character, which have reached me in the course of these years. Many of these reports are painful in the extreme.

The facts briefly stated are these:

Persons habitually and systematically using the ouija or planchette board, or similar automatic devices for obtaining spirit messages, experience, after a time, a peculiar condition of lassitude and exhaustion—in many instances accompanied by severe pain at the top of the spine and gradually spreading over the entire brain. This state of prostration is due to the now well-estab-

lished fact that, in order to obtain the movements of the board, vital or nerve-energy is withdrawn from the organism of the experimenter, often out of all proportion to the physical health and constitution.

In professional mediums who practice their power incessantly and for pecuniary gain, this prostration is apt to be so great that they become complete nervous wrecks after a time. It was the recognition of this fact which caused the well-known physicist, Sir Wm. Barrett, to write: "I have observed the steady downward course of all mediums who sit regularly." The inexperienced experimenter scarcely ever attributes this condition to the *true* cause, and it is difficult to convince him that a practice, seemingly so simple and harmless, could be attended by such direful effects. But if, in spite of these warnings, the experiments are continued, other symptoms appear which do not leave any doubt about the matter. The general health begins to fail, there manifests itself a kind of apathy and weariness of life, which quite unfits the person for the ordinary duties of life and deprives him of all interest in them, and which is only relieved by resort to the board. Communication with the "friends" of the unseen world now becomes the one exciting and all-absorbing interest and occupation to

which all other duties and interests are subordinated.

And in proportion as physical vigor, and therefore the power of resistance and of will, decline, and passivity and apathy increase, the spirit gains closer access to the mind, directs and influences its operations, and, in the course of time, gets complete control of it. When this control has been effected and the power of resistance has been quite broken down, the mind becomes more and more susceptible to suggestion and less and less able to exercise with regard to it discriminating and controlling power. The messages then come with great regularity and conciseness, immediately the experimenter touches the board; but their moral tone is seen to have undergone a very great change. From the normal and healthy mind's point of view they are distinctly immoral and mischievous in their aim and character. They may refer to a husband or wife whose loyalty is questioned, or they may throw suspicion upon the motives prompting the actions of friends or relatives, especially if they happen to object to these experiments. Or, in the case of young people, the message may hint that the established laws of morality are, after all, only conventional laws, framed by man, and that it is not necessary to be so strict—that certain instincts,

imparted to human nature, were imparted by God and may be lawfully obeyed, and that a time has come when men must not allow themselves to be enslaved by these old-time fetters any longer. The Christian law is ridiculed and Christian customs and practices are declared to be old-fashioned and out of date.

And these suggestions are made in the most subtle manner, in exalted language, appealing to the youthful imagination and to dangerous tendencies latent in all men, and when it is borne in mind that the invisible counsellor who makes these suggestions is believed to be a kindly father or mother, who could only desire the well-being of her child and that the experimenter's power of discrimination is lost, one can imagine how far this kind of mischief can be carried.

As the "psychic development" advances the entire mental and moral nature of the experimenter becomes disordered and he discovers to his cost that, while it was an easy thing for him to *open* the mental door by which the mind could be invaded, it is a difficult, if not an impossible thing, to *shut* that door and to expel the invader. For the impulse to communicate or to write now asserts itself imperatively and incessantly, at all hours of the day and in the midst of every kind of occupation and, in the end, even at night,

either suddenly awakening the victim or preventing him from securing any refreshing sleep. A pitiable condition of mental and moral collapse, often terminating in suicide or insanity, is frequently the ultimate result.

Some years ago I came in personal contact with a lady who had developed the power of automatic writing and who retired to bed every night with sheets of paper and a pencil by her bedside. The impulse to seize the pencil would assert itself suddenly and imperatively, and she could secure only an occasional hour of sleep by devoting many preceding hours to the writing. The lady was a physical and mental wreck.

Of the many cases of which I have record I especially remember that of a young man in an office in London who had fallen a helpless victim to these experiments. While making an entry in a ledger his hand would suddenly be jerked up and down and the pen would then write down wholly extraneous matter, often of a most offensive character. He found it impossible to hold his appointment.

The editor of one of our weekly publications quite recently sent me the names and addresses of three persons in one locality who had to be confined to the asylum in consequence of these practices, and respecting whom the attending

physician stated that "the use of the ouija-board had brought about a state of dementia."

But lest anyone should imagine that I am making my case too strong and that I am overstating the seriousness of the matter, I will quote what an American scientific student of the subject has to say about it. Dr. Hereward Carrington sums up his warnings against the practice of automatic writing in the following words:[54]

"I doubt not that hundreds of persons become insane every year by means of these experiments with the planchette board,[55] as the present subject would have done had she not stopped her experimenting in time. . . .

"The way the board swore on occasions was extraordinary, and on several occasions it called Mrs. C. and others names which they had never heard till they saw them spelled out on paper, and are of such a nature that I cannot give them here."

Or, as Dr. Carrington says in his introduction to the work of a foreign savant:

"Those who deny the reality of these facts, who treat the whole problem as a 'joke,' regard planchette as a toy, and deny the reality of powers and influences which work unseen, should ob-

[54] The Problems of Psychical Research.
[55] A Modification of Ouija.

serve the effects of some of the spiritistic manifestations. They would no longer, I imagine, scoff at these investigations and be tempted to call all mediums merely frauds, but would be inclined to admit that there is a true 'terror of the dark' and that there are 'principalities and powers' with which we, in our ignorance, toy, without knowing and realizing the frightful consequences which may result upon this tampering with the unseen world."

Some people, and amongst them scientific men of standing, are apt to defend these practices and to encourage them because, in their opinion, they furnish tangible evidence that our departed friends and relatives have survived the death of the body and that their individuality has suffered no change. They claim, to put it briefly, that the age-long problem perplexing mankind is solved by the ouija-board.

At first sight this contention seems reasonable and many cannot see how it is to be controverted. But fuller reflection must disclose the fallacy that underlies it. For centuries distracted human nature has stood by the open grave and, dissatisfied with the answers furnished by the Christion Religion and by the soul's emphatic testimony, has besought God with tears to give proof that the person departed is not really dead. Mil-

lions of distracted minds are asking for such proof today and, indeed, this is one of the causes which are so effectually promoting the revival of Spiritism at the present time.

But only very rarely, under exceptional and peculiar conditions, and *without any initiative on the human side,* has such proof been given.

Are we then seriously to credit the claim that, while God, in His wisdom, denies the evidence craved for in earnest prayer to the mass of mankind and to the very best of them, He furnishes that evidence through the ouija-board,to the most-frivolous inquirers, and by means unquestionably perilous to the mental and moral health of those through whom it is furnished?

Can anything more improbable be conceived? If this were really so would we not have to part with our instinctive feelings of reverence for God, and our sense of His holiness and justice, and would we not have to admit, in view of the facts which I have presented, that such a method of disclosing so significant a truth to us, is offensive to our reason and common-sense? It is surely only a science which has entered on crooked paths and which has lost all sense of the true proportion of things that can make such a claim and that can induce inexperienced persons to venture on these perilous quicksands.

Very justly remarks the American psychologist, Dr. Quackenbos:[56]

"It may well be asked, if communication with the dead be lawful and fraught with satisfaction, would God have concealed from us so innocent a means of gratifying the most intense longings of human nature? The answer of the Centuries is: No! The proof of immortality is not to be sought for in the vaporings of Spiritism."

In view, then, of the undeniable and now very widely admitted facts stated here in mere outline, one cannot warn the public too earnestly against these practices—seemingly so simple and harmless and yet attended, in so many instances, by such fatal consequences. They have about them a peculiar and almost irresistible fascination for a certain order of mind, and that fascination becomes intensified by the very elusiveness of the phenomena and the lack of definiteness and finality which characterizes the communications. The mind is kept in a chronic state of expectancy, incessantly craving for further disclosures. It is, therefore, the first step that counts, and parents and educators should see to it that that first step is never taken. Where the practice has been carelessly indulged in, it should be rigidly discontinued before any appreciable degree of development is

[56] Body and Spirit.

reached. For more reasons than one the board should not be tolerated in any Christian household or placed within the reach of the young. And we should also guard them against coming in contact with a form of modern literature calling itself scientific in which these practices are encouraged by men whose one aim is to obtain evidence of human survival, but who have no regard for the moral and physical well-being of those to whom they appeal. It should be pointed out that all truly scientific and informed men, such as Dr. Mercier in London, Dr. Viollet in France, and the late Dr. Lapponi in Italy, have branded these practices as dangerous to mental and moral health, and have seriously warned against all such tampering with the unseen world. They assure us, on the ground of personal experience, that the number of the victims of these cults is increasing day by day.

The practice itself is no discovery of modern science—nothing new in the world of phenomena, as some would have us believe; on the contrary, it is as old as man. In China the little board has been known for centuries and is admitted to be a means of spirit-intercourse. In one form or another these practices were indulged in by the pagan races and may indeed be considered to be characteristic of the pagan civilizations. They

were condemned and forbidden by the laws of Moses because they were known to undermine and destroy the true spiritual life of the people. They fell into disuse in proportion as the light of Christianity spread through the world. Their revival, in our time, is not a step forward but a step backward; it is a return to distinctly heathen and anti-Christian beliefs and practices and additional evidence of the fact that the world is once more relapsing into paganism.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

The manuscript of this work was completed and was in the hands of the publishers when Prof. W. J. Crawford's second book on the "Phenomena of Spiritism" appeared. I could not, therefore, consider it in its bearing upon the standpoint taken up in my work. But I regard the book as of high scientific value, presenting as it does the conclusions of a careful and painstaking investigator who has guarded against every possibility of error and deception and who has the courage of his opinions.

Prof. Crawford's book certainly demolishes once for all the notion still entertained by a few inaccurately informed students of the subject that some of the earlier scientific experimentators may have been tricked, or that the operation of some at present little-known mental faculty may explain the phenomena. In view of the evidence presented by Prof. Crawford, confirmed as it is by scientific testimony from many lands, it will be admitted that this view may now be regarded as obsolete and unscientific—as an evidence of ignorance rather than of superior intellectual insight.

All these conceivable explanation, it should be borne in mind, were weighed and carefully considered for years before the positive conclusion held today was arrived at. For those who are accurately and experimentally acquainted with modern psychical research there are today only two problems presenting themselves for solution and they may be formulated in the two following questions:

1. What is the source and character of the delicate substance or plasm displaying itself in the physical phenomena of spiritism? and

2. What is the nature and aim of the extraneous

intelligence or intelligences operating in the sense world by its means?

With almost everything Prof. Crawford has to say on the first point I am in agreement.

His conclusions on the second point I find it impossible to accept and the present book explains in detail why I cannot accept them.

I am as convinced today as I was more than twenty years ago that an *adequate* study of the *effects* of spiritistic practice, mental, moral and physical, as a whole and not as we observe them in some isolated instance, will establish the consistency and reasonableness of my position.

J. G. R.

INDEX

INDEX

A

PAGE

Apostolic testimony re Spirit-Creed..... 141
Aquinas, St. Thomas, on Demonism..... 37
Argument of book summarized..... 202
Armstrong, Prof., on spiritistic practices..... 171
Atonement of Jesus Christ and human nature..... 136
and Holy Scripture 129
Sir R. Reynolds on 131
and Saints and Martyrs 130
Augustine, Saint, on Eternal Punishment..... 146
Automatic Writing, Sir Wm. Barrett on..... 98
Doctor Carrington on perils of..... 201
Stainton Moses on effects of..... 67
perils of 56
cases showing perils of 61

B

Barrett, Sir. Wm., on perils of spiritistic practices..39, 55, 61
on probable nature of some spirits..... 200
Branco, Prof., on the descent of man..... 114
Brownson, Dr. O., on fall of man..... 124
on spirit-identity 105
Bruce, H. A., on the subconscious mind..... 87
Bumueller, Dr., on the descent of man..... 114

C

Carrington, Dr. H., on medium's loss of weight..... 68
on perils of automatic writing.....58, 201
on spirit-impersonation 83
Chesterton, G., on fall of man..... 119
on religious belief 10
Christian Thought and Experience, evidence of..... 111
Christianity, Rev. M. Maher on truth of..... 134
and Spiritism, not reconcilable 11
Claim, the, of Modern Science..... 3
of Science specified..... 19
Crookes, Prof., on effects of mediumship..... 69
Crozier, Dr. J. B., on spiritistic practices..... 169

D

Decree of Holy Office 203
De Maistre, on the heart of man..... 123

PAGE

Descent of man, Prof. Branco on 115
Dr. Bumueller on..... 114
Dr. Driesch on 116
Dr. J. Ranke on 115
Dr. R. Virchow on 116
Doyle, Sir Conan, false assertion of..... 138
on spirit-impersonation 85

E

Eternal Punishment, Saint Augustine on..... 146
W. E. Gladstone on 150, 157
and human reason 151
Dom A. Vonier on.....151, 153, 156
Evidence of Christian Thought and Experience..... 111
of Common Sense..... 165
of Fact and Experience..... 49
of History 31
of True Science..... 79

F

Fact and Experience, Evidence of 49
Fall of Man, Dr. O. Brownson on..... 124
G. Chesterton on 119
Prof. Wm. James on 123
Dom A. Vonier on 120
Flammarion, Prof., on spirit-identity..... 106
Funk, Dr., a case of spirit-impersonation..... 91

G

Gardner, Prof. P., on Necromancy..... 172
Gladstone, W. E., on Eternal Punishment.....150, 157
on Orthodoxy 136

H

Hatch, Dr. B. F., "Spiritualism unveiled"..... 182
"Hell and its Problems" 147
History, The Evidence of 31
Holy Office, Decree of 203
Holy Scripture, on the Atonement of Jesus Christ..... 129
teaching of, on Necromancy, &c..... 34
on the testing of Spirits 142
Hubbel, Mr., "Facts and Fancies in Spiritualism"..... 183

I

Immortality and Reason 174
Inference, the inevitable, from arguments presented..... 193

PAGE

J

Jacks, Dr. L. P., on spirit-identity 85
Jacolliot, M., on spiritism in India 34
James, Prof. Wm., on the fall of Man..... 123
on the limitations of spirits 89
Jesus Christ, M. Troubetzkoy on Person of..... 128
Justin, Saint, on spirit-manifestations..... 37

L

Lapponi, Dr., on contradictory teaching of spirits..... 43
Leaf, Mr., on spirit-impersonation 84
Lillie, Mr., on mediumship of Stainton Moses..... 63
Lodge, Sir Oliver, on supposed safeguards..... 55
on spirit-identity 82
Lombroso, Prof., on medium's loss of weight in materialization 69
London "Times," on spirit-revelations..... 177

M

Maeterlinck, Mr., on spirit-identity..... 97
on source of spirit-messages 98
on triviality of spirit-messages..... 178
Maher, Rev. M., on the truth of Christianity..... 134
Materialization, description of process 64
experiments of Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing..... 69
Carrington on loss of weight in..... 68
Lombroso on loss of weight in..... 69
Mediums, their status 184
Mediumship, disastrous effects of..... 57
not a natural gift 51
process contrary to nature 53
Prof. Crookes on effects of 69
Mind-passivity, an open door 5
Modern Science, claims of 3
Myers, F. W. H., on spirit-identity..... 98

N

Necromancy, Catholic Encyclopedia on..... 33
Prof. P. Gardner on 172
New International Encyclopedia on 32
"New Revelation," The, a great delusion..... 193
conditions for considering a..... 26

O

Orthodoxy, W. E. Gladstone on 136
Ouija-Board, truth about the..... 207

PAGE

P

Pasteur, Prof., on discernment of divine truth..... 161
Preface iii
Prince, Dr. Morton, on the subconscious mind..... 87

Q

Quackenbos, Dr. J. D.,
on unlawfulness of Spiritism 176

R

Ranke, Dr. J., on the descent of man..... 115
"Raymond," worthlessness of evidence respecting identity of 131
Reason and common sense, evidence of..... 165
Reynolds, Sir Russell, on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.. 131

S

Schrenck-Notzing, Dr. Von, on materialization phenomena.. 69
on effect of materialization on medium..... 72
Science, Evidence of True 79
Spirit-identity, Dr. O. Brownson on 105
Dr. Carrington on 83
Sir Conan Doyle on 85
Prof. Flammarion on 106
Dr. L. P. Jacks on 85
Mr. Leaf on 84
Sir Oliver Lodge on 82
Mr. Maeterlinck on 97
F. W. H. Myers on 98
Spirit-impersonation, a striking case of..... 89
Evidence of 82
Dr. Funk's case of 91
Spiritism and Holy Scripture 142
Spiritistic Phenomena, Dr. R. Wallace on reality of..... 112
Spiritistic Practices, Prof. Armstrong on..... 171
Dr. Carrington on perils of 200
Dr. J. B. Crozier on..... 169
Spirit-messages, comic element in..... 178
worthlessness of 94
Spirit-Photography, Traill Taylor on 93
worthlessness of evidence of..... 94
Stainton Moses, on effects of automatic writing..... 67
on lying Spirits 43
on mind-passivity 53
on Spiritism and Christianity 12
Subconscious Mind, the, H. A. Bruce on..... 87
Dr. Morton Prince on..... 87
Summary of argument of Book..... 202

Index

PAGE

T

Table of Contents ii
Traill Taylor on Spirit-photography 93
Troubetzkoy, on the Person of Jesus Christ..... 128
True Science, the evidence of 79
Truth, the, about the Ouija-Board 207

U

"Unseen World," by Rev. A. M. Lépicier, O.S.M..... 193

V

Venzano, Dr., on reality of spiritistic phenomena..... 50
Virchow, Dr. R., on the descent of man..... 116
Vonier, Dom. A., on Eternal Punishment.....152, 153, 156
on the fall of man 120

W

Wallace, Dr. A. Russel, on reality of spiritistic phenomena 112
Williams, J. H., on Christ's teaching re future life..... 149

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