

THE LAST FLOURISH OF THE GREAT DEBATE

Fielding Fielding-Ould, *Is Spiritualism of the Devil?* (Beverley: Wright & Hoggard, 1917).

E. A. G. and P. W. S. S., *True and False Spiritualism* (London: SPCK, 1918).

Frederick B. Meyer, *The Modern Craze of Spiritualism* (London : Morgan & Scott, 1919).

On the Side of the Angels. The Law v. Spiritualism. A Verbatim Report of the Police Court Proceedings. Ministry of National Service v. Ernest Walter Oaten (Huddersfield: Spiritualists' National Union, [1919]).

The pamphlets in this final section illustrate the ways in which different religious groups responded to the 'crisis of faith' engendered by the slaughter in the trenches and the appeal of the spiritualist message. There was, however, little new about the debates and arguments put forward at this time of great social upheaval.

The author of *Is Spiritualism of the Devil?*, the Rev. Fielding Fielding-Ould, was vicar of Christchurch, Albany Street, London. He was also a practising spiritualist, member of the London Spiritualist Alliance, a correspondent to *Light*, and clearly saw himself in the mould of fellow Anglican clergyman William Stainton Moses. Ould's tract was recommended by Arthur Conan Doyle, but inevitably also received stinging criticism from others. The novelist and author of popular Christian guides Jane T. Stoddart described Ould as 'a man who has been misled through ignorance'.¹ The title echoes other pamphlets, such as that by the Philadelphia clergyman G. Tabor Thompson, entitled *Is the Devil the Father of Spiritualism?* (1911). Thompson was a founding member of the National Spiritual Alliance, and so the answer to the question he posed, like Ould, was a resounding No. 'Slandering the angels,' declared Thompson, 'will continue until we as a cult are so organized that we can push the button at any city hall and our protests be respected'.²

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) produced several pamphlets on spiritualism during the Great War, responding to what the anon-

ymous authors of *True and False Spiritualism* described as ‘The failure of the Church to teach with sufficient emphasis concerning the departed’ (below, p. 108). Other relevant SPCK tracts included the Rev. Canon Edmund McClure’s *Spiritualism: An Historical and Critical Sketch* (1916) and the Rev. George Robert Oakley’s *What is Spiritualism?* (1917). They represent a range of positions from careful criticism to tentative engagement with the influence of spiritualism, reflecting more generally the clerical response discussed in the introduction to this volume.

Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847–1929) was a well-connected Baptist minister who also served a London flock.³ *The Modern Craze of Spiritualism* (1919) was one of over seventy books and booklets he authored, and it has been estimated that by the time of his death over five million copies of his various works were in circulation. At the time of writing *The Modern Craze of Spiritualism*, Meyer was minister at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth, where he had a large working-class congregation. He was responsible for the closure of hundreds of brothels in south London as part of his contribution to the ‘social purity’ movement in the area. Meyer’s opinion that spiritualism was an ‘outbreak of Demonism’ was a further expression of the claims of satanic influence that were made by the likes of the Rev. Edward Gillson and the Rev. Nathaniel Stedman Godfrey during the early 1850s. The latter were Anglicans, but Nonconformist clergy had written similar attacks in the past as well. In 1871, for example, the Liverpool Congregationalist minister John Jones penned *Spiritualism the Work of Demons*.

On the Side of the Angels. The Law v. Spiritualism is fundamentally concerned with the spiritualist movement’s campaign to be officially recognized as a religion, just as Seventh Day Adventists were, for example. The crux of the legal case was that, as a tireless lecturer and evangelist for the spiritualist movement, Ernest Walter Oaten (1875–1952) had as much right to be exempt from military service as other ministers of religious denominations under the Military Service Act of 1916. At the time of the trial Oaten, a committed socialist and former Sheffield District Councillor, was President of the Spiritualists’ National Union (1915–20).⁴ As well as campaigning for official recognition as a religion, Oaten’s first term as President was also preoccupied with lobbying for the amendment of the Witchcraft Act (1736) and section four of the Vagrancy Act (1824), under which mediums were usually prosecuted. Oaten worked closely with Conan Doyle until the latter’s death, and in April 1934 he represented British spiritualism in the first BBC broadcast on the spiritualist faith.

Notes

1. J. T. Stoddart, *The Case against Spiritualism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), p. 99.

2. G. T. Thompson, *Is the Devil the Father of Spiritualism?* (Philadelphia, PA, 1911), p. 5; author's collection. The founding charter of the National Spiritual Alliance is reproduced at <http://www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org/>.
3. 'Frederick Brotherton Meyer', *ODNB*; W. Y. Fullerton, *F. B. Meyer: A Biography* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1929).
4. G. O'Hara, *Dead Men's Embers* (York: Saturday Night Press Publications, 2006), pp. 201–2; 'What I Believe – Ernest Walter Oaten', *Psypioneer*, 2:3 (2006), pp. 59–68; 'Ernest Walter Oaten – The Personal Side', *Psypioneer*, 5:6 (2009), pp. 190–6.

Copyright

Copyright

Fielding Fielding-Ould, *Is Spiritualism of the Devil?* (Beverley: Wright & Hoggard, 1917).

‘IS SPIRITUALISM

OF

THE DEVIL?’

BY

REV. F. FIELDING-OULD, M.A.,

Vicar of Christ Church, Albany Street, N.W.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

PRICE 2d. POST FREE, 2 1/2d.

Beverley –

WRIGHT & HOGGARD, PRINTERS, MINSTER PRESS. /

INTRODUCTION.

June, 1917.

DEAR MR. FIELDING-OULD.

I read your excellent lecture at the time that it was delivered, and now that you are preparing it for the press, am very glad of the opportunity of expressing some views upon the subject.

Anyone who has this great matter at heart, and who believes, as I do, that this modern spiritual revelation is one of the greatest events in the history of the world, must particularly rejoice when it is advocated by a clergyman. I am sure that with existing prejudices it takes courage to do so, but I cannot conceive any more fruitful work for one who desires the advancement of the real spirit of religion. This new message from the unseen and the eternal contains much which without destroying our old creeds must at least modify and clarify them, and no one can do this work better than those who search for the necessary formulæ with a reverence for the old as well as with a mind which is open to the new. People, especially earnest and educated people, have for long been drifting away from orthodoxy because, as presented to them, it offended their whole sense of justice and of morality. It had become a perfect night-mare of unreason. But now there come these voices from the beyond explaining away some of the grosser misunderstandings, and shearing through forms and ceremonies right down to the essential spiritual roots of the matter which have been so covered over that their meaning and even their existence have been forgotten. We understand that these spirits of the beyond can no more define the Deity than a man standing one rung up a ladder can explain the sun to a man who stands upon the ground. But one rung up the ladder gives a broader view, and when we have learned all that can be seen from there, it is possible that yet another rung may be attained. We have enough in the new revelation to carry us on for some centuries before we exhaust it, and it will mark the strongest upward heave since the days of the greatest spirit who has ever descended to earth.

Some people seem to think that the clergy have set their faces against this movement, but I am sure that this is not / so. There is at least a strong minority who understand its true import, and there are no better books than those which

the Revs. Arthur Chambers,¹ Tweedale,² and others have written upon it. I can well remember that when, after thirty years of experience. I first began to express my own conclusions in public, the first and warmest letter of approval which I received was from the late Archdeacon Wilberforce,³ who had experienced in his own life the consolations of this creed.

It is this religious side which attracts me. It is human and practical, and must weave itself deeply into our daily lives. As to the evidential and phenomenal side upon which the validity of the messages rests it has been so thoroughly proved that it seems to be a mere waste of time to continue this line of work. No amount of negative results, or of fraudulent mediums (surely the meanest and wickedest form of fraud in the world) can ever affect the positive results obtained by such a cloud of witnesses. If the definite testimony of Crookes,⁴ Wallace,⁵ Lodge,⁶ Barrett,⁷ Myers,⁸ William James,⁹ Charles Richet,¹⁰ Lombroso,¹¹ Gurney,¹² Hodgson,¹³ Stead,¹⁴ and so many more, will not carry conviction, what additional evidence is likely to do so? Are greater names needed, or more of them, or what? Psychical Research has, in my opinion, done its work, and the time has come to garner the harvest which for so many years it has been most patiently sowing. That harvest is essentially a religious one, reconciling reason and religion, which have been divorced so long, and yet are so essential to each other. It is books like yours, meeting the objections and fears of timid souls which help forward the good work. As to the diabolic suggestion the answer still holds good which the robust common sense of Christ supplied when He was accused of casting out devils by the power of the devil. Let a man read Stead's 'After Death,'¹⁵ followed by Stainton Moses' 'Spirit Teachings,'¹⁶ and ask himself how any agency but a noble and good one could put forward such views. Let me conclude by a single passage from the posthumous message of Julia Ames:¹⁷ 'All that I wrote about the joy and the glory of the love of God was too weak, too poor, to give you any idea of how Life becomes transfigured when the atmosphere of life is love.' If such messages are from the devil, then his house is indeed divided against itself.

Wishing you every success in spreading the doctrine of hope, happiness, and reason.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE. /

IS SPIRITUALISM OF THE DEVIL?

By The Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, M.A.

An Address delivered to the Members, Associates and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday evening, March 22nd, 1917, at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, Mr. H. Withall, acting President, in the chair.

In his opening sentences Mr. Fielding-Ould stated that he had endeavoured to approach the subject without bias and with complete sincerity. It was a very serious question, and all the more serious because neither side was willing to admit that it was a question at all, but was perfectly convinced that it had the monopoly of truth. He would first explain that he used the word 'Devil' as a convenient one for undeveloped or malicious spirits with evil intent. The speaker proceeded:—

It is necessary that an ambassador of a foreign Court should present his credentials and make good his claim to be speaking in the name of his master. In Spiritualism we hear a great number of heralds and messengers; they exhort, rebuke and instruct, and we cannot wholly rely upon their pronouncements until we know something of the motive, something of the source, the power and authority which sends them forth. Are they irresponsible persons speaking of their own initiative like enthusiasts in Hyde Park, or are they authorised delegates of some Great Power which lies behind? And if the latter be the case, of what nature and quality is that power and what is its object in intervening in the affairs of our world?

I am, I know, speaking for the most part to professed Spiritualists who are in no doubt as to this matter, but who by one means or another have satisfied themselves that the communications are from a high and noble source, and are given with unselfish and altruistic motives. But I am not, I assure you, flogging a dead horse, for there are millions of people who know something of these matters and are of a vastly different opinion. In fact, I am like the Irish preacher who said, 'I will now address a few words to those who are not here!'

If Spiritualism is a great and noble thing, as many believe it to be, it is a deplorable fact that many believers bring it into daily contempt and condemnation, and the Spiritualist who sees in it the hand of God may well cry, 'Save me from my friends; deliver me from those 'who went out from us but are not of us'!' But as Cardinal Newman¹⁸ said, 'Let us recollect the great principle of our Church that the abuse of a thing does not supersede the use of it.'

The Bishop of Oxford,¹⁹ in his recent book, 'The Religion of the Church,'²⁰ makes the following comment on Spiritualism:—

I cannot help often feeling that if the experiences which Spiritualists report are true experiences, it is more likely that they are the victims of clever demons than in real communication with the spirits of just men being made perfect.' (Page 85.)

This opinion carries weight, for the Bishop is a man of God, an exceedingly able and learned scholar, and one who, being a personal friend of Sir Oliver Lodge, is by no means ignorant of the subject.

I think there are very many people who, without having come to any final conclusion, are uncomfortable about Spiritualism. It seems uncanny, sordid, secret and furtive, a kind of backstairs religion, unauthorised and much blown-upon. They seize with enthusiasm upon any well-known name which may be connected with the movement and cannot conceal their chagrin and bitterness that there are at present so few such upon whom they can lean for support. 'Have any of the rulers believed?'

The Church of Rome, with unwise precipitancy, has through the Holy Office condemned the whole thing (decrees in 1840, 1856, 1898). Relying upon her own traditions and the teaching of the ancient fathers, instead of keeping her eyes and ears open for new aspects of Truth, she says the thing is of the Devil. It is in the nature of things impossible, says Rome, that souls departed should manifest their presence to the living. Father Lépiciér,²¹ Professor of Divinity in the College of the Propaganda, and whose book bears the usual imprimatur, says: 'The souls of the departed, of whatever character these may be, cannot visit this earth, and even if they could do so, their ability to control the elements of matter would make it impossible for them to appear to us.' 'They are,' he says, 'fallen angels personating the souls of the dead.' /

The suggestion is that Spiritualism *is an organised attempt of the powers of evil to undermine and destroy the Christian faith.* With extreme subtlety, it is said, the demons obtain a hearing and gain our confidence by imparting interesting information and the pretence of moral fervour, waiting their time and opportunity to introduce a stupendous lie and so to wreck God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

'And oftentimes to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence ...' – MACBETH.

Now, this is a perfectly legitimate position to take up and one which has some show of probability, all things considered. It must not be met with impatience and indignation, but by an honest consideration of the facts, that we may ascertain whether or no this is the true explanation of the phenomena. I do not see how anyone can rest until he has faced the question and satisfied himself upon

this point. To be the victims and dupes of a band of devils, and even be used by them in their malicious propaganda would indeed be a fate the very thought of which makes one's hair stand on end.

We are, be it remembered, easily enough deceived by a plausible address in our fellow men, and when we are dealing with beings possibly far beyond us in point of experience and intelligence, led on, as we may be, by credulous curiosity, we may very easily fall victims to deception. We may think we can judge of the truth when we hear it, but there is no conceivable nonsense which has not at one time or another been believed by some section of mankind, and the greatest souls have fallen into error. The noble and wise Marcus Aurelius²² believed his wife, Faustina, had been bewitched by a gladiator, and, having killed the man, made Faustina take a bath in his smoking blood.

In religion

What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text.
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
– 'MERCHANT OF VENICE.'

Let us, then, ask, in the first place, what account do the communicating intelligences give of themselves? What is their theory of the origin and objects of the movement? /

They invariably profess to be in complete agreement with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, and proclaim His gospel the highest revelation ever given to man.

'All my researches in Spiritualism,' said William Stead, 'strengthen my faith in the essential doctrines of Christianity' ('Stead, the Man,'²³ page 228); but they (the spirits) allege that much of the doctrine which now goes by the name of Christianity is a misreading of the original teaching, or a merely human and erroneous addition to it. They claim that they are sent ultimately by Christ Himself to brush away the dust which in the course of two thousand years has gathered upon His gospel.

This was eloquently expressed by the spirit known as 'Imperator' through Stainton Moses. 'The time,' he said, 'is far nearer than you think when the old faith, which has worn so long and which man has patched so clumsily, will be replaced by a higher and nobler one – one not antagonistic but supplementary – and the pure Gospel which Jesus preached shall find its counterpart again on an advanced plane of knowledge ... Even as He, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of men, rescued Divine truth from Jewish ignorance and superstition, so do we rescue Divine verities from the crushing weight of man's theology.' Raupert,²⁴ who quotes the passage, adds this interesting note: 'The spirits insist that this mission of illumination is *to advanced and enlightened souls only*, persons who

are chafing under, or who have outgrown, the bondage of creeds, and who are thoroughly prepared to receive a higher and purer truth. They (the spirits) point out that the forcing of such truth on unprepared minds not only causes violence to be done to Truth itself, but harm, great and far reaching, to those not really capable of assimilating it. "There are many," they say, "to whom the Gospel given of old is satisfying yet, and who are not receptive of further truth. With these we do not meddle."²⁵

I do not say that this is always happily worded, but the meaning is plain enough and, as I read it, satisfactory. To take an example of its reasonableness – the particular theory of Redemption and of the atoning blood of Christ which was held in the Church of England in Stainton Moses' day is now almost entirely discarded. *How* exactly the death of Christ affects man's relation to God remains much of a mystery. 'The / Church has no one definite or completely satisfactory answer to give to the question,' says Dr. Swete,²⁶ the Cambridge professor of Divinity ('Forgiveness of Sins,' p. 158), though Irenæus, Origen, Hilary, Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas and others have each advanced a theory. But we hear no more of the commercial transaction put forward when Stainton Moses took Orders. The spirits admit that Christ died to save us, but maintain that our theories of the manner in which the sacrifice becomes operative and effective are erroneous. This may very well be, and as man acquires more moral and intellectual capacity he must be ready from time to time to re-state the old fundamental truths in terms which his remote ancestors or even his own father would have rejected. 'The Church in each age,' says Bishop Gore, 'should be free to return upon its central creed, structure and worship, and without loss of continuity re-express its theological mind, as it has so often already done, in view of the fresh developments of the intellectual, moral and social life of man.' ('Dissertations,' p. 213.)

We cannot but concede that 'Imperator's' statement of the spirits' aim and motive is a reasonable one. The teaching of Christ *has* been misinterpreted; man *has* for centuries been adding to it his own conceits and drawing logical conclusions in a domain which is beyond logic. 'An enemy hath sown tares among the wheat.'

'More and more,' said Lewis Carroll,²⁷ 'as I read of the Christian religion as Christ preached it, I stand amazed at the forms man has given it, and the fictitious barriers they have built up between themselves and their brethren' ('This Life and the Next,' p. 259).²⁸

To take an example, the Cult in the Roman Communion of the Virgin Mother. You will remember how careful our Lord was to leave no grounds for such a development, how He drew a line between His human relationship and His 'Father's business.' 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' He asks at Cana, as who should say, 'Why do you seek to interfere or to control my movements in

a matter which is beyond your province and has nothing to do with our relationship?' And again, 'Who is my mother and who are my brethren? ... Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother' (Mark iii. 35; *cf.* also Luke xi. 27, 28). And / yet the Roman Church, whatever the better instructed hierarchy may profess, has, in effect, made a Goddess of the Virgin, and in some countries more prayers are said to her than to God. 'The Kingdom of Justice God has reserved to Himself,' said John Gerson,²⁹ 'and the Kingdom of Mercy He has in a certain manner given to Mary, ordaining that all the mercies which He dispenses to men should pass through her hands and be dispensed as she pleases.' (See Gore's 'Bampton Lectures,'³⁰ p. 234). Could a better example be found of the impertinent working of man's presumptuous imagination? Did man ever receive a good thing without at once setting to work to spoil it – weaving round it his own inventions until it became doubtful what was his work and what the original? The scribe must add an explanatory gloss which, sooner or later, becomes incorporated in the text. Because something is revealed as true, something else is felt to be a fitting consequence, and therefore this also must be true: so the matter grows. The thing is well seen in the lives of the saints, where so often the original and sufficiently marvellous story is lost in a tangle of subsequent additions.

Much has been believed as the doctrine of Christ which we have no difficulty in labelling as spurious. Augustine taught that unbaptised babies must be finally lost, and (to go to the other end of the scale) George Whitfield³¹ said, 'I hold that a certain number are elected for eternity, and that they must and shall be saved, and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned.' I say that the fact that Christ has been so grievously misinterpreted in the past lends some probability to the contention of the spirits that He is misinterpreted now.

The war has brought things to a head, and never before were there heard such bold and outspoken criticisms; never was there such widespread dissatisfaction with much of the teaching and general procedure and method of the Church as there is to-day. People are educated in these days and can think for themselves; they will not be soothed or put aside with the old forms of speech and pious opinion – besides, as never before they are *in earnest*: their husbands and sons are being killed every day, and they demand some instruction and teaching which is alive and reasonable.

There has been too much mumbling and word-making, too much fighting and wrangling over trifles, too much patronising / and pooh-poohing of enquirers, as though they were children and wanted to know more than was good for them. It is not an attack on real religion or upon God and His Son, nor even upon the office of the clergy; it is an attack upon unreality, wearyful man-made tradition, and general humbug and insincerity. (Applause.)

Can any deny that the teaching of the spirits is on *some subjects* both *nobler and more reasonable* than that which is accepted among immense numbers of Christians?

There are many people still who tremble at the thought of eternal burning in lakes of fire. A notorious tract by a Roman priest, the Rev. J. Furniss,³² now fortunately out of print, and entitled 'A Sight of Hell,'³³ was until lately put into the hands of Irish children. I quote from it, 'See in the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl; she looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare. Listen! She speaks. "I have been standing on this red-hot floor for years; look at my burned and bleeding feet." ... The fifth dungeon is the red-hot oven, the little child in the red-hot oven.' (Quoted in Lecky's 'European Morals,'³⁴ p. 223.) And so on. This dreadful publication is not a unique and isolated example of a horrible imagination. Dante's 'Vision of the Inferno' and a thousand lesser books of dreary cruelty have been circulated since the 'Apocalypse of Peter' about (A.D. 150), which was the mother of them all.

Now the spirits are far from denying the existence of hell – and let Lord Halifax take note of the fact. Indeed, the paragraphs relating to it in the well-known book 'The Life Elysian' are appalling, but for the most part the doctrine of the spirits commends itself to our ideas of equity and righteousness.

Perhaps the most revolting aspect of the belief of many Christians in time past was that which made the joy of the saints in heaven to be enhanced by the sight of the tortures of the eternally lost. 'The elect will go forth,' said St. Gregory, 'not indeed locally but by intelligence and by a clear vision to behold the torture of the impious, and as they see them they will not grieve. Their minds will be sated with joy as they gaze on the unspeakable anguish of the impious – the just man will rejoice when he seeth the vengeance' (quoted in 'European Morals,' p. 227). The Troubadours, we are told, gave some relief to the terrified people in the Middle Ages by going about making fun of the bogey stories of the monks. But much the same kind of thing is taught in many quarters even to-day.

But compare such horrors with the teaching of Spiritualism. Only a short time ago I myself heard a spirit say that the rapture of the most elevated intelligences is tinged with sadness at the temporary misery of souls suffering expiation for their sins. There are many hells, they tell us, and from all accounts the metaphorical fire of the New Testament is no bad symbol of the mental anguish suffered there, but they assure us that it is *never eternal* and that every pang is for the cure and purification of the soul; that at the first movement towards a better mind help and hope are given, though the sorrow may still continue for long. 'If there were a fiery hell,' I heard a spirit say, 'it would long ago have been quenched by the tears of the angels.'

There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave.
To tell us this. – HAMLET.

Churchmen need not have waited for such an assurance so long, for we read in Scripture that Christ after His death 'went and preached to the spirits in prison who before time were disobedient,' and as Dean Farrar pointed out, why should He have preached to those whose fate was sealed, and who were incapable of amendment and salvation?

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham wrote to William Stead: 'The intelligence which uses your hand, and of which you are not conscious, is no other than the Devil' ('Stead, the Man,' p. 62). 'Am I a demon?' asks Julia; 'am I doing what is contrary to the will of God when I constantly try to inspire you with more faith in Him and all His creation, and, in short, try to bring you nearer and closer to God?' ('After Death,' p. 21).

We must be very ignorant of history if we are surprised at the hostility with which the new teaching is received in many quarters. Prophets and reformers have never been popular. The Pharisees (the narrowly orthodox) are in their old place, and the Sadducees (the sceptical worldly) again up in arms. Well, so much the better! Let the thing be *tried and tested to the uttermost*: if it is good and true it will survive the storm. / If there are some who prefer to go on believing that at the crack of doom they will reassume their fleshly bodies (though 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom'), let them do so; if they think it consistent with Divine love that some souls shall endure agonies of fire for ever and ever, let them think so. If they hope to enter into ineffable joy because they held a certain set of intellectual opinions, let them believe it – the spirits say these things *are not so*, and it is open to man to accept or reject the message as he sees fit.

We must remember the age-long tendency to put down everything which is strange and marvellous to the Devil. A storm is his work, disease his doing, a comet his messenger, half the mountains and gorges in Europe bear his evil name. If a sparrow interrupts St. Dominic at his prayers by its twittering it is sure to be a disguised devil. If the little jackals visit the cave of St. Paphnutius³⁵ they are fiends with some design upon the good man's soul.

What would the Middle Ages have thought of the telephone, of the motor car going uphill without a horse, or of the radiograph of a living man's skeleton? Devil's works, every one of them! In judging Spiritualism this well-marked tendency must be discounted. Devil? Very possibly so, but a case of 'Wolf! Wolf!' certainly. We have heard the accusation so often of what have subsequently proved to be perfectly legitimate scientific achievements that we may well pause before accepting that ancient and ready explanation.

It is the readiness to attribute everything strange to the Devil which accounts for the accursed witch-hunting of the past, when to have a blue mole on the body which would not bleed when pricked was a sure sign of the Devil's servant. Innocent VIII.³⁶ issued a Bull against witchcraft in 1488 and the result in human misery was appalling. For a long time five hundred people a year were burned in

Germany alone. At Würzburg in 1627 many little children of both sexes were among the victims. Between 1550 and 1590 – forty years – seventeen thousand, it is said (though I think there must be a mistake) were put to death in our own Scotland (Mackay's 'Popular Delusions').³⁷

A curious belief was prevalent that witches were incapable of shedding tears (Brevior: 'The Two Worlds,'³⁸ p. 104). This / fact, one might think, would have saved some lives, but apparently there was a way round the difficulty.

Very often there was no real excuse for a prosecution at all, but there are cases recorded which go to show (and this is a point I want you to notice) that the witch was simply *what we call a medium*. In Scotland, Christian Shaw³⁹ incurred suspicion because she was levitated (and that against her own will), Elizabeth Dunlop⁴⁰ because she cured sick folk, and Richard Dugdale,⁴¹ a boy of nineteen, for speaking Greek and Latin which he had never learned.

The *tragic thing* was that the victims, quite ignorant of psychic matters, often themselves believed that they were in the grip of the Evil One; and when torture was applied they readily poured forth the contents of their own imagination in the form of Sabbaths, broomsticks, devil-goats and so forth, which confirmed the judges in the whole stock-in-trade of traditional witchcraft.

The last witch burned in Scotland was a poor old woman in the winter of 1722, and it is recorded that she sat composedly and warmed herself at the fire which should presently reduce her to ashes.

Can you hear young women screaming at the stake? Can you see little children terrified out of their senses? It is the ignorant making good their conviction that Spiritualism is of the Devil – and it somehow makes us reluctant to take that view, for to us, who come later, there is more evidence of the Devil on the Bench than in the dock. (Applause.)

We are asked sometimes, if this thing is of God, why has it so recently come to light? Did not our ancestors need it too? Well, I suppose the time was not ripe, a certain degree of scientific development and enlightenment was a necessary preliminary; but in spite of that, no doubt the message *would* have come before if man had not been so zealous in burning the mediums whenever he could lay hands upon them. So our forefathers threw away a hundred natural products as mere refuse, until some wiser men arose to teach us how we might use them for human profit and advantage.

'The new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith. Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.'

Then we come to the serious question. *What does the Bible teach on the subject, and how is it to be understood? /*

I suppose that whatever our views may be on religious matters, we should all listen to the venerable Scriptures with a certain deference and respect.

It has been the custom to put the Bible into the hands of babes and naively to assume that anybody who can read has all revealed truth spread out before him 'as plain as print.' The fact is that to interpret the Bible aright an immense learning is required. Modes of speech and ways of thought have changed, symbolism and fact are strangely intermingled; the ancient text, copied and recopied for centuries by hand, is often uncertain. Some acquaintance with the history and customs of half-a-dozen nations is necessary, some knowledge of the science of comparative religions; the commentaries and deductions of the principal experts through some eighteen centuries must be read, and we must have other qualifications in addition, or we are always liable to misinterpret the real significance of any given text, and may found an entirely wrong course of action on some apparently conclusive passage of Holy Scripture.

Nevertheless, we may admit at once that the Old Testament forbids Spiritualism (in the usual sense of the word) in the most unequivocal and categorical manner.

'There shall not be found with thee anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter. or sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer, for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto the Lord' (Dent. xviii. 10). 'A man or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death' (Lev. xx. 27).

Now for many devout people this ends all discussion of the matter, the will of God is revealed about it, and there is nothing more to be said.

But we have learned (and that only in the last few years) that an isolated text, without due consideration of the context and the conditions prevailing when it was spoken, may be most misleading. And note the dilemma of the adherents of unquestioning and literal obedience. If we are to obey the Old Testament, every medium in London must forthwith be stoned to death – that is the end prescribed – and that whether they can help their peculiar constitution or not. /

But, as St. Paul says, we are not under the Law. He was a Jew, and yet rejected its claims. The code of Moses was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, and the schoolmaster's function is over when the child grows up.

The Church deliberately threw off the old obligation of circumcision, and very much of the old system soon followed it. We are not conscious of any breach of the laws of God when we eat pork or jugged hare, yet to the Jew three thousand years ago, and I suppose to-day, it was sin. We are beginning to understand that the prohibitions and regulations were not for all time, nor even then binding on all mankind, but that they were *economic, local and transitory*. They were in the first instance addressed to the Jews, and in many cases had no further application. They were formulated with a definite educative end in view, and at a time when the conditions demanded such safeguards.

Spiritualism was much practised among the heathen nations surrounding the Hebrews and seems to have been the root and occasion of a false theology, of Pantheism, the deification of dead heroes, ancestor-worship and of many vile and cruel rites (II. Kings xxi. 6). And we can readily understand how important it was that the Hebrews, who were under special training for the high function and destiny which lay before them, should not become contaminated with such evils. The aim generally speaking, of the necromancer seems to have been to gain his ends by supernatural powers *apart from righteousness*: the occult and religion, power and morals, were divorced, and it is to be noted that whenever in the Bible the two came into conflict (as in the case of Jannes and Jambres,⁴² Elymas⁴³ or Simon Magus) the servants of religion were invariably victorious.

Spiritualism was forbidden to the Jews just as we forbid to children things which may be right enough for their elders, but which would be most injurious to them (see Deut. xviii. 14. R.V.). Wine and cigars are not in themselves evil, but they would be 'abomination' to a child.

It seems clear, if this reasoning is sound, that it was not the occult science which were 'abomination to the Lord,' but first, the evil things often connected with them, and secondly, the promiscuous use of the occult, its substitution for the authorised and covenanted means of approaching the unseen. / Saul was breaking the law in consulting the witch at Endor, but not in asking Samuel to find his father's asses by equally occult process.

'When they shall say unto you,' says Isaiah, 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards that chirp and mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?' (Isaiah viii. 19, R.V.).

But note this: the 'seeking unto God' of Isaiah meant, in Saul's day, recourse to the official medium, the authorised dealer with the unseen, as we read in I. Samuel ix. 9; 'When a man went to inquire of God, he said, Come and let us go to the seer.'

It is clear that the promiscuous dealing with mediums was not to take the place of the *regular means of enlightenment* provided by the Jewish religion. The Jews were not advanced enough to be able to distinguish Truth from Error, and so the whole thing was forbidden them. One 'sensitive' might be as developed as another, but the 'controls' would not be equally trustworthy, and the only safe course was to confine oneself to dealing with the official seer or prophet of the day.

I think we may find a hint for our own times in all this. *We are not to make of Spiritualism a new religion*, a dignity which the higher spirits do not claim for it. The function of Spiritualism is to throw light on certain aspects of Christianity, and is not meant to be a substitute for it or a rival faith.

One of my first experiences at a materialisation séance was to see my father, who had died many years before, come to me and say, 'My dear boy, I am glad that you have found out this wonderful thing, but don't let it draw you away from the true religion.'

It is said that Julian the Apostate was seduced from Christianity by the Spiritualism of one Maximus,⁴⁴ a magician who could make a marble statue seem to laugh.

We are to beware of error and not to swallow every doctrine greedily which comes through a medium. 'Believe not every spirit,' says the apostle, 'but try the spirits, whether they be of God.'

With regard to the New Testament we may notice the significant fact that there is *no direct prohibition* of occult practices such as are found so often in the Old Testament ... The omission in the New Testament is the more remarkable as the / literature of the Rabbis shows that the Jews of the first century were firm believers and no doubt practicers of many forms of magic. Josephus was the first writer to hold that they were malignant *human* spirits which were expelled by exorcists; popular belief pictured *devils* of another order of being. They were believed to frequent ruined buildings, gardens, vineyards and all foul and dirty places. Hence the supposed danger of walking there after nightfall, unless there were three people together, which insured safety. Devils were thought to be the cause of various *diseases*, such as asthma and croup, but they might be expelled by magic formulæ. This no doubt explains the belief of the Scribes that the cures performed by Jesus were wrought by the invocation of superior diabolic agents. (Eversheim's 'Messiah',⁴⁵ Appendix 759 f.f.)

The Teraphim,⁴⁶ once or twice mentioned in the Old Testament, most authorities think were not merely household divinities, but were used for Spiritualistic practices. The carved image was sometimes surmounted by a mummied human head which was made to give forth a voice and utter oracular counsels.

Ephesus, of which we read so much in the 'Acts,' was crowded with necromancers and sorcerers, many of whom on hearing St. Paul's message brought their valuable books and burned them before him. The books, no doubt, contained magic formulæ and the mystic words engraved upon the crown, girdle and feet of the famous statue of Artemis. This burning of the books is often pointed to as a proof that the practice of Spiritualism is inconsistent with a belief in Christianity. It is to be remembered, however, that the worship involved the most hideous abominations and unclean iniquity performed in the name of religion. There was, no doubt, much in the magic books and in the practice of the mediums that all modern Spiritualists would hold in abhorrence, much that was quite inconsistent with the pure religion which the people heard St. Paul preach. It is not remarkable that in accepting the new faith the magicians should renounce the

occult practices altogether which they now saw had been the occasion of defilement and profound error.

It has been argued that Spiritualism is implicitly forbidden in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, where Abraham declines to send Lazarus back to earth to warn the brethren of Dives. / Abraham does not, however, refuse the request because spirit intercourse is unlawful, but, as we are clearly told, because he considers the expedient would be useless.

Our Great Example Himself had familiar intercourse with the 'dead' on the Mount of the Transfiguration, which proves that the thing is both possible and legitimate.

There is evidence that Modern Spiritualism is an organised attempt on the other side to produce certain results on earth. There seems to be a great number of spirits engaged in the work – spirits of various grades and different degrees of enlightenment. I believe myself that there is a body of *enlightened spirits* working through these strange methods by God's will and for our highest good.

But if this is so, it does not prevent mischievous and malignant spirits – devils, in fact – from intervening as opportunity serves and doing their best to discredit and nullify the good work. And we cannot forget these methods have a rather sinister history and are familiar ground for evil spirits. A public telephone may be used by a burglar as well as by a bishop, and the difficulty is for the man at the receiver to determine which is speaking. 'Freedom to return to earth,' says a spirit, 'is open to all alike, and the minds of men are far more in sympathy with those who are undeveloped (*i.e.*, in the earth condition) than those who are above them. This constitutes the danger I want you clearly to recognise. The (discarnate) souls who feel the first attraction to return and are more generally welcomed, are those who *know nothing at all* of real spiritual life and government.' ('The Life Elysian,'²⁴⁷ p. 100.)

The branch of the Church which is the most implacable enemy of Spiritualism would desire to be itself judged by what is best and noblest in its history, and rightly so. The devil has spoken through popes and pastors often enough in the horrible massacres and persecutions they have inaugurated, but in spite of such lapses in its every branch, I myself firmly believe that the great Church of Christ is founded upon a rock and holds a Divine commission. But let Spiritualism claim an equally fair judgment; let its source and mission be determined by the consideration of its noblest teaching and not by the babblings of the ignorant and undeveloped, the tricks and lying of impostors on either side of death. /

Fools and knaves are not far to seek, but how often does it happen that spirits of low development return not to trick and deceive but to implore our help (*e.g.*, see 'Stead the Man,' p. 159), crying out of the darkness and entreating our prayers on their behalf. Far from proving a diabolic origin for Spiritualism, such

incidents tend to show that it is a thing which in God's mercy may be used for the benefit and uplifting of souls on the other as well as on this side of the veil.

A cousin of my own, who shot himself in London, appeared to a little girl he was educating at a convent in Brussels and implored her prayers. For two months he appeared every morning at her bedside, and as she continued to intercede for her one-time benefactor, the old smile at last returned to his face and he ceased to come.

I now come to a very important point. Father Miller, in his 'Sermons on Modern Spiritualism'²⁴⁸ (p. 162), asserts that the spirits deny the *Divinity of Christ*, and also (p. 177) that 'Spiritualism ridicules the Divine institution of the Sacraments and scornfully rejects them.'

Now I have myself heard spirits admit the real benefit of Sacraments and how they have seen the faithful communicant transformed and glowing with a mystic light. Moreover, I have heard them say that people who have passed on may still, and do still, employ such means of contact with higher worlds if they still feel the need of such props and helps towards the apprehension of the Ineffable. They are discarded by such when the aspiring spirit has grown beyond them, as a child may forsake its perambulator.

The *Divinity of Christ* is a crucial point. There are, of course, many spirits beyond the line as there are many here who would deny it (for, as we know, death makes no sudden and revolutionary change in our fixed mental conceptions). There are many, I say, *here* and *there* who would make the Christ a created being of the same nature as our own, though for the moment much more advanced. I am inclined to think that many Spiritualists hold that identical view. I can only say that I personally reject it with all the emphasis of which I am capable, and I decline utterly to accept the opinion of any chance-comer, living or dead, on such a vital point.

What do the spirits who have so far communicated with us say about Jesus Christ? /

On the whole, I find a tendency to emphasise our Lord's own saying, 'My Father is greater than I,' and to push the doctrine further than the Church has done. A father *is* in some ways and senses greater than his son in the very nature of things, though a son is of the same essential nature as his father. God, the great central light, infinite, and therefore hidden and for ever beyond man's growing power of apprehension. Jesus Christ of the same essential nature, God's visible Image, manifestation and expression to creation. Not begotten at a certain date, but continuously put forth, the Word of God. But let me quote the exact words of the spirits. Julia Ames (on whom be peace!) says on page 48 of the 'Letters from Julia' –

When you see, as we do, that the whole secret of all things is *love* and that there never was so much love revealed to mankind as in Him, you can understand how it is true that there dwelt in Him the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And again:—

Christ is with us always; this is heaven, to be with Him. You cannot understand how the consciousness of His presence makes the atmosphere of this word so different from that with you ... I can only tell you that He is more than we ever have imagined. He is the source and giver of all good gifts. All that we know of what is good and sweet and pure and noble and lovable are but faint reflections of the immensity of the glory that is His.

Another spirit says: 'We worship and reverence the name of Jesus, and we seek after all that His life sets forth. He is even now a ruler and inspirer over many spheres and hands of mighty ones.' And again: 'Christ as He really is, Son of God He is in the highest, but not King and judge as some understand those words.'

The book 'Speaking Across the Border-Line,' by F. Heslop,⁴⁹ with a preface by Sir Oliver Lodge, and purporting to be 'letters from a husband in spirit life to his wife on earth,' says (p. 58): 'I believe absolutely in the Divinity of Jesus Christ and the immaculate conception' (he means, no doubt, the Virgin birth of our Lord, not the Immaculate Conception of the Roman Faith); and again:—

I can only give you what I believe to be true, and I do believe with all my soul in the absolute Divinity of Jesus Christ ... Remember always that Jesus Christ was God, the seed of / the Father, man in the flesh of His mother, a God-man, distinct from every other great teacher ... He held a unique position in His Divine origin (pp. 100, 101).

Quotations might be multiplied and some no doubt found on the other side, but enough have been given to show that it is not true that Spiritualism consistently denies the Divinity of Christ. In the well-known book of spirit teaching, 'The Life Elysian,' the spirit Rhanya lays down very clearly his views as to the person of Jesus Christ, and it is interesting to find that they are an exact reproduction of the notorious Ebionite⁵⁰ heresy of the first century, viz., that the Messiah was the son of Joseph and Mary, that at his baptism he received a heavenly and indwelling influence, the real Christ, which forsook him just before his crucifixion.

This shows the diversity of teaching which comes through, and exhibits clearly this remarkable and significant fact, that there is no *uniformity of spirit teaching* on these high matters. If all the speakers were accredited agents of a central organisation we should expect them to conform to some standard and criterion of doctrine, such as the authorized formularies which control and limit the preacher of the Church. But there is no evidence of any such thing. On the lesser matters there is substantial agreement; there is no glaring discrepancy,

for instance, on such subjects as the sleep state, the circles of graduated conditions of life, nor as to the process of death, but when we come to such lofty considerations as the essential personality of Jesus Christ, we at once find widely conflicting views put forward, and every individual spirit seems to hold and be free to express his own opinion. Some will see in this discrepancy plain evidence of a diabolic attempt to deceive and mislead. It seems to me, however, to prove something quite different – viz., that the spirits who are able to communicate with our earth, or have so far done so, have no access to the springs of final Truth: in other words, that *they do not know*. They honestly give us their convictions, but are not in a position to speak *ex cathedra*. In ‘Through the Mists’⁵¹ (page 171) a spirit says: ‘Except in the case of deliberately untruthful messengers ... the error is due to ignorance rather than design.’ And it would seem to me the height of folly and credulity to forsake the essential doctrines of the Catholic Faith as taught by Christ and understood by the Apostles for the views of any particular / good-natured spirit who can communicate. As St. Paul says: ‘Though an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema’ (Gal. i. s). But let us distinguish between what *is* the gospel and what is not. Chance comers from the other world are no more competent to instruct us in the deep mysteries of Theology than chance comers here. Joseph Smith⁵² was deceived in 1823 by a mistaken spirit, and the pernicious nonsense of the Book of Mormon was the consequence. Mahomet, another good medium who began well, was deceived, and millions have followed blindly the crooked path he laid out.

There is a group of Spiritualists which is frankly anti-Christian and anti-Christ. If Spiritualism strays away from Christ and His teaching I am quite sure it will soon fall to be the useless and helpless thing it was for so many centuries. Christ without Spiritualism produced many saints, Spiritualism without Christ I defy to do so.

I cannot find in what is admitted to be the highest Spiritualistic teaching that the teaching that the *fundamental essentials of the Christian Faith* are assailed. For example, the Apostles’ Creed lays down the truth of the *Resurrection of the body* (in the Nicene Creed it is Resurrection of the *dead*). Now, what the Church really means is that man in the completeness of his complex nature, without losing anything essential, survives death, in spite of all appearances to the contrary. Spiritualism entirely agrees, but corrects the crude general notion as to how the thing is done. It is really a difference in the method of the resurrection, not one of the thing itself.

Then it is objected that Spiritualism ignores, if it does not repudiate, the work of the Holy Ghost and of grace, subjects which fill so large a space in the teaching of the Church. I am inclined to think that it is largely a matter of terms and the choice of words. The ordinary man, whether he be dead or alive, will be

more likely to speak simply of the power and help of God than to use the terminology of exact theology. Our friend 'Morambo,'⁵³ the ex-slave, would astonish me much if he spoke in the language of the Divinity schools, and discoursed about the Hypostatic Union, prevenient grace, or the Procession of the Spirit. We must not expect spirits, coming for the most part from worlds not so very far above our own, to be versed / in the final mysteries of the Essential Being of God. First-floor people do not expect second-floor folk to know all about astronomy because they live a few feet nearer the stars.

The doctrine of the continual presence and activity of guardian spirits is no new thing to the Church, and is certainly no denial of the work of the Holy Ghost, but only emphasises one side and method of that work, which the Church herself teaches is very frequently accomplished through agents, 'angels and men in a wonderful order.'

Is Spiritualism of the Devil? I believe we have a conclusive answer in the story of Jeanne d'Arc. Joan was a chosen medium of a group of lofty spirits. From the age of thirteen she was a Spiritualist if ever there was one. But was she deluded by demons? The whole facts of the case cry aloud that she most certainly was *not*. Joan was from childhood a creature of marked and exceptional piety, and her spirit friends urged her continually to a greater devotion and more earnest prayers. Several commissions were appointed to investigate her life and if possible to blacken the character, but without the least success. Is it conceivable that demons would have chosen or could have used such a medium? That she really *was* under guidance was proved by her identification of the disguised prince, the revelation of the hiding place of the sword of Fierbois⁵⁴ and by the astounding success of her mission. As usual all was attributed to the Devil. 'Your voices,' said her judges, 'are the enemies of God, transforming themselves into the likeness of ... Angels and saints ... no faith should be put in such apparitions' (Murray's 'Jeanne d'Arc,' p. 123). At the age of nineteen, and calling upon Jesus, she was burned at Rouen. *But mark the sequel* – the Bishop of Beauvais, her arch enemy, repented of having shed innocent blood, and built a chapel at Lisieux in expiation of his crime.

A court appointed twenty-four years after her death, by Pope Calixtus,⁵⁵ solemnly reversed and annulled her condemnation, and the Church in our own day is proceeding to her canonisation as a saint.

Now if the Church admits thus tardily that Joan was led and used by good spirits on a Divine mission, why should it be concluded that all other mediums are the dupes of designing / fiends? Is there not sometimes danger of that ancient blasphemy, 'Say we not well that thou hast a devil?'

There are some who find it impossible to reconcile the thought of high spiritual control with the *apparent triviality* of a moving table and such like phe-

nomena. They are accustomed to have their religious emotions kindled amid the beautiful symbolism of well-appointed churches,

Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem, swells the note of praise,

and are suspicious of this hole-and-corner business of the back room. The world-famous temple seems more worthy of the gods than 'the school of one Tyrannus.' They are conscious of the profound importance, even solemnity, of the issues, and are offended because the means employed seem so unworthy of the occasion. So Naaman⁵⁶ was offended on being told to go away and wash in the river, the miserable Jordan at that! People will still be calling 'common and unclean' what God may please to use for a high purpose. The glorification of the small and common-place is one of the lessons of Christianity, and we are often profoundly mistaken in our estimation of what is really great and truly small. Is a speck of dust a small thing? Not when it is under the eyelid. Is a million of money a great thing? Not to the owner if he is at the point of death. Is a table a contemptible thing? Not when it is used as an altar, nor yet when it raps out a message from a higher world.

After all, is there anything inherently *incredible* or wildly unreasonable in the idea that Christ should view with concern the misinterpretation of His Gospel and the consequent loosening of its hold on man's allegiance, and that He should take steps to renew and re-vitalise the saving Truth? Or that He should use for the purpose exactly the same means which He employed in the ancient days of the prophets? What wonder if once more Jesus should turn to the modern Thomas and offer him, in Spiritualism, direct evidence within the range of his bodily senses – 'Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing.'

St. Peter did not need it, and you and I may not need it, but be strong in faith and assurance – 'Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed' – but many are *doubting* / and many *totally sceptical*. To such Spiritualism may be a holy thing, the very voice of God to their souls. I do not think it is realised how very many people have *no religion whatever*. If there is a future life, the evidence for it certainly does not warrant the smallest effort of self-sacrifice or self-control. As for God (if there is such a Being), He is utterly unknowable, and His name is merely useful in the form of profane oaths. I think Spiritualism may be the means of saving many such from wasting the wonderful opportunity of earth life.

Let us bear in mind that much of the Hebrew prophets' teaching was *confused and misled* on account of the prophets' own imperfection, that Balaam, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah and others, though doubtless good enough psychics, through want of moral uprightness were led astray by lying

spirits. Let us remember that if the instrument is out of tune the Great Musician cannot breathe His message through it. A medium must not be content to be a person of peculiar physical constitution, but must be a man of holy life. His eyes are open to the wonders of the borderland, let him be spiritually awakened and aware of the rushing splendours of the higher spheres of being; standing in the gap, a link between the worlds, known and blest on many planes of life, a servant of the servants of God!

There is a story told of Father Walter, a Roman priest at Washington, which seems to take the entrenched position of his Church by storm. The clergyman was going to bed one winter's night when he heard the violent ringing of his door-bell. He looked out of the window and saw a boy and girl on his doorstep. 'Our father is dying,' they cried, 'and wants you to come and see him at once; we will show you the way.' The priest went down and accompanied the children to a poor house in the lower portion of the town. 'Our father's room is at the top of the house,' said the boy; 'you will see a light shining through the keyhole.' Father Walter left the children below and groped his way up the rickety stair. There in the room indicated was a dying man, covered with rags, and lighted feebly by a candle stuck in a bottle.

'Who are you?' whispered the sick man. The priest told him. 'I did not send for you,' said the man; 'I had no one to send, I am alone and dying.' 'That is strange,' said the priest, 'for two children, a boy and a girl, came to my / house and told me their father was dying, and then showed me the way here.' 'Two children!' gasped the man. 'What were they like?' The priest described them, and the man covered his face with his hands and wept. 'My poor, dear children,' he said, 'they died two years ago!' (Bennet's 'Visions of the Unseen'.)⁵⁷

To say, as the Roman Church would, that those children were angels of a super-human order who personated the boy and girl, seems to me to go out of the way to find a far-fetched explanation, when there is a simple and beautiful one already to hand.

It is no unusual thing for struggling and distressed souls to be *helped through Spiritualism*. Do we not all know people who had given up all religion and who have been brought back by its means? Agnostics who had lost all hope of God and immortality, to whom religion seemed mere formality and dry bones, and who at last turned upon it and reviled it in all its manifestations. Then Spiritualism came to them, like the dawn to a man who has tossed all night fevered and sleepless. At first they were astonished and incredulous, but their attention was arrested, and presently they were touched to the heart. God had come back into their lives, and nothing could express their joy and gratitude.

Is this the work of devils. There are some, *mirabile dictu*, who would say it is; for these awakened souls are often unorthodox, they are made after no recognised pattern and bear none of the time-honoured labels, and as such they come

under human ban and condemnation: 'We rebuked him because he followeth not with us.' But one seems to see the Good Shepherd leading His sheep over tracks invisible from the more frequented roads, and I have no doubt they will arrive safely at the Great Fold, perhaps far on before their critics.

I received this letter some time ago:—

DEAR SIR, — After my long silence I hardly like to address you, but a feeling of great joy and gratitude compels me to do so. You will, perhaps, be glad to hear that owing to the seed so kindly and generously set by yourself in me, a perfect stranger to you, the same has brought forth an abundance of fruit, and I am now in the happiest condition of my life, and have already commenced spreading the good news abroad. The holy delights of Spiritualism have made me a changed man, and / I shall ever be grateful to you. I have joined the Spiritualist Alliance, and am daily learning fresh wonders and receiving fresh comforts from our Infinite and all-loving Creator ...

Allow me to quote once more from Stead's friend, Julia:—

When I saw the splendour of the lovelight that flooded the (spiritual) world, I was beside myself with joy; all the many loves which I had known on your side faded into insignificance beside the great glowing radiance of that love which swathed me about as with a garment and enabled me to see what marvellous possibilities, what undreamed-of powers, were all the while in the heart of each of us ... God is love, and love is God, and the mystic power of God is love. We may become as God so far as we enter into His Divine Nature, which is *love*, We remove ourselves from God as we do not love. When you feel as if you are unable to sympathise with any person, by so much as you are unable to sympathise even with his sins, you are out of God. He is all in all, and all His all is love, and you cannot work out His purposes in hate and unkindness. Oh, if I could make you see as we see it here, how true it is that they only *live* who *love*, that all that is not of love is as death, that the soul that does not love is without God in outer darkness, and the only way to save the world is to drench it with love, to flood it with love — yes, love even for the worst. It is not by disliking men even for their sins, that you will save them from their sins ('After Death.' p. 49).

I would ask you, are these words (which might be from an epistle of St. John) — are these the words of one that hath a devil? If so, then I can only say I like that devil, that is the kind of devil I want to be.

I will conclude by recording my opinion that Spiritualism is a thing of *immense importance* fraught with the issues of life and death. and I am wondering how soon the Bishops of the Church of England will consider it worth while to examine the thing and make themselves competent to advise their children about it. To some people, Spiritualism is merely an opportunity of having a little

talk with a deceased 'Uncle George' or 'Aunt Jane,' a little sentimental dabbling with the unseen, without intellectual purpose or spiritual aspiration; but if I am not greatly mistaken, the end the nobler spirits have in view is much higher than that. The real end and *raison d'être* of the movement is *religious*. If Spiritualism fails to rise above the level of a mere *branch of science*, it will have fallen short of its true mission and glory. As the intellectual is greater than the physical, so is the spiritual above the psychical, and investigators who attend seances and acquire knowledge about / higher grades of existence without a growing hunger to make themselves *worthy* of and *capable* of promotion to such states, are like men who cultivate a vineyard but never eat of the grapes. The mission of Spiritualism is to enlighten man's difficult path, to make him distinguish between the permanent and the transitory, the real and the apparent. It is to drive home, as never before, the lesson which has so long been on the lips of the Church, that this life finds its real importance in the fact that it is the preparation for another, and that religion – *i.e.*, the progressive approach to God – is the supreme duty and privilege of man.

But as you may so partake of the Eucharist as to eat and drink to your own condemnation, so may a rash or evil-minded investigator of Spiritualism find in it his ruin. Is it diabolic? That depends upon yourself – if you want to raise a devil, you may do so easily enough; if you seek God and Truth, it can mightily bless your search.

The thing itself is neither divine nor diabolic; it is an instrument, a means, an open door through which in the past have come both good and evil, but there is some evidence that beyond that door are now assembled a great company of enlightened spirits who are bound together by a noble and unselfish resolve to raise and bless mankind.

Let us approach, then, with the utmost caution and the most careful scrutiny of our motives. Let us not be dazzled by the thought that we are listening to a being from another world and drink in his every saying as 'the Word of the Lord.' Let us not imagine that all the mysteries of being are unfolded before his wondering eyes just because a year or two before ourselves he has stepped across the little ditch of death. But let us also beware of that attitude which before all others Christ condemned, *viz.*, the inert and unteachable, the unresponsive and unimpressionable, the self-satisfied and self-sufficient, that which in its haste and hostility calls good evil, and evil good, and will not believe though one rose from the dead. (Great applause.) /

Light:**A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF PSYCHICAL, OCCULT AND
MYSTICAL RESEARCH.**

LIGHT proclaims a belief in the existence and life of the spirit apart from, and independent of the material organism, and in the reality and value of intelligent intercourse between spirits embodied and spirits disembodied. Beyond this it has no creed. It is the acknowledged representative of cultivated and intelligent Spiritualism throughout the world, and the Editor has the co-operation of the best writers in this country and abroad, whose experience and knowledge are of the highest value. This gives the journal a unique position and a singular value.

Price 2d.; or 10s. 10d. per annum, post free.

Specimen Copy will be sent on receipt of stamp for postage.

All orders for the Paper and for Advertisements, and all remittances, should be addressed to 'The Manager of LIGHT;' all communications to be printed should be addressed to 'The Editor.'

OFFICE: 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, CHARING CROSS, W.C.

LIGHT is sold or obtained to order by all Booksellers.

The Trade supplied by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd.

To Advertisers: LIGHT circulates in all parts of the world, and is a valuable medium for Advertisements.

PSYCHICAL, OCCULT AND MYSTICAL BOOKS.

The finest Library of these books in Europe (perhaps the whole world) is to be found at the Office of LIGHT, 110, St. Martin's Lane, W.C. Those who wish to become Members of the Library may do so on payment of Ten Shillings and Sixpence per annum, which will entitle the subscriber to borrow one book at a time; or One Guinea, which will permit of three books being borrowed at one time. Further particulars and Catalogues of the Librarian at 110, St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C. /

Propaganda Publications

Issued by the Spiritualists' National Union, Limited.

1. THE SOUL'S DEEPEST QUESTIONS. By G.P. YOUNG. Price 2d.; post free, 3d.

2. SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUALISM. By H.G. HEY. Price 2d.; post free, 3d.
5. SPIRITUALISTIC EXPERIENCES. By Dr. A.R. WALLACE, O.M., F.R.S. Price 2d.; post free, 3d.
9. SPIRITUALISM AMONG THE ZULUS. By C.H. BULL, with Memoir by E.W. WALLIS. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
11. SHORT COURSE OF THEOLOGY. By CHEV. DE ST MARCO. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
12. STARTLING FACTS ABOUT OUR BIBLE. By GAMBIER BOLTON. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
13. MAN AND HIS POSSIBILITIES. By G.T. GWINN. spiritualism. By Mrs. H. L. BATIE. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
14. IDEALS OF SPIRITUALISM. By HANSON G. HEY. ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM. By C. H. BULL. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
15. THE PLACE OF SPIRITUALISM IN MODERN THOUGHT. By W.P. PRICE-HEYWOOD. IMAGINATION. By LEWIS FIRTH. Price 2d. post free, 2 1/2d.
18. WHERE ARE OUR DEAD SOLDIERS? By EIRNEST W. OATEN. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
19. SPIRITUALISM THE BASIC FACT OF RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND PHILOSOPHY. By Miss F. R. SCATCERD. UNSEEN INFLUENCES. By HANSON G. HAY. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
20. PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND BARBARIC LEGISLATION. By ELLIS T. POWELL, LL.B., D.Sc. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
21. THE BRIDGE OF DEATH. By Miss H.A. DALLAS. Price 2d.; post free, 2 1/2d.
- PSYCHIC FORCE. An Investigation into a little known power. By GAMBIER BOLTON. Price is.; post free, 1s. 2d.
- MAN, WOMAN, KNOW THYSELF. By GAMBIER BOLTON. Price 1d.; post free, 1 1/2d.

Prices for Quantities: 13/12; 25 per cent. off; carriage forward.

From THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, LTD.,

30, GLEN TERRACE, CLOVER HILL, HALIFAX, YORKS.

17. *Henley*: William Ernest Henley (1849–1903), English poet best known for his poem ‘Invictus’, which was written in 1875. The following quotation is taken from this poem.
18. *‘It matters not ... my soul’*: Henley, ‘Invictus’, ll. 12–16. In the original poem, the word ‘punishment’ not ‘penitence’ is used.

[Grove and Hunt] (eds), *A Soldier Gone West*

1. *Astral Plane*: in Neoplatonic thought the plane of existence that encompassed the planetary spheres, which was home to spirits and angels, and through which the soul travelled after death.
2. *Lincoln*: Abraham Lincoln (1809–65), sixteenth president of the United States, assassinated in 1865. Quite a few spiritualist mediums claimed to have received communications from his spirit.
3. *Spring Drive*: During the spring of 1918 the Germans launched a series of major offensives to punch through the Allied lines and force a conclusion to the war.
4. *Gethsemane*: the garden in Jerusalem where Jesus prayed with his disciples the night before his crucifixion.
5. *Why not try the Spirits as Paul advised?*: referring to the New Testament 1 John 4:1, where Paul says: ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God’.
6. *‘Ja ja, Gott’*: German: ‘yes, yes, God’.
7. *Missouri attitude*: a questioning, ‘prove it’ attitude.
8. *Temple of Light*: the heartland of the spirit world and a name adopted by numerous spiritualist churches and centres.

Fielding-Ould, *Is Spiritualism of the Devil?*

1. *Arthur Chambers*: Arthur Chambers, Anglican clergyman and spiritualist, best known for his book *‘Our Life After Death,’ or The Teaching of the Bible concerning the Unseen-World* (London: Charles Taylor, 1894), which went through 120 editions by 1917.
2. *Tweeddale*: Charles Lakeman Tweeddale, (d. 1940), Anglican clergyman and author of several spiritualist texts, including *Man’s Survival after Death* (London: Grant Richards, 1909), and *News from the Next World* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1940).
3. *Archdeacon Wilberforce*: Basil Wilberforce (1841–1916), Archdeacon of Westminster and Temperance crusader.
4. *Crookes*: Sir William Crookes (1832–1919), renowned chemist whose investigation of mediums led him to believe that some had genuine powers.
5. *Wallace*: Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), scientist, naturalist, evolutionary theorist and well-known adherent of spiritualism.
6. *Lodge*: Sir Oliver Lodge (1851–1940), physicist, spiritualist and author of *Raymond; or, Life and Death* (London: Methuen, 1916).
7. *Barrett*: Sir William Fletcher Barrett (1844–1925), physicist and founding member of the Society for Psychical Research.
8. *Myers*: Frederic William Myers (1843–1901), psychical researcher and founding member of the Society for Psychical Research.
9. *William James*: William James (1842–10), American physiologist and psychologist, and founding member of the American Society for Psychical Research.
10. *Charles Richet*: Charles Robert Richet (1850–1935), French physiologist and psychical researcher, named president of the Society for Psychical Research in 1905.

11. *Lombroso*: Cesare Lombroso (1836–1909), Italian criminologist who took an intellectual interest in spiritualism late in life. His thoughts were published in his book *After Death – What?* (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard, 1909).
12. *Gurney*: Edmund Gurney (1847–88), psychologist, influential member of the Society for Psychical Research and principal author of *Phantasms of the Living* (London: Society for Psychical Research, 1886).
13. *Hodgson*: Richard Hodgson (1855–1905), psychical researcher active on behalf of the British and American Societies for Psychical Research. He was generally sceptical about mediums except for Leonore Piper.
14. *Stead*: William Thomas Stead (1849–1912), newspaper editor and public advocate for spiritualism. He drowned in the *Titanic* disaster.
15. Stead's 'After Death': William Stead, *After Death: A Personal Narrative* (London, 1905).
16. *Stainton Moses*' *Spirit Teachings*: M.A., Oxon [William Stainton Moses], *Spirit Teachings* (London: Psychological Press Association, 1883).
17. *the posthumous message of Julia Ames*: Julia Ames, American journalist whom William Stead claimed to have received spirit communications from shortly after her death.
18. *Cardinal Newman*: John Henry Newman (1801–90), Anglican clergyman who converted to Catholicism in 1845.
19. *Bishop of Oxford*: Charles Gore (1853–1932), made Bishop of Oxford in 1911.
20. *'The Religion of the Church'*: Charles Gore, *The Religion of the Church as Presented in the Church of England: A Manual of Membership* (London: Mowbray, 1916).
21. *Father Lépicier*: not traced.
22. *Marcus Aurelius*: Marcus Aurelius (AD 121–180), Roman Emperor.
23. *'Stead, the Man'*: Edith K. Harper, *Stead, the Man: Personal Reminiscences* (London: William Rider & Son, 1914).
24. *Raupert*: John Godfrey Raupert (1858–1929), psychical researcher whose criticisms of spiritualism and occultism were expressed in several books, including *The Dangers of Spiritualism* (London: Sands, 1901).
25. *'The spirits insist ... do not meddle'*: This quote is from John Godfrey Raupert, *Modern Spiritism: A Critical Examination* (London: Sands, 1904), p. 235.
26. *Dr. Swete*: Henry Barclay Swete (1835–1917), biblical scholar and author of *The Forgiveness of Sins: A Study in the Apostle's Creed* (London: Macmillan, 1916).
27. *Lewis Carroll*: Charles Dodgson (1832–98), mathematician and author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
28. *'This Life and the Next'*: Estelle Davenport Adams, *This Life and Next: Impressions and Thoughts of Notable Men and Women from Plato to Ruskin* (London: G. Richards, 1902).
29. *John Gerson*: Jean Charlier de Gerson (1363–1429), French poet and theologian.
30. *Gore's 'Bampton Lectures'*: Charles Gore, *The Church and the Ministry: A Review of E. Hatch's Bampton Lectures* (London: Rivingtons, 1882).
31. *George Whitfield*: George Whitfield (1714–70), evangelical Anglican clergyman who was influential in the founding of Methodism.
32. *J. Furniss*: John Furniss (1809–65), English Catholic priest and founder of children's missions.
33. *A Sight of Hell'*: John Furniss, *The Sight of Hell* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1866).
34. *Lecky's 'European Morals'*: William Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1869).

35. *St. Paphnutius*: fourth-century Egyptian anchorite known in legend for his love of solitude.
36. *Innocent VIII*: Giovanni Battista Cybo (1432–92), Pope between 1484 and 1492.
37. *Mackay's 'Popular Delusions'*: Charles Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1841).
38. *Brevior: 'The Two Worlds'*: Thomas Brevior [Shorter], *The Two Worlds, the Natural and the Spiritual* (London: F. Pitman, [1864]).
39. *Christian Shaw*: Christian Shaw, an eleven-year-old Scottish girl whose claims to be bewitched led to the arrest of twenty-one suspected witches in 1696.
40. *Elizabeth Dunlop*: Elizabeth Dunlop of Ayrshire, Scotland, was arrested on charges of witchcraft in 1576.
41. *Richard Dugdale*: Richard Dugdale, a Lancashire gardener, also known as the 'Surey demoniac', who claimed to be possessed and became the centre of a polemical religious debate in 1697.
42. *Jannes and Jambres*: Jannes and Jambres are mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:8–9 as magicians who opposed Moses.
43. *Elymas*: Elymas, otherwise known as Bar-Jesus, a Jewish magician mentioned in the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles 13.
44. *Maximus*: Maximus of Ephesus, a fourth-century philosopher and magician.
45. *Eversheim's 'Messiah'*: Alfred Edersheim, *Prophecy and History in Relation to the Messiah* (London: Longmans, Green, 1885).
46. *Teraphim*: Hebraic word often translated into English as 'idols' or 'household gods'.
47. *'The Life Elysian'*: Robert James Lees, *The Life Elysian* (London: Rider & Co., 1905).
48. *'Sermons on Modern Spiritualism'*: Alexander V. Miller, *Sermons on Modern Spiritualism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1908). Miller was a Catholic clergyman in the diocese of Westminster.
49. *F. Heslop*: F. Heslop, author of *Speaking across the Border-Line* (London: Charles Taylor, 1915).
50. *Ebionite*: The Ebionites were a Christian Jewish sect that followed Jesus's teachings but did not believe he was divine.
51. *'Through the Mists'*: Robert James Lees, *Through the Mists: or, Leaves from the Autobiography of a Soul in Paradise* (London: G. Redway, 1898).
52. *Joseph Smith*: Joseph Smith (1805–44), founder of the Latter Day Saint movement or Mormons.
53. *'Morambo'*: an African slave with whose spirit the medium Mrs Wallis claimed to be in contact.
54. *sword of Fierbois*: a legendary sword found by Joan of Arc. She was led to it by divine voices.
55. *Pope Calixtus*: Pope Calixtus III (1378–1458).
56. *Naaman*: Naaman, biblical character, a military commander cured of leprosy by washing in the river Jordan.
57. *Bennet's 'Visions of the Unseen'*: Henry J. T. Bennetts, *Visions of the Unseen: A Chapter in the Communion of Saints* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1914).

True and False Spiritualism

1. *planchette*: a small board on castors that purportedly moves under the guidance of spirits to spell out words, usually in conjunction with a Ouija board.