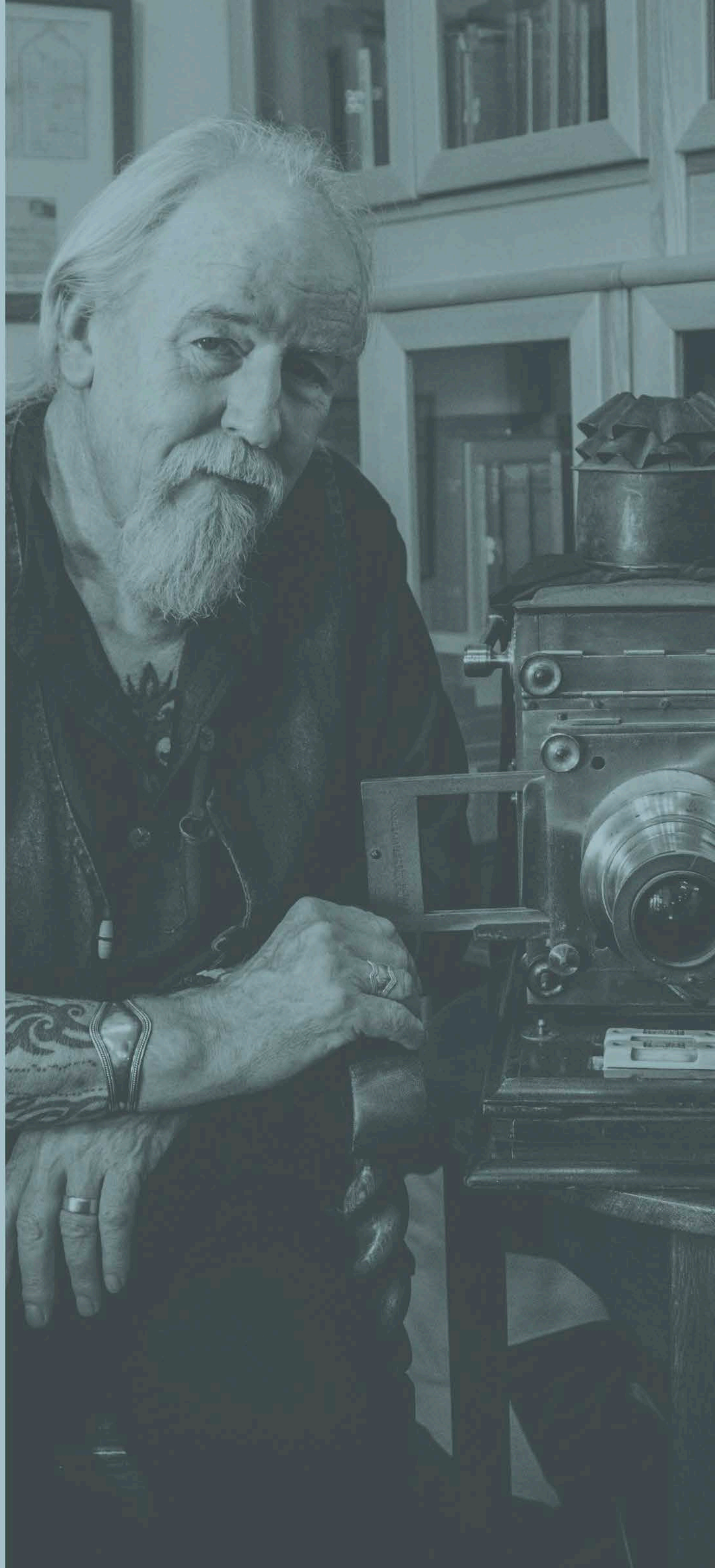


The PIONEER

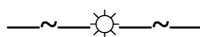
The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.





Volume 9, No. 2: April 2022

Contents list:



The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue

036 – Knock, Knock – Who's There?

ACD's Australian Helper

The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey: The Rap—"God's Telegraph" by W. Leslie Curnow, B.A

043 – 92nd Anniversary of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

A. C. D. As I Knew Him – Psychic Science

A.C.D., As I Knew Him – Stanley De Brath

Addendum note – Garth Willey

Conan Doyle Exhumation Makes Front-Page News – The Two Worlds, July 9th, 1955

Coverage of the funeral – The Two Worlds, July 18th, 1930

057 – One-stop Website – Research – Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College 2022

058 – Public Debates: Spiritualism – Christianity

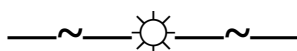
The Relation of Modern Spiritualism to Christianity – Ernest W. Oaten

Concluded from the last issue

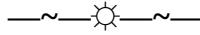
065 – New SNU Pioneer Page

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KNOCK, KNOCK – WHO’S THERE?

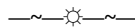


It is said that it was William Shakespeare who first penned the immortal: “Knock, knock! Who’s there?” in his play Macbeth, Act 2, scene 3, written between 1611 and 1612 and first performed in 1623. In the last issue of Pioneer “Hydesville Day – March 31st – Let’s get it right”, where an alleged brutally murdered pedlar circa 1843 came Knocking. This article received a large amount of feedback; we can note from the various stories about Hydesville that it is often stated, three knocks for yes and one knock for *no*, etc. But we can note from the article that this was not the case; it tended to depend on who was asking the questions—there was no set code and no code devised by the Fox sisters, albeit William Duesler devised the Alphabet Code on March 31st 1848, which would later become the standard code for the early mediums.

The raps would be generally categorised under the heading of physical mediumship and are unique from the point of view that physical phenomena generally require darkness or defused red light or similar colour. But from March 31st it was demonstrated in daylight! More than once, it is clear that those who witnessed this phenomenon claimed the rapping *was not* a sound one could mimic simply with one’s knuckles. The word “rap” conveys the wrong idea of the sound; it was a muffled percussive sound and seemed to come from within the substance of an object, resulting in a vibration which could be felt. Reports suggest that the raps varied in intensity from the tiniest tick to deep thuds to sledgehammer blows; fragile tables, etc. were struck with tremendous blows but were not damaged. It is not a physical blow in the normal sense – but psychic in origin.

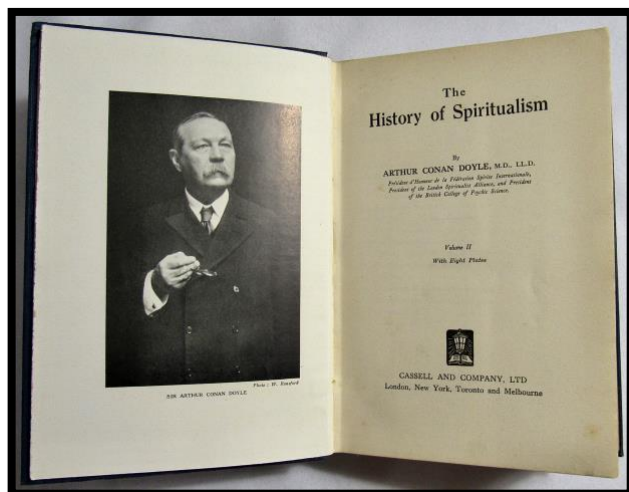
It was noted in Mrs Margaret Fox’s statement:

The noise continued while we were hunting, and was heard near the same place all the time. It was not very loud, yet it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs, that could be felt by placing our hands on the chair, or while we were in bed. It was a feeling of a tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar. It seemed as if we could feel it jar while we were standing on the floor.



Hydesville was not the first house to experience rapping, but from Hydesville came a clear intelligent two-way communication; it appears that the actual house was the battery—the psychic force—the platform required for the communications to take place.

Given the consistency of raps which continued for around a five-year period, peaking in 1848, they were not reliant on any one person being present. The mediumship of the Fox girls, as noted, began shortly after the family moved from the house to their brother’s farm.



The article published below is by Leslie Curnow and gives an interesting historical account of the Raps;¹ firstly, we note that Curnow assisted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his 1926 two-volume book, “History of Spiritualism”. Unfortunately, the book’s account of the events of Hydesville is poorly researched and inaccurate.

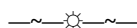
¹ Pyspioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: “The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey – Leslie Curnow”.

ACD's AUSTRALIAN HELPER

The name of Leslie Curnow is known to every reader of ACD's "History of Spiritualism", since the author early explains:—

"It was clear that such a work needed a great deal of research – far more than I in my crowded life could devote to it. It is true that my time was in any case dedicated to it, but the literature is vast, and there were many aspects of the movement which claimed my attention. Under these circumstances I claimed and obtained the loyal assistance of Mr. W. Leslie Curnow, whose knowledge of the subject and whose industry have proved to be invaluable. He has dug assiduously into that vast quarry; he has separated out the ore from the rubbish, and in every way he has been of the greatest assistance. I had originally expected no more than raw material, but he has occasionally given me the finished article, of which I have gladly availed myself, altering it only to the extent of getting my own personal point of view. I cannot admit too fully the loyal assistance which he has given me, and if I have not conjoined his name with my own upon the title-page it is for reasons which he understands and in which he acquiesces."

This raises the question, of course, of whether Curnow was responsible for any of the errors in the "History of Spiritualism". At any rate, he took a natural interest in the impact of the book and called attention in *Light*, October 16, 1926, p. 484, to some reviews.

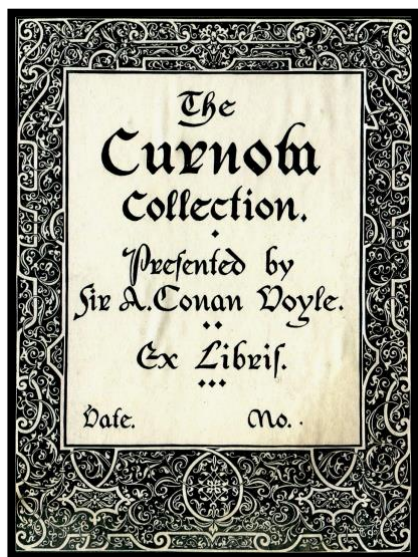


Sadly, Leslie Curnow died shortly after the publication. The *Psypioneer* issue, noted above, published his obituary, etc.

It is further noted:

Fortunately, a solution was found to the problem of the library. There was only a brief report but it was enough to set minds at rest, in *Light*, June 18, 1927, p. 293:

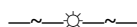
THE LATE MR. LESLIE CURNOW'S LIBRARY.—We are asked to state that in disposing of Mr. Curnow's library, it was found necessary to divide it. One portion was purchased by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, and the other by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who is handing over the books acquired by him to the Library of the Britten Memorial Institute in Manchester.²



Duncan Gascoyne, curator of the Britten Museum, kindly checked "Two Worlds".

"The only reference I could find was in the Secretary's Report of the Britten Memorial Fund Annual General Meeting held at the Britten Memorial Library, 65 Bridge Street, Manchester on Saturday June 9th 1928, which states:—

"The Secretary's report covered all the activities of the year, special mention being made of the valuable gift from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of half of the "Leslie Curnow" collection of psychic books. He hoped that sanction from the Charity Commissioners would be received at an early date to permit the Library being used until such time as we could establish a permanent Library and Institute."

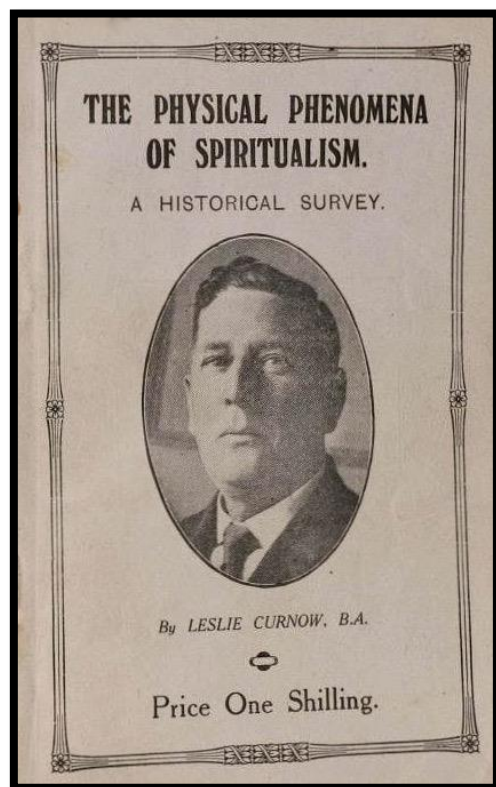


² See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No. 4: "The Story of the Britten Memorial – 1899-1933 – The Two Worlds".

The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey

The Rap— “God’s Telegraph”

By W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.³



As we know, it duly happened at Hydesville in 1848. All should read that remarkable book, *The Autobiography of a Shaker*, by Elder Frederick W. Evans, published in Glasgow in 1888. He says that the spirits declared again and again that when they had completed their work among the Shakers “they would do a work in the world of such magnitude that not a palace nor a hamlet upon earth should remain unvisited by them.” True enough to-day surely.⁴

Then, soon after the manifestations started with the Fox girls, these mediums were told by the spirits, “You must proclaim these truths to the world. This is the dawning of a new era.”⁵ Are we not now in the full flush of that dawn ?

A RAP that sounded in the year 1848 at Hydesville, an American village, has gone on ever since reverberating round the world. Its coming was predicted ten years previously, as well as the fact—how grotesque it seemed!—that it was to echo down the corridors of time, and was destined to effect a mighty revolution.

The simple folk who first took an interest in this phenomenon—sturdy pioneers, though they knew it not—were called Rappers, just as at an earlier stage another band of noble pioneers who experienced psychic manifestations were known as Quakers, and yet another band as Shakers.

What a rich field for psychic investigation a study of the Shakers reveals ! In 1830 they were familiar with spiritual manifestations occurring amongst themselves that were not known to the world until many years later. It was about 1838 that the Shakers received from a spirit source the definite prediction of a world manifestation of spiritual activity that was to start ten years later.

EMMA HARDINGE WROTE:



Shakers Dancing

“... spiritual manifestations had been prevalent amongst them long in advance of the Hydesville disturbances; that the Shakers in general claimed, upon unquestionable authority, to have been the John Baptists of the modern spiritual movement; ...”

³ Member of the Society for Psychical Research and late Assistant Editor of “Light” (Two Worlds reference).

⁴ Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1: “When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?”

⁵ This quote can be found in Leah Underhill’s book, “The Missing Link”, 1885, pages 4849, and is quoted in “The Failure of Spiritualism in the Past” by Herbert Thurston, pages 49-56.

And the “new era” started with a Rap!

How mean and paltry a method of rending the veil, of getting in touch with the Great Beyond ! How petty and puerile a way of communicating with “our sacred dead” !

Yes, as mean and paltry as watching the twitching of a frog’s leg or the steam forcing up the lid of a boiling kettle. Yet the first gave us electricity, and the second the railway and the steamship.

The Rap has done far more. It has brought us in close touch with another grand and mysterious world, or, to express it better (after Sir Oliver Lodge), it has revealed to us the momentous fact of the daily intermingling of the two parts of one great world. It is all a matter of how one views it. The Fox girls, in their simple trust, and with wonderful prophetic vision called the Rap “God’s Telegraph”—a beautiful description.⁶

How, in a single article, can one expect to cover the field of Rapping phenomena ? Frankly, it cannot be done. A whole book could be written on the single experiences of the Fox sisters. In the series of articles, of which this is the first, devoted to a survey of some of the chief Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism, an effort will be made to indicate as far as possible what has occurred in each branch of the subject. In this way we hope to treat, among other things, Lights (or Luminous Phenomena), Automatic Drawing and Pantomime, Scents, Levitation, Fire Tests, Apports, Music, Movements of objects, Voices, and Materialisation.

EARLY RAPS

A chapter could be filled with a mere list of instances of Rappings that happened before the Hydesville incident in 1848. One that is a favourite case of mine, because of its dramatic character, its lawsuit that extended over two years and its abundance of witnesses, is the famous Molesworth Case in Edinburgh in 1835. Those interested will find full particulars in Mrs. Crowe’s *Night Side of Nature*, vol. ii., pages 292-4, and Rogers’ *Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings*, pages 48-49. Briefly, Captain Molesworth, the occupant of the house, tore up flooring boards and fired his gun at the walls in his efforts to discover who or what was causing the raps and noises with which he was troubled; and the owner sued him for damages.

The Senior Partners (as some students love to call them) or the “unseen operators,” as Dr. W. J. Crawford named them, have had a plaguey time with us poor, stupid humans, and they have shown inexhaustible patience. Let us take three illustrations. In each there is the same method (by Raps), and in each the same apparent failure to achieve the end they had in view.

(1) 1661-1663.—At the home of Mr. John Mompesson, of Tedworth (Wilts), where drumming and noises occurred over a period of two years the unseen intelligences were asked to give “three knocks and no more,” which was done: then “five knocks” which was also done.

(2) 1716.—At the Wesley home at Epworth Parsonage, Samuel Wesley knocked with his stick against the joists of the kitchen, and “It answered me as often as and loud as I knocked.”

(3) 1835.—At Captain Molesworth’s house, near Edinburgh, correct answers were supplied by Raps to questions that could be expressed numerically, as, “How many people are there in this room ?”

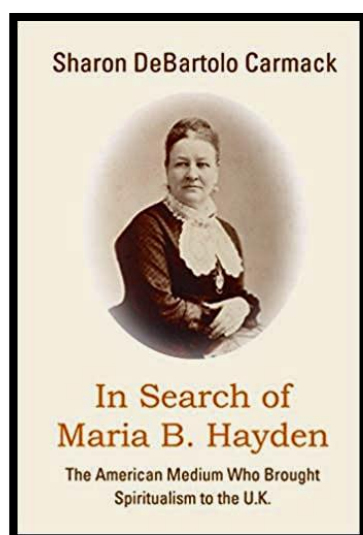
⁶ It is a pity the author gives no reference to this quote.

Many more cases of the same kind might be cited, but these are sufficiently illustrative. Confining ourselves to these cases, we see that the unseen operators had achieved an exactly similar result in nearly 200 years. But the only result was a nine days' wonder. Then they tried again in 1848 with the Fox family. In the previous instances they had experimented with people of position in the world. Now they came to the very lowly and obscure, and here at last they GOT THROUGH. They had tried among millions before they found the right vessels. The "weak things of the world" were chosen to "put to shame those that are wise."

Many might say with Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, on his death-bed, "Tell the Fox Family I bless them . . . They have prepared me for this hour."

RAPPING MEDIUMS

After Hydesville a furore was created, and many in America who were led to experiment found themselves possessed of mediumistic powers. The first of these Rapping mediums were Mrs. Sarah A. Tamlin and Mrs. Benedict,⁷ both highly endowed psychically, particulars of whom will be found in Capron's *Modern Spiritualism: Its Facts and Fanaticisms*, Boston, 1855.



The first medium for the Raps in England was Mrs. Maria B. Hayden,⁸ though there is a single mention (*British Spiritual Telegraph*, vol. iii., pages 55-6) of Mrs. Mary Marshall, afterwards well known as a wonderful Rapping medium, in 1835.⁹ Mrs. Hayden arrived in London from the United States in 1852, and the story of her brief visit of a year is a fascinating one. We can only mention here the two very notable converts she made—Professor Augustus De Morgan, the eminent mathematician and author, and Robert Owen, Socialist and reformer, the former to the facts, and the latter to both the facts and the philosophy of Spiritualism. De Morgan, in the clever and striking preface he wrote to his wife's book, *From Matter to Spirit*, 1863, tells how he obtained, through Mrs. Hayden, correct answers by Raps to mental questions.¹⁰ He sent a distinguished man friend, who, on obtaining a similar result, confessed that he was "awe-struck."

Next comes Daniel Douglas Home. Raps were only an incident in his wonderful mediumship, but they occurred almost continuously in his presence. As the books written by Home and his widow, in which full particulars are given, are obtainable, we forgo description, and pass to less accessible data.

Catherine (or Kate) Fox, the youngest of the three Fox sisters, was pre-eminent in producing Raps. She came to London in 1871.

⁷ Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: " "Ordered by the spirits" – How the First Public Meeting Came About to Demonstrate".

⁸ Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 10: "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852-3 and the Conversion of Robert Owen".

⁹ This date would be incorrect, see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: "Mrs. Mary Marshall – Paul J. Gaunt". She was the first English public medium; the story is a little confusing, as there were two Mary Marshall's.

¹⁰ Sharon DeBartolo Carmack DSNU has done some in-depth research into two of America's earliest mediums, one of whom is Maria B. Hayden, publishing a valuable biography in December 2020: "In Search of Maria B. Hayden: The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K." Sharon has kindly sent Pioneer a copy, which will be reviewed in due course.

Mrs. Everitt was another fine medium (private) for Raps.¹¹ My friend Mr. David Gow (Editor of "Light"), who knew her well, has described to me many of the phenomena he witnessed, and there are published accounts of raps in her presence in such odd places as in a church, in a theatre, in a railway train, and when riding in a cab through London streets. I have also heard Mr. Henry Withall¹² tell similar stories about her, Edmund Dawson Rogers, in his *Life and Experiences*, gives a good account of Mrs. Everitt.¹³

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How vivid are the personal experiences, and how convincing ! Though what happens to us may be insignificant compared with something of the same kind that has occurred elsewhere, yet our tiny blade of grass is more to us than a whole forest of giant trees. So I am tempted to related how Raps came to me when all alone.

In my study at the Hampden Club last year late at night, when all was still, I was writing at my desk when I thought I detected a wee sound on the table in front of me. I am always on my guard against letting myself imagine the presence of "spirits" in every crack of furniture or rattle of a window, so I dismissed this sound as probably due to a rustling of papers with which my table is usually covered. As I went on writing the sound became more definite—a succession of little taps. In front of me lay an empty cardboard box that had held fifty cigarettes, and a tiny fusillade appearing to come from that direction, I place the box to my ear. Quite distinct came a rain of light blows, such as the point of a lead pencil would make. I mentally asked, "Rap three times," and three raps were given in response. I repeated this several times, asking for different numbers, and each time received the number I asked for. I replaced the cigarette box in the original position and went on writing, and from time to time I could hear the fairy tattoo, which seemed to say, "We are here ! All is well." As I was engaged in "their" work, it is possible that spirit presences sought in this way to make themselves known. At other times I have heard loud raps on the chair alongside my bed after retiring, but the little incident of the cardboard box remains my most convincing experience of this kind.

CHARACTER OF RAPS

It is clear that in the phenomenon of Raps we are seeing the operation of some higher physics or chemistry, at present beyond our ken. Here are some of the descriptions.

"As if a heavy piece of artillery had been discharged in the vicinity" (Leah Underhill).

"Not unlike distant thunder or the discharge of artillery" (*Spiritual Magazine*)

"Some delicate as the ticking of a watch, others as loud as if made by kicks of horses" (*Spiritual Magazine*)

"A succession of raps all over the table, like a pelting shower of rain" (Mrs. Hayden).

"I was received with a chorus of raps such as fifty hammers, all striking rapidly, could hardly produce" (Cromwell Varley, with Kate Fox).

But the best account of all comes from Sir William Crookes. He writes (*Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, 1874, pages 86-87):—

"The popular name of "Raps conveys a very erroneous impression of this class of phenomena. At different times during my experiments I have heard delicate ticks, as with the point of a pin, a cascade of sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work; a

¹¹ See *Psypioneer*, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Early Spiritualism in England Continued: Mediumship of Mrs. Everitt".

¹² *Psypioneer*, Vol. 7, No. 8: "The late Mr. Henry Withall – Dawson Rogers".

¹³ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 2: "Reminiscences of a remarkable medium – H. A. Dallas".

cracking like that heard when a frictional machine is at work, sounds like scratching, the twittering as of a bird, etc.

“These sounds are noticed with almost every medium, each having a special peculiarity; they are more varied with Mr Home, but for power and certainty I have met with no one who at all approached Miss Kate Fox. . . It only seems necessary for her to place her hand on any substance for loud thuds to be heard in it, like a triple pulsation, sometimes loud enough to be heard several rooms off.

“In this manner I have heard them in a living tree, on a sheet of glass, on a stretched iron wire, on a stretched membrane, a tambourine, on a roof of a cab, and on the floor of a theatre. Moreover, actual contact is not always necessary. I have had these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, etc., when the medium’s hands and feet were held, when she was standing on a chair, when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling, when she was enclosed in a wire cage, and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have heard them on a glass harmonicon, I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. I have heard them on a sheet of paper, held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed through one corner.

“With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences, not produced by trickery or mechanical means.”

HOW PRODUCED

Ectoplasm is probably the material used in the production of Raps. Dr. Eugene Crowell (*The Spirit World*, Page 186) says they are done by the action of materialised hands. Dale Owen (*Debateable Land*, page 270), under the intriguing caption of “Seeing Raps,” describes how he saw them produced by “spirit lights,” striking the floor or the table. These lights, we now know, are probably of ectoplasmic formation. He says of such a light: “It rose and fell, as a hammer would, with which one was striking against the floor.” At each stroke a loud rap was heard. “It was exactly as if an invisible hand held an illuminated hammer and pounded with it.” Similar testimony is given by Signor, a well-known investigator of the early days. Speaking of a seance with Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox), he says (*Light*, 1883, page 570) “A beautiful spirit light was also brought into the room by the materialised hand of a spirit dear to the host. With that light the spirit touched the sitters, rapping with it answers to questions.” Another case of just the same kind is related by Benjamin Coleman, another early investigator.

THE WEDDING RAPS

My way sometimes takes me along Marylebone-road, and I never pass the Parish Church, where the marriage of Catharine Fox and Mr. H. D. Jencken (barrister-at-law) was celebrated, without recalling with emotion the scene at the subsequent wedding breakfast when the unseen spirit guests rapped merrily all about the room, and tipped the festal board.¹⁴

Leslie Curnow’s series continues in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 8, No. 4: “Spirit Lights – Marvels Unknown to Science”, by W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.



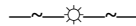
¹⁴ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 9: “Marriage of Miss Kate Fox – The Spiritualist”.

92nd Anniversary of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 7, July 2010, gave the first of several articles on Sir Arthur's 80th anniversary of his passing and, as we now approach July 2022, it brings us to the 92nd anniversary of the SNU's 'Honorary President-in-Spirit'; Pioneer republishes part of this tribute with some additional information.

My former colleague, Leslie Price, who is the founder editor of Psypioneer, noted:

On July 7th, 2010, it was 80 years since the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. To mark this occasion we are reprinting two tributes from the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) journal "Psychic Science".¹⁵ Interestingly, both tributes note ACD's Unitarian sympathies.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was "Promoted"—as *The Two Worlds* headline described it—around 8:30am on 7th July, 1930. He was, at his own request an hour earlier, helped out of bed and seated looking out of the windows of his home, 'Windlesham', with his immediate family around him: Jean and Adrian holding his hands and Lena Jean and Denis on either side of them. Unable to speak, he looked at each of them in turn, and then passed on to his next great adventure.

Four days later, he was buried in the Windlesham grounds close to the little garden hut where he had so often sat writing. It was a simple ceremony conducted by the Rev C Drayton Thomas, even though he had expressed a wish for there to be no "clerical interference". Some 300 were in attendance, the scene being more like a garden party than a funeral. A grave-board made of solid British oak bore his name, date of birth, and the epitaph: "Steel true, blade straight". Deliberately, significantly, and subtly, there was no date of death on the grave-board.

On Sunday 13th July, a Spiritualist memorial service was held at the Albert Hall with a reported attendance of 8,000—even though the seating capacity was only around 5,000, meaning standing room only for some 3,000. A chair had been left vacant for ACD on the stage; and the presiding medium, Estelle Roberts, said she saw his spirit form enter the auditorium and not only sit in the chair but provide her with a private message for Lady Conan Doyle.



Lady Conan Doyle passed on in 1940 and was buried next to ACD. But in 1955, the family sold Windlesham and their bodies were exhumed and taken for burial in the churchyard of the 13th century Norman church at Minstead, in the New Forest, not far

¹⁵ Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science – James Hewat McKenzie (founder of BCPS)".

from ACD's former country home, Bignell House.¹⁶ His headstone there bears the additional words "Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters".

A 'man of letters' indeed he was: not only a writer of fiction and a prolific writer on all manner and kinds of factual and spiritual matters but also he was a poet and song writer (he even finished an operetta – *Jane Annie: or The Good Conduct Prize*, 1893 – for James Barrie who had suffered a nervous breakdown). One of ACD's poems, *The Farewell*, seems particularly poignant here:

The Poems of Arthur Conan Doyle Collected Edition (1922)

The Farewell

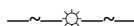
THE SOUL TO THE BODY:

SO SORRY, dear old friend, you have to die,
We've been such goodly partners, you and I,
Such comrades in our work, and mates at play,
We've lived together many a happy day.
It's only lately that you disappoint,
Sluggish in limb and clogged in every joint;
But that is not your fault, for grim old Time
Has blocked your tiny arteries with lime,
And cut your sap and left its withering trace
In every wrinkle of your dear old face.
No, faithful comrade, I have nought but praise;
If there were fault, 'twas mine. You walked the ways
On which I led you, be they low or high,
Thanks for all services! And so good-bye!

THE BODY TO THE SOUL:

GOOD-BYE, old friend! You've used me many a year,
And, as you say, I'm rather out of gear,
And quite disposed to rest. No doubt you'll find
Some other form congenial to your mind,
And moulded on this wreck you leave behind,
For that, they say, persists. May it be one
That serves you faithfully, as I have done.
Of course it's right our partnership to sever
Since I am old and you as young as ever.
I'll find some cancer cell or handy germ
To bring my waning forces to a term
And break the framework of the old machine.
Then down at Woking or at Golder's Green
They'll do the trick. And you, friend, from afar,
Will see the oaken chest or cinder jar,
And know that I have gone without a pang
Back to the elements from which I sprang.

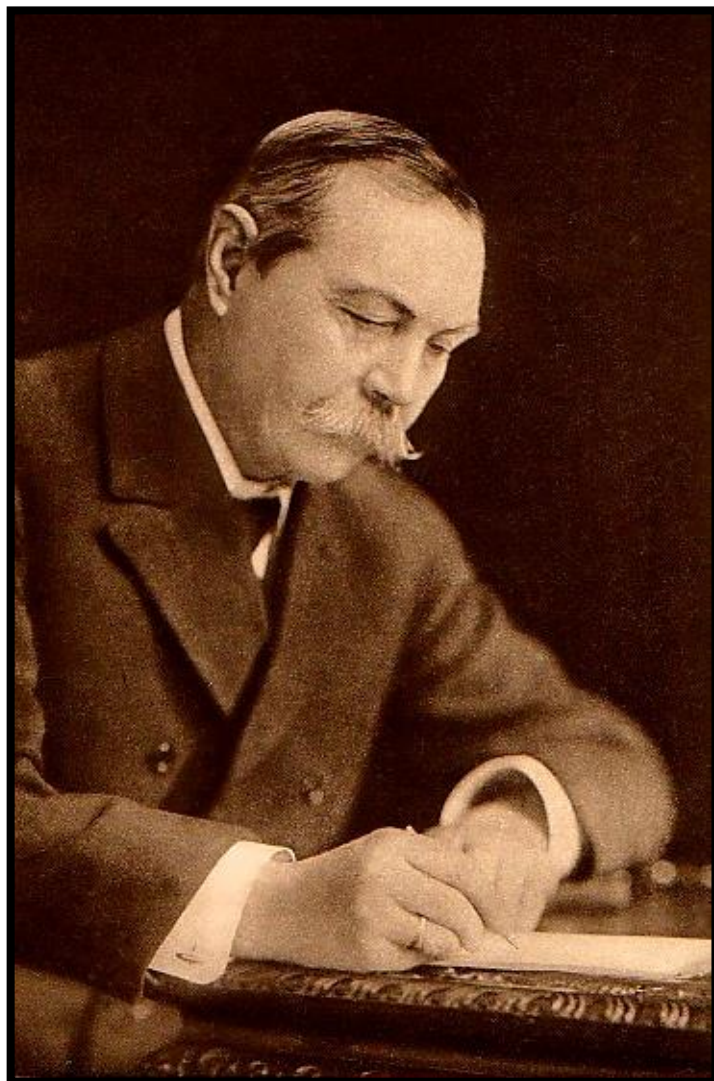
Garth Willey.



¹⁶ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 8, No. 12: "Did Conan Doyle Haunt his Old Cottage? – Leslie Price".

A. C. D. AS I KNEW HIM

From *Psychic Science*:¹⁷



If brevity be the soul of wit, I can accord the palm to our friend and comrade, Arthur Conan Doyle, whose ability to put in a few words and in clear, choice language, the very essence of the situation, was both a pleasure and an instruction to those who were favoured to receive letters from him. I noticed this also at the College Council table during the years when he was Hon. President; he would listen carefully to a discussion, giving a guiding word now and again, and then by the time all had had their say, he had ready a clear, brief minute dealing with the situation, which seldom needed alteration. To be both brief and comprehensive was one of his many remarkable gifts.

Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle were two of the very earliest members of the College, and later became Life Members. I have a note dated February, 1920, three months before the opening of the College, in which he asks for membership, wishes the great venture success, and promises to interest others.

This he loyally did to the very end, for he found the College method of experiment particularly suited to the many who continually came to him for help.

I remember well, how delighted he was that he was able to introduce Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, now Research Officer of the S.P.R.,¹⁸ but at the time one of the editors of the “Scientific American,” anonymously to the College as an “enquirer who may be useful.” He saw him get more and more interested through sittings with John Sloan, Evan Powell, the Crewe Circle, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and others. The results then obtained made a case for investigation, such a case, that Mr. Bird, finding “Margery” on his return to the States, continued his quest to the present day with the most far-reaching effects to his nation.

On another occasion, a lady arrived with a letter from Sir Arthur, simply saying that if I could help the bearer it might be of service to the cause. A sitting was available with Mrs. Leonard, which bore unexpected fruits, for the bearer of the missive returned later to

¹⁷ *Psychic Science*—Quarterly Transactions, British College Psychic Science Vol. IX.—No. 3, October 1930, pages 214-16.

¹⁸ Re:—“*Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, now Research Officer of the S.P.R.,...*” Malcolm Bird was Research Officer of the American S.P.R. (ASPR), not the London-based S.P.R., as it may suggest. *Psychopioneer Ed.*

tell me she was Miss Louise Owen, Lord Northcliffe's secretary, and through her came Hannen Swaffer, and all the help which has come to the movement through his association. Books might be written of the results of the unwearied efforts Sir Arthur made to introduce people to a reliable centre, so that they too might get first-hand evidence of the facts in which lay "the hope and future of the race."

But he had many sorrows as well as joys in his labours. No one strove harder than he for a just settlement in any dispute, and there were many in such a movement; he never provoked a storm, but no one was more prepared to fight to the bitter end if injustice was shown and had to be put right. Want of loyalty and gratitude among workers hit him hardly. "Most of the internal troubles come my way" he says in one note, "I love Spiritualism but I often loathe some spiritualists. "Well one can but slog on, but I wish sometimes I could avoid all personal intercourse save with a few chosen ones, and do my work with my pen from my study."

All engaged in public work can echo his words, and we honour him the more that to the very end he made himself available for everything good and bad that affected the Movement.

Was there ever a stouter champion of the "Margery" mediumship than he? In 1925, he felt while Dr. and Mrs. Crandon were in the throes of the contest with Houdini, the "renegade psychic," as he called the latter, that we ought to do something to show the brave couple in Boston that we were following and sympathising closely with their struggles. A few members of the College gladly collaborated with him in choosing and sending a silver loving cup "as a sign of sympathy with their long struggle for truth from a few friends in the British College of Psychic Science." But his was the quick sympathy to see the cheer that might come to them, as it did, from such a token.

I often had cause as Hon. Sec. to the College, to appreciate his direct friendship and loyalty. He was not one to listen to slanders without seeking to find the truth. He wrote on one occasion, "I am worried about something: came to see me and said that three mediums (mentioning their names) had all given as a reason for being no longer connected with the College, that they were turned down because they used the name of Christ or associated Christ with their powers."

"Of course, I am myself Unitarian, though with every reverence for the great Teacher, but I would naturally resent any penalising of a medium for his views or for his method of interpreting his own powers. But knowing your good sense, it is inconceivable to me that such a thing could occur. I am sure there has been some misunderstanding."

This is the letter of a real friend, and I had no difficulty in refuting the slanderous charge, two of the mediums involved sending me personal letters for Sir Arthur as to their respect for the College, and the help that had been given them; as to the other it was news to me that she had any particular religious views. He was fully satisfied, and replied that he had dealt severely with the person who had made the allegations. As I look over his many letters during the years I see many instances of the same noble loyalty, and realise that what I experienced was being shared out to hundreds of other leaders to assist them in their fight. "It is team work with all of us, and each has his place," he remarks again. Some of his critics, friendly and unfriendly, thought he was over loyal to the Cause, for he did not believe in bringing before the public every occasion for scandal, but that he was aware of it and deeply regretted it, was obvious. "I think our Movement needs a Sherlock Holmes quite as much as a propagandist at present," was his comment in discussing one incident.

His loyalty was accompanied by an open-handed generosity. He realised, more than most, that societies needed financial help, and the College shared liberally with other

centres out of the funds available from his lectures. "I send you a cheque for 50 guineas for the Fund. I wish it were more, but the need and poverty is great everywhere. For some years past I have never paid out less than £2,000 for the Cause, here or in America or abroad. The College will live in history, as will a good deal which is happening now." What might our work not be if more, out of their abundance, saw the need and offered such help ?

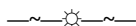
The influence of his two visits to the U.S.A. with Lady Doyle and his family was very deep. It is not too much to say that these gave a new standing to psychic study which is still felt. In my own visit, I met so many whose interest and effort had been notably quickened by a word from, or even by a look at, the great pioneers, as if a Pentecostal blessing had accompanied them.

A mass of correspondence from Sir Arthur to one who collaborated with him in preparing his two vol. "History of Spiritualism" came at one period into my hands, and bears witness again to an outstanding genius for friendship and loyalty and true comradeship, and is a witness also to the assiduity and labours he devoted to finding out the facts dealing with early Spiritualism in U.S.A. and in Britain. For two years the history was never out of his mind, in addition to his many other labours, public and private, for, as he says in notes embodied later in a letter to *The Times*:—

"Spiritualism has been the butt of the wits and the scorn of the highbrow, as its great prototype was before it, but even its warmest opponents must now admit after two generations of effort, that ridicule and misrepresentation are not going to put it down, and that it is destined not only to live but to grow. At present it is known to most men by its weaknesses, real or alleged, even as early Christianity was to the Romans, who saw nothing of the great realities behind, for man is always weaker than the truth which he may champion, but we who know what the effects of the facts have been upon our own minds and souls, know beyond all doubt that a very great thing has come into the world and that it is our duty, in season or out of season, to call the attention of our fellow mortals that they may share our knowledge."

Here is the key of the labours put into the "History of Spiritualism" as well as to all the gigantic efforts our leader, in conjunction with many others, put into a glorious ten years. 1920-30 will indeed live in the history of Spiritualism, and the names of Arthur and Jean Conan Doyle are emblazoned at the very head in the very heart of the Sacred Scroll which tells the story to those who will follow and bear the burden and heat of the coming days.

B. McK.
[Barbara McKenzie]



Further on page 217 is this valuable insight by Stanley De Brath:—¹⁹

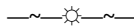
A.C.D., AS I KNEW HIM

As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's secretary in psychic matters, I know what an enormous mail he received from all over the world. A few of these letters were abusive and libellous, marked by him with a single note of exclamation (!), and not a few came from individuals who regarded their own trifling and commonplace experiences as heaven-sent mediumship, but there were, now and again, real human cries for help, or of gratitude for guidance received. They were passed on to me with perhaps a single word—"Help," "Foolish," "Yes," or "No." In every important case I sent him a copy of my answer, so that he might be fully conversant with my continued correspondence.

Personally we were excellent friends, and I greatly valued the trust he had in me not to let him down in any way. In face of his Unitarian views (which I myself fully share) it seemed to me a notable instance of his breadth of outlook that he should have perceived the supreme import to all human history of the three facts on which he laid stress (1) Hebrew Monotheism; (2) the Mission of Jesus; and (3) Modern Spiritualism. He rightly said that the rise and fall of Empires is nothing in comparison with these as causes of human history.

If anyone will consider calmly and without prejudice what the world must have been without the influence of the Bible and even the mutilated and institutional Christianity of Europe and America, he will see that the perception of facts so large that they mostly escape notice, is the chief characteristic of a really great mind. Most of us fasten on some little portion, such as the wars of the 16th century, or the character of some outstanding leader, and base our estimates on that. To see events in perspective and proportion is one of the elements of greatness.

STANLEY DE BRATH.



At the head of this article Leslie Price noted: "Interestingly, both tributes note ACD's Unitarian sympathies". Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5, published "Is Spiritualism Indebted to Christianity?" This article was published in "Psychic News", December 12th, 1936, page 9, by W.H. Evans. The paper's editor, Maurice Barbanell, noted:

Here is an article that will provoke controversy. The writer has given forty years of study to our philosophy. What do you think of his views?

A GREAT deal of the misunderstanding about what, I suppose, may be called plain Spiritualism and Christian Spiritualism arises from ignorance. As a matter of fact, what is called Spiritualism, "without affix, prefix, or suffix," as some proclaim it, is nothing more than Unitarian Christianity.

At the end of this article, it is continued with: "Sir Conan Doyle upon Spiritualism", where Doyle continues his view of Unitarianism.

¹⁹ De Brath was editor of *Psychic Science* from October 1926, until he resigned in April 1936.

The following issue of Psypioneer:

Addendum note by Garth Willey

In the introductory notes to last month's Psypioneer commemoration of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle I noted that the words "Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters" had been added to ACD's new headstone when he and Jean Conan Doyle's graves had been moved from the Windlesham grounds to the 13th century Norman church at Minstead.

Synchronistically, perhaps, by our 'friendly powers that be' except that it was a couple of weeks late albeit I had been offered it at least a month previously, I was lent a magazine containing what my helpful friend had termed "an interesting article about ACD."

The magazine was *This England*, Vol. 38, # 2, Summer 2005 and the article was titled *The Hampshire Home of Arthur Conan Doyle*, by Ann Priest. It provided an overview of Sir Arthur's early adulthood as a GP in Southsea, near Portsmouth, his return to Hampshire in 1925 when he bought his country retreat Bignell Wood on the outskirts of Minstead, the various locations in Hampshire which he utilised as scenes of action in *Sherlock Holmes* and various other short stories and novels,²⁰ and details of the eventual re-interment of ACD's body under a great oak tree in a quiet corner of a churchyard in Minstead in 1955.

The article records that the graveyard is at the Church of All Saints and the exact layout and the words on ACD's granite cross and tombstone are:

Steel True, Blade Straight
Arthur Conan Doyle
Knight
Patriot, Physician & Man of Letters.
22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930

Thus the date of death was also added as well as the extra words, and an ampersand was used rather than the word 'and' as I reported in the July edition of Psypioneer.

The *This England* article includes some lovely photos – but, rather than chase up permission to use them here, the name of the church soon revealed a website²¹ with photos and yet a little more information:

The re-interment took place in secrecy at 5:00a.m. on a July, 1955 morning, the name(s) of the occupant(s) of the grave only being revealed when an interim stone bearing the initials A.C.D. appeared. The Minstead Church website explains the reason for secrecy: All Saints Church is C of E and it had taken some negotiation to permit the burial; and then only on the proviso that it was on the far boundary of the church grounds.

The Minstead Church website also states that ACD was "buried in an upright position being a devoted spiritualist" in the garden of his Crowborough home; but that "The couple

²⁰ *The White Company*, 1891, and the *Sherlock Holmes* stories *Silver Blaze*, 1892, *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, 1892, and *His Last Bow*, 1917 – and the fact that *Sherlock Holmes* himself was described as 'a Hampshire man by birth' in *A Study in Scarlet*, 1887, and the character Dr John Watson was based on a Southsea acquaintance of ACD's and, indeed, Dr Watson was said to have spent time at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Netley whilst going through "the course prescribed for surgeons in the army".

²¹ This website appears to no longer exist but there is an array of various sites giving similar information, with various accounts of Sir Arthur being *buried in an upright position*. There are no indications of this being the case in the mainstream Spiritualist press of the day.

were laid, horizontally this time, to rest in a double grave early one morning in a double lead casket.”

Now, the Psypioneer team knows nothing of upright burial being common amongst “devoted spiritualists.” So it is probably a misinformed writer for the Minstead graveyard who glibly wrote of it. And irrespective of the proclivities of “devoted spiritualists,” whether it was even true of ACD’s Crowborough burial is open to conjecture. If any readers can shed any light on either of these matters then we’d be glad to hear from you.

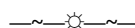


And would you believe, an Addendum to this Addendum!

On August 1st, I bought via AbeBooks an ACD first edition from a UK bookseller, Arabella’s Beautiful Books in East Sussex. On learning that I was a Doylean, they said they had a few small bonus items that I might appreciate: “Yes, please!”

On receipt on 24th August imagine my pleasant surprise when one of the items was the appended photo of the Minstead gravestone! (Another was a beautiful copy of ACD’s handwritten Last Will; and a third was a copy of a 1924 cheque written by ACD payable to the LSA.) The gravestone is in relatively pristine condition – by contrast to the photo on the Minstead website – and the photo must have been taken soon after it was laid.

So called ‘inexplicable synchronicity’ indeed! I leave it to readers’ imagination and/or understanding of the power of those in the spirit world as to how firstly, the This England magazine and, secondly, these items came into my hands in such a timely – albeit a month late – manner!



A report from Maurice Barbanell, then editor of the “Two Worlds”, July 9th, 1955:

CONAN DOYLE EXHUMATION MAKES FRONT-PAGE NEWS

THE bodies of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his wife featured in a story that began almost as a Sherlock Holmes thriller last weekend. When, however, members of the family explained the reasons for the secret exhumation the mystery almost entirely fizzled out. The first account was front-page news in the “Daily Express” last Saturday, quickly followed by the London “Evening News,” which made the story the main feature on its front page.

Thereafter nearly every national and Sunday newspaper featured the happenings—a tribute to the magic of the Conan Doyle name.

“Dawn Mystery in Village” was one “Daily Express” headline. Its reporter said that the villagers of Crowborough, Sussex, were talking about “the last mystery of Sherlock Holmes” because of the secrecy surrounding the exhumation.

CLOAKED IN MYSTERY

With the headline, “Diggers Sworn to Secrecy,” the London “Evening News” said “No Sherlock Holmes adventure was ever cloaked in deeper mystery than that which wreathed the exhumation of his creator.” It added erroneously that the memorial garden with its two graves had become a shrine for Spiritualists.

This newspaper referred to Doyle’s Spiritualism and mentioned how throughout her long illness, which preceded her passing, Lady Doyle was comforted by spirit messages from her husband.

At the end of this account was given one of the reasons for the exhumation. The house, Windlesham, is to be sold. The family had decided that the bodies of Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle, together with the ashes of their son Denis, should be buried together in a new family grave.

The graves, however, do not form part of the ground which is to be sold. They are part of a cottage which was owned by Denis and is now the property of his widow, the former Princess Mdivani.

PERMANENT REST

Then the situation was complicated on Saturday night. A statement was issued by the senior partner of a firm of solicitors acting for the Conan Doyle estate.

“There is no mystery about it at all,” he said. “The bodies are being taken to a permanent resting place in the family vault.” As there is no family vault, his statement did not help to clarify matters. “I cannot say where the family vault is,” he added. Obviously he could not because it does not exist.

On Sunday, Jean, Sir Arthur’s daughter, a group-captain in the Women’s Royal Air Force, said that the bodies were exhumed because there were no grandchildren to take over the family house. It was her mother’s last wish that her grandchildren should live at Windlesham.

BODIES IN NEW FOREST

Adrian Conan Doyle who is living in Portugal, explained that he was having the bodies reinterred in Minstead churchyard in the heart of the New Forest. It was there that the Conan Doyles had a cottage. It was also there that Sir Arthur wrote “The White Company,” which Adrian described as his father’s most famous book, with the New Forest as a background.

The “Sunday Express” quoted him as saying that he was sure his father would like to rest there. Adrian, of course, must have been misreported. He knows the difference between his father and his father’s earthly body.

In a later statement Jean Conan Doyle said that the family, for several years, had felt that it would be better to move their parents’ bodies to some more permanent place. Eventually the garden where the bodies were buried would pass into other hands.

When I read the hullabaloo concerning the exhumation, my mind went back to the strange burial service of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his garden 25 years ago. This curiously enough, was conducted by a Church of England parson and was almost orthodox.

It was cold, formal, and contained no reference to the positive evidence of survival, the central propaganda to which Sir Arthur devoted so many years of his life.

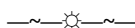
INSPIRED ORATION

When it was over and we were all leaving, feeling puzzled as to why Spiritualism’s message had not been stressed, Lady Doyle stopped Ernest Oaten and asked if he would like to say a few words.

The famous Spiritualist closed his eyes for a few moments. The crowd gathered round him. Then, obviously inspired he delivered a panegyric of Conan Doyle which was a perfect epitome of his Spiritualist outlook and struck just the right note for a Spiritualist funeral.

The chagrin of the many Spiritualists who were present was transformed as a result of the inspired words that flowed from the semi-entranced Oaten.

M.B.



Given Barbanell’s comments above “... my mind went back to the strange burial service of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his garden 25 years ago. This curiously enough, was conducted by a Church of England parson and was almost orthodox.”

However, it should be noted:

The Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas, a Methodist minister, was a well-known psychical researcher. For example, in his capacity as a member of the Council of the S.P.R., he was involved in the testing of the direct-voice medium Leslie Flint, as published in Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6: “Leslie Flint Public Séances”. Drayton Thomas was also an early sitter of Mrs Osbourne Leonard; he wrote many books and contributed to SPR’s Journal and Proceedings. The Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas was not just a religious minister but championed survival through mediumship.



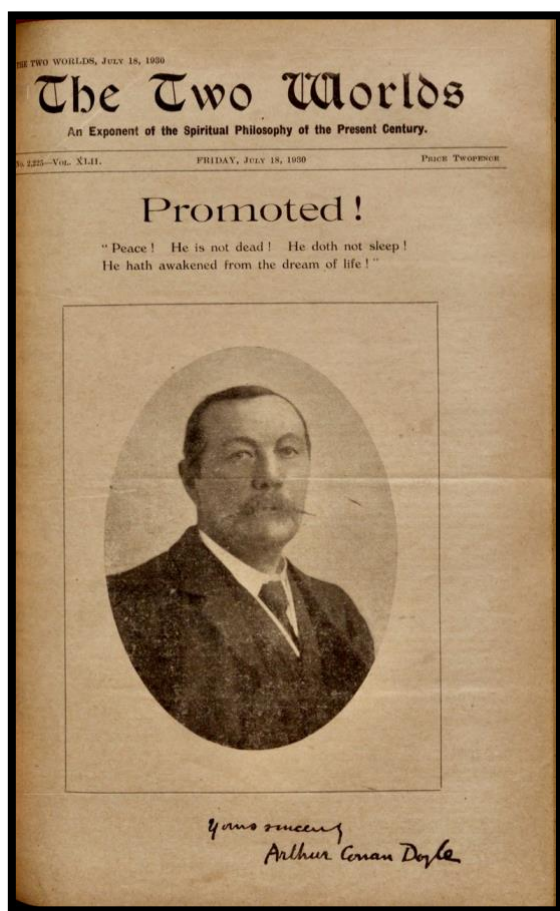
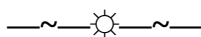
Many Spiritualists then and now would not necessarily agree with Barbanell's above comments about his funeral, i.e., "It was cold, formal, and contained no reference to the positive evidence of survival, the central propaganda to which Sir Arthur devoted so many years of his life."

Below is the coverage of the funeral under the editorship of Ernest Oaten as published in the *Two Worlds*, July 18th, 1930:

It was the happiest funeral we have ever attended.

A smiling company turned their eyes from earth to heaven, and offered their congratulations to a friend promoted to higher office.

THE FUNERAL



Glorious sunshine flooded the lawn at Windlesham on Friday when the mortal remains were laid in a flower-lined grave in the garden of his home. The scene was unique. We passed through an archway to the lawn, amidst a mass of rambler roses in the full glory of their summer gaiety. A well-mown lawn bordered by trees, in which the tinted copper beech, fir and birch mingled with the swaying roses whilst at the far end the quaint, many-gabled house, with its robe of greenery, made a pretty scene. The low level windows all open to the summer breeze, and the rustic porch looking over the Ashdown Forest, made a picture of pastoral loveliness. Some 300 people formed an irregular square, at one end of which were two trestles. Except that conversation was subdued, it might have been a home-coming or a garden party. There were few signs of mourning. A few of Sir Arthur's literary friends in the conventional frock suit and tall hat contrasted with the bulk of the company, who were in work-a-day garb, and the household servants in their working clothes.

Through the open window there faintly floated the strains of the piano, and there was a call for a few voices to lead the singing.

Then came the large polished oak coffin, which was reverently laid upon the trestles, surmounted by a massive wreath of red roses, and behind it Lady Doyle, smiling and self-contained. The gallant knight had taken another journey, but they would presently hear of his progress. Lady Doyle was quietly dressed in grey chiffon, and was accompanied by her son Malcolm in morning dress, and his sister Jean, also in grey, leading Sir Arthur's Airedale dog "Paddy." Behind them Miss Mary Doyle and Mr. Leckie (father-in-law), his daughter, and a few intimate friends including Major Wilson, private secretary to Sir Arthur who has been his intimate friend since 1885. Sir Arthur's eldest son, Dennis, was confined to bed with laryngitis, the result of a midnight motor rush for oxygen in the hours of difficulty. He listened to the service through an open window. The Rev. C. Drayton Thomas conducted a simple but impressive service.



It opened with the plaintive hymn, “Open My Eyes that I May See Glimpses of Truth.”

The Rev. C. C. Angel then read several passages of Scripture: Psalm 121; Ecc. Xii., 6 and 7; Mal. iii., 17; and I. Cor. xiii., 3 to 7.²²

The Rev. C. D. Thomas offered a prayer—a prayer of thankfulness for the gift of life, and for the opportunity of service, and for the consciousness that He who provided life here has provided life eternal; of thanks for angel guidance and guardianship, and for the comfort and strength received from on high.

The company joined in singing “God Be With You Till We meet Again.”

Mr. Thomas then read a statement from Lady Doyle: “We know that it is only the natural body that we are committing to the ground. The etheric body, or, as St. Paul said, the spiritual, is the exact duplicate, and lives on, and is able when the psychic conditions are attuned to the spiritual, even to show itself to earthly human eyes. The beloved one here will continue to keep in close touch with the family, although they may not have the power to see his presence. Only

²² **Light, July 10th, 1930:** “The service was simple. It was conducted by the Rev. Charles Drayton Thomas and the Rev. C. C. Angell, a relative of the family. The latter read passages from the Scriptures: Psalm CXXI (“I will lift up my eyes unto the hills”), Ecclesiastes XII (“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken”), Malachi III (“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels”), and I. Corinthians XIII (“Love suffereth long and is kind”), these being Sir Arthur’s favourite passages. Mr. Drayton Thomas offered an impressive impromptu prayer which he followed by reading a paper that was described as “an expression by Lady Conan Doyle and the whole family of their attitude towards death and the larger life,” it being also a heartfelt tribute to the splendid and unselfish life of Sir Arthur.

“The two well-known hymns, “Open my eyes” and “God be with you till we meet again,” were sung with fervour, and then, following the coffin, the great gathering reverently made its way to the grave beside the summer-house which Sir Arthur had used as an outdoor study.”

those who have that God given extra sight—clairvoyance—will be able actually to see his form, but he will, we are assured, find ways to make his presence known to them in their daily lives, and so hearten and guide them. Sir Arthur will continue to carry on the work of telling the world the truth.”

Mr. Thomas added a few impressive words: “He is not dead. God bless him for his beautiful and unselfish life; his courage, his championship of the cause of those suffering from injustice: his ready help to those in sorrow. He had no thought of self. Never did man more worthily follow in his Master’s footsteps.”

The company slowly followed the coffin through the garden, across a tennis court, over a rustic bridge, and through a tree-lined path to the little glade, a blaze of golden elder, where stood the hut in which he did so much literary work. The door of the hut was open, and within were visible the chair drawn up to the table, with pens, ink, pencil and pad, as though his work would be resumed next morning, and before the hut a flower-lined grave, with a few rugs spread to hide the bare earth. Around the glade wires been stretched from tree to tree, and over a hundred floral tributes hung therefrom. Amongst them was one from the Directors and readers of THE TWO WORLDS, bearing the inscription:

“With gratitude to a gallant knight, who lives to fight upon another field.”

It was a riot of colour—the sun shone, the birds sang, the hum of insects was borne on the air. The company stood smiling and triumphant; even the dog lay with his muzzle towards the open grave, as if expecting a caress.



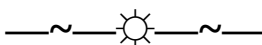
The Rev. C. D. Thomas, in a few pointed words, alluded to the fact that it was not usual to distinguish between body and soul. They were laying aside the worn-out garment which had been used by the soul of Sir Arthur. He will continue to be with us, with his intelligence and ability undimmed by death. “Sir Arthur, we are gathered here to show our respect and affection for you. To thank you for all you did for us, and when we remember your work in the world it

will encourage us to do what we can while it is yet day. God's blessing rest upon you, and go with you now and always." He concluded with a Benediction.

At Lady Doyle's request Mr. E. W. Oaten added a few words. They were there to do honour to a great man—the biggest man in mind and heart he had ever known. In the words of Marc Antony, "He was my friend." And now he has left us—but he is still ours. He will still labour for the cause he loved. God bless him for his work. A true gentleman, a faithful friend, an honest Spiritualist.

Lady Doyle kissed a red rose, and dropped it on the coffin, and the company slowly dispersed.

Never was a funeral like this one. Not a blind was drawn, not a tear was shed, not a voice choked. No one could doubt the sincerity of the family, and their confidence and conviction. An atmosphere of calm buoyancy pervaded the whole scene. One had the deep consciousness of the presence of a vast cloud of witnesses, and if (as we expect) Sir Arthur was present, he would know that the love and respect of the company was real and abundant. It was the happiest funeral we have ever attended. A smiling company turned their eyes from earth to heaven, and offered their congratulations to a friend promoted to higher office. The fervent wish in everyone's mind is that God will raise up as faithful a successor. Who will—who can—do his work as the ambassador of the angel world ? ²³



²³ At the end of the above article, it was noted:

CROWDED CHURCHES—SPIRITUALIST churches throughout the country were crowded last Sunday evening, when large numbers attended to observe the one minute's silence in memory of Sir Arthur, which was observed everywhere. Speakers and demonstrators alike referred to Sir Arthur's great work for Spiritualism, and expressed their convictions that he would still influence the cause so dear to his heart from the Other side.

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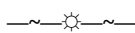
July 2nd – 9th 2022

September 3rd – 10th 2022



This page also has a selection of downloadable important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union, designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

Also, a link to all “Pspioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer



PUBLIC DEBATES:

Spiritualism – Christianity

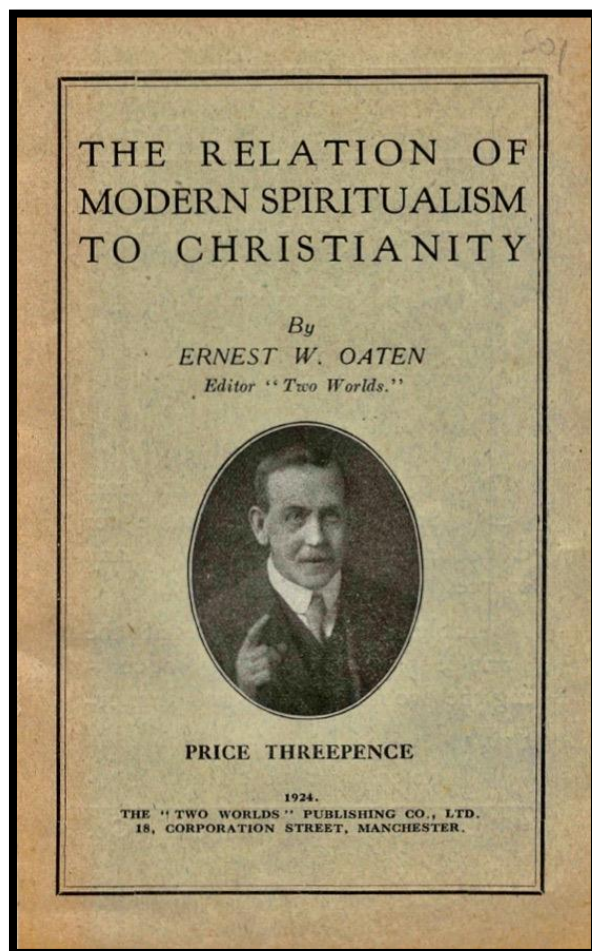
Concluded from the last issue:

The “Two Worlds” 1924 publication published below was kindly sent to Pioneer by historian Marc Demarest, who runs “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals” (IAPSOP): ²⁴

The Relation of Modern Spiritualism to Christianity.

An address delivered at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, Manchester, on Sunday, February 4th, 1923, by Ernest W. Oaten (Editor Two Worlds).

J. Cuming Walters, M.A., in the Chair.



THE MEDIUMSHIP OF JESUS.

He had often heard it stated that Jesus was the greatest medium who had ever lived, but such claim was, he feared, based upon the inference that he was super-excellent in every conceivable way. He (the speaker) did not agree that Jesus was the greatest of mediums—he was far more than that.

He was the master of psychic laws, who chose as his circle both those who had mediumship and those who provided the psychic elements for the best use of such gifts. He carried that circle of twelve with him, and he directed and used their powers as a great musician uses a grand organ. That he possessed mediumship is quite probable, but not all phases of mediumship. As a healer he appears to have been remarkable.

As a psychometrist his interview with the woman of Samaria shows that he was successful in some degree. He appears to have unearthed her past connections with four husbands and her loose alliance with her present choice. It is not an exceptional reading, but if Jesus returned to Manchester

and held a similar interview with a woman of that locality in the neighbouring park he would become liable to a fine or imprisonment for fortune-telling. (Laughter).

²⁴ “The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: <http://iapsop.com>”.

The site also archives the now defunct issues of Psypioneer (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the Pioneer issues.

No. No ! ! He did not want laughter. It was a grim fact that in a country supposedly Christian the very acts and practices of Jesus were condemned by law.²⁵ The great Nazarene had some clairvoyant power, as is evidenced by his ability to see the ass over against Bethany some seven miles away, and to even pronounce the words which would persuade the owner to release it. These gifts were good and useful, but when one comes to the recital of physical mediumship Peter occupies the centre of the picture. On the Mount of Transfiguration it was “Peter, and those that were with him were heavy with sleep.” How can the Christian explain that phenomenon ? Peter, James and John (not all the twelve, if you please) accompanied their Master to the Mount, and these were witnesses of the most astounding incident in their lives, the materialisation of Moses and Elias. One would think they would be all alive and intensely interested, but we are told “Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep.” None but a Spiritualist can understand it.

PETER—THE PHYSICAL MEDIUM.

Well ! he had been to materialising seances and had seen and handled the forms of men known to have died some years before, and in all those seances someone had been asleep (in trance or semi-trance). That person had been the medium, and the sleepiness of Peter, who is especially mentioned, is the indication of his mediumship, and that is corroborated by the fact that these physical phenomena accompanied Peter after the crucifixion. When there was levitation over water to be accomplished Peter was the one chosen, and after Calvary Peter was the central figure of the happenings at Pentecost. For Peter the prison gates were opened, etc.

They were sometimes told that the Old Testament was against the production of Spiritualistic phenomena. Moses had recorded certain prohibitions and penalties. The following is perhaps the strongest argument anent this point:—“And here I must . . . show that Christ broke the law of Moses regarding ‘seeking to spirits of the dead,’ so far as good spirits are concerned. This He did in a most emphatic manner. Let the reader especially note this, for it is the most remarkable case in the sacred history, because it demonstrates, and no doubt was planned by our Saviour to demonstrate, that express abrogation of the Mosaic law regarding the spirits of the dead. Christ abrogated this law by Himself seeking the spirit of Moses, the very promulgator of that law, and leading his disciples to do the same, Christ conducted his disciples, Peter, James and John, up into the Mount of Transfiguration, and introduced them to Moses and Elias.

Of Elias we need not speak, for having been translated, he might not strictly be called a spirit of the dead; but Moses, we are told, died in Mount Nebo, and that the Lord buried him in a valley there. Yet Christ went to seek this spirit, as if the case was studied literally. He might have commanded Moses to appear before Him in His own room, but no, as the law against seeking to the dead was to be abolished, He went to the Spirit of the great dead—to Moses, the very man who prohibited such an act by the law in question, and there, on the Mount, broke the law before his face; and by His example taught His disciples, the future proclaimers of His new law to the world, to do the same.” So says William Howitt in “History of the Supernatural.”

EVIDENCES OF MEDIUMSHIP.

To return to Jesus and the phases of mediumship shown by him. When he was questioned on one occasion he paused and wrote upon the ground, and then answered. Why did he write ? Because he had to get the answer before he gave it. Automatic writing was to-day very prevalent, and such men as Rev. Vale Owen and R. J. Lees got their messages from the spirit world by this means. Probably Jesus found it easier in the then conditions to get his answer by writing than by inspiration.

²⁵ Please see the Pioneer pdf booklet, “The Effect of the Vagrancy Act”, advertised elsewhere in this issue.

Or again, when on one occasion he was journeying to raise the sick, we are told “he groaned in spirit.” Why should a man groan when going to do an act of healing ? Your family doctor does not groan when he drives up to your house in his motor. Why the groaning ? None but a medium of great power knows the unbearable tension which supervenes when the power is concentrated on him before a powerful and successful seance. He (the speaker) had often experienced it—intense irritation as of carrying a great burden often makes one shiver and groan. He had heard such on many occasions. No one but a psychic understands the fulness of such an incident. It was the symbol and evidence of psychic power.

In the healing of the blind on one occasion “he spit upon the ground and made clay of the spittle” to anoint the eyes of a sufferer. This was an insanitary action which in the present day would make him liable to a fine of 40s. and costs. Would it not be easier to touch the eyes directly ? But probably Jesus knew his business best. Delayed and continuous action of the psychic force was probably necessary and the clay was loaded with this force so that the eyes could absorb it slowly. It was easier and quicker than holding the eyes for an hour, but it produced the same effect. Of course, the blind man found trouble. They had no newspaper reporters or psychical researchers in those days, but doubtless there were as many critics as to-day. We can imagine the man who was healed surrounded by them. “How did he do it ?” “What did it feel like ?” “Did he know you previously ?” “Will it be permanent ?” and a hundred other questions and innuendoes were voiced. Some of us might well imitate the erstwhile blind man who seemed to say, “a plague on you all.” “One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

THE MEANING OF GETHSEMANE.

But let us touch another side of the Master’s character. Come with me to Gethsemane and watch the psychometrist who has sensed the tragedy approaching him. Weak and exhausted by the work he had done, his psychic power was depleted, for it ebbs and flows from time to time. Sucked dry and left alone, the iron entered his great soul, and in agony of spirit the dread of impending events overwhelmed him. The psychic afflatus gone, the poor human soul found his weak and common humanity. Who can understand it ? The ship of his life had been carried on an ocean of psychic power directed by the winds of spirit presence and ministry, which were now for a time withdrawn, leaving him stranded on the sands of a common humanity. Pity, they say, is akin to love. It is here I love him best. To every soul comes its trial, to every medium his test. It had come to him. Ah ! the medium knows Gethsemane, it is the opposite pole to the Mount of Transfiguration, and you cannot have one without the other. The time when the psychic needs a friend is in the “dark garden.”

Stranded like a jelly-fish on the shore, the tide of psychic power having ebbed. Wearied by the stress of work done and “with coming events casting their shadows before,” he sees with psychic vision the tragic end of his earth labours. He realises the weakness of some of his closest followers. He knows how much remains to be done, and in agony of spirit with brow bedewed with perspiration, his weakness finds its outlet in the unheeded call: “Father ! if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me.” And then realising all he owes to those invisibles whose close presence has hitherto strengthened him, he adds: “Nevertheless not my will but thine be done.” It is the triumph of faith and confidence in the unseen as the result of past experiences. It is the triumph of the spirit over the body. What a breadth of vision came to Him in Gethsemane. With what exactness He divined it all. At the last supper he was able to indicate the coming of the end, and its horrible method ? “One of you shall betray me ?” “Who is it, Lord ?” “He that putteth his finger in the dish with me.” They all heard, and as he put his finger in the dish Judas’ hand followed. Doesn’t it sound silly ? They had just been warned. It is easy to avoid a movement of one’s hand. Why did Judas give himself away ? Because in the

presence of that powerful circle Judas had lost control of his hand, and was impelled to do so.

Lastly, at the crucifixion we are told that there came the sad words, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" The ebbing tide of sensation had caused a cessation of all reaction to psychic stimulus. The bodily senses were too weak to record it, and he interpreted this as a withdrawal of the power of the higher world. It was merely the inability of a weakening physical body to respond to the spirit power.

THE GOLD BEHIND THE GILT.

Here is my sketch, abbreviated and incomplete, of the life of Jesus as I reconstruct it in the light of psychic investigation. Men tell me I despise Jesus of Nazareth. I will trust His judgment rather than theirs, but I think I know his life more intimately than any Christian can. There is no soul in history that I hold in higher esteem. I hate the false and misleading place in which he has been put by folks who are no more able to understand him than they are to read Egyptian hieroglyphics, but I love the man. I owe him much, and he has much to teach the world which the world can never learn until they take him from the pedestal of worship and idolatry, and walk with him in the garden.

It may be said that my reading of his life is "naturalistic." I am content that it should be so. There is nothing more divine than the laws which govern life. The God who laid down such laws made them sufficient for all His purposes and has no need to supersede them. The God who controls earthly processes is the same as He who controls the processes of spiritual life.

Despite the uncertainty of the text of Scripture, these ancients who knew nothing of psychic matters could never have made records so true to psychic laws and conditions. Hence, there must be some solidity behind it all, and the truth of his psychic life stands out beneath all the attempts to gild it beyond recognition.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA DID NOT END WITH CALVARY.

I want to carry you on a little farther, for there are vivid differences between the life of Jesus as I see it and the presentation of it by modern Christendom. I have alluded to the failure of the Apostles' attempt at communism, but for a time they clung together. I want you to note that the psychic phenomena continued after the crucifixion. It is the evidence that mediumship belonged to the Apostles. The transition of their Master did not cause the phenomena to cease. The physical mediumship of Peter was again in evidence at Pentecost, "the mighty rushing wind," typical of physical seances, and "cloven tongues as of fire which sat upon the heads of each of them." Similar spirit lights I have both seen and handled; I have held them when they have been as hard as glass to the touch, and they have gradually dissolved and melted through my fingers, still floating away as spirit lights (this was in the presence of the medium, Walter Jeune). "They began to speak in tongues." Another phenomenon I have witnessed. I have heard a working girl, who had no knowledge of any language but her own, maintain a sustained conversation in Italian with an Italian friend of mine. He was able to even locate the town to which the spirit belonged, by the provincial accent.

These phenomena have occurred in recent times as well as 2,000 years ago. And why not ? "God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever," and His laws partake of His nature.

The story of Paul on the road to Damascus is a truly psychic story. He heard a voice and saw a light. There are two reports of the incident, and they are contradictory. One says that those who were with him saw the light but did not hear the voice; the other reverses the statement. I think both are probably true as relating to SOME of those

present. Those possessing incipient clairvoyance had that sense quickened by the mighty outpouring, and those who were inclined to clairauidience had their special function stimulated. The two recorders of the phenomenon probably got their facts from two different observers. The whole thing is easily understood by a Spiritualist.

EARLY CHRISTIAN SEANCES.

Then came the establishment of little companies of Christians in various centres bent on communion with their Lord. They met where they could, in one another's houses and, as persecution grew, in cellars, caves, groves, in fact wherever two or three could be gathered together. Paul's epistles throw much light on the conduct of circles. One shall speak at a time. The muttering gibberish which often characterises developing circles must be suppressed, and mediums must speak in understandable language. Such gibberish, often called a foreign language, is generally speaking no language at all, but a mass of meaningless sounds—an attempt to attain control of the medium's vocal organs. These are important sidelights on the procedure of the early Churches. These simple, earnest, faithful souls were familiar with the spirit circle—it was their form of meeting—and in the close bond thus established with the spirit world the cause grew strong. Gradually it spread: Greece, Rome and Northern Egypt, with the adjacent isles of the sea, were impregnated with its influence, and presently its strength enabled it to meet Greek philosophy and Egyptian symbology on equal terms. The testimony of history to the Christians of those early years is striking. Even those who opposed their ideas bear tribute to the honesty, morality, cleanliness, truthfulness, self-sacrifice and peacefulness of their lives. I would that so high a tribute to Christian believers could be written to-day. Alas ! it cannot.

CONSTANTINE—HYPOCRITE.

In the early part of the third century Constantine came to the Roman throne. He was a strong and determined character—a fine BRUTE. A cruel, vain, harsh, immoral brute, with all the frightfulness of the brute type, and with all its cunning. He found his empire torn asunder by religious disputations. Greeks and Egyptians, followers of Appolonius, and of the mythical gods, argued and strove with one another, whilst the humble piety of the early Christians caused them to take little part in the disputation. Constantine appears not to have had a thread of spirituality in the fabric of his nature. He, however, was a cunning and resolute statesman, and finding his empire torn into sections by opposing religious interests, so that its stability was threatened, he devised means to meet the case. He evidently noted the steady growth of the young Christian Church and the high character of its followers, and made a *profession* of conversion. Such conversion appears to have wrought no change in his character—he was as atrocious a fiend afterwards as he was before. His act was purely a diplomatic one in the interests of the peace of his realm.

From the moment of his professed conversion he moulded and manipulated the young church as clay in the hands of the potter. State recognition caused the early Christians to lose their heads. Their cause had become “popular.” The same danger threatens Spiritualism to-day—there are ever those who will sacrifice truth for popular favour.

By direction of Constantine a series of Counsels were called to codify and define what was meant by Christianity, and the chief reason for such counsels appears to have been a desire on the part of the king to establish a polyglot and eclectic system which should embrace *all* the forms of religious thought extant in his empire. The pure and simple PRACTICE of the early Christians was polluted and diluted with the myths, symbols and ceremonies of other systems, and a sacerdotal church set up which embraced all sects. The Egyptians and Greeks had their parthenon of Gods, and to meet them Jesus of Nazareth must not only be made a god, but “Very God of Very Gods.” No longer the simple peasant teacher, he must transcend all others in his divine nature (not merely in his teaching and practice).

THE TRINITY A HEATHEN MYTH.

The Trinity appears to have been incorporated to please the Egyptians who had their triad embodied in Osiris, Isis and Horus. This gave rise to what is known as the great Arian heresy. Bishop Arius refused to sell his principles for royal favour, and the Church split and has remained split into Greek and Roman ever since. The Trinity was no part of the faith of the early Christians. They had probably never heard of it except as one of the Egyptian follies. In order to support this doctrine the birth of Jesus had to become complicated with the myth of virgin birth and contradictory stories of “the magi” and the shepherds.

In his “Ancient Egypt” Gerald Massey, who regarded this as his finest work, tells us the outline of a story sculptured on the walls of an Egyptian Temple as follows:—

“The story of the Annunciation, the miraculous conception (or incarnation), the birth and the adoration of the Messianic infant had already been engraved in stone and represented in four consecutive scenes upon the innermost walls of the holy of holies (The Meshken) in the Temple of Luxor (which was built up by Amen-hotep III) about 1700 B.C., or some seventeen centuries before the events depicted are commonly supposed to have taken place. In these scenes the maiden queen, Mut-em-Ua, the mother of Amen-hotep, her child, impersonates the virgin-mother who conceived and brought forth without the fatherhood. The first scene on the left hand shows the God Taht as divine word or logos, in the act of hailing the virgin queen and announcing to her that she is to give birth to the coming son (that is, to bring forth the royal Repa in the character of Aten, the divine heir). In the second scene the ram-headed god Kneph, in conjunction with Hathor, gives life to her. This is the Holy Ghost or Spirit that causes conception, Kneph being the spirit by nature and by name. Impregnation and conception are apparent in the virgin’s fuller form. Next the mother is seated on the midwife’s stool, and the child is supported in the hands of one of the nurses. The fourth scene is that of the Adoration. Here the infant is enthroned, receiving homage from the gods and gifts from men. Behind the deity, who represents the holy spirit, on the right three men are kneeling offering gifts with the right hand and life with the left. The child thus announced, incarnated, born and worshipped was the Pharaonic representative of the Atensun or child-Christ of the Aten cult, the miraculous conception of the ever virgin mother imaged by. Mut-em-Ua.”

The story dates over 1,700 years before the birth of Jesus, and was evidently adopted to win Egyptian opinion. The devil was adopted from Persian beliefs, Ahriman, the opponent of Good.

TAMPERING WITH THE SCRIPTURES.

Times and seasons, Christmas, Easter, etc., were amalgamated into the scheme to win the adhesion of other faiths. The vestments, sacramental vessels, etc., of Egypt and Greece, were fully drawn on, whilst I believe it true that the life of Appolonius of Tyana was incorporated into that of Jesus, and the two lives made one. Appolonius was probably the greatest traveller of his time, and had roamed through the world’s seats of learning, and it is no surprise to find the “golden rule” of Confucius and many of the teachings and beliefs of India and Persia incorporated into those of the new Church.

Even the sacred records were tampered with, often we believe deliberately, in order to bolster up the new scheme. There is one text in the authorised version of the New Testament which reads: “There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.” It has been the sheet anchor of the Trinitarian, but it has been omitted from the Revised version. Why ? Because it had no right there. It was a late interpolation inserted to bolster up the doctrine of the Trinity. From the day of Constantine all Scripture is suspect. Pre-Constantinian records, if sometimes inaccurate owing to the oral tradition from which they were compiled, are at

least honest, but once the Church became a State institution statecraft and kingcraft supplanted truth, and “the faith” was a mere tool for the strengthening of both.

These remarks may startle a general audience, but there is nothing I have said that is not known to the student. Not a word of it is even new. Constantine became a Christian and the priest sold the pass. THE CHRISTIANITY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH DIED JUST THEN, AND THE WORLD HAS BEEN WITHOUT IT EVER SINCE. That’s the cause of all our troubles. The teaching of the spirit world was polluted for material ends.

BACK TO THE FOUNT OF ALL INSPIRATION.

Modern Spiritualism is an attempt at the call of the spirit world to get back to the simple faith and practice of the early Church. We can probably improve upon its methods. It would be hard to improve upon the lives of its early adherents, for their power lay in their close and conscious communion with spirit people. We want, I say, to get back to the first basis of Christianity before kingcraft prostituted it to further its own ends, if we would understand the spirit teaching of the time of Jesus.

I do not like the term Christian applied to me, only because by common custom it applies to the system of Constantine rather than to the system of Jesus. “He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he shall do, and greater works than these shall he do.” Is the Christian Church doing them ? Are these “signs that shall follow those who believe” characteristic of Modern Christianity ? No ! no ! It is a dumb pretence made in a sacred name. I believe that if the MSS of the Vatican could be opened to the world of modern scholarship the whole artificial structure would fall like a house of cards, for the priests know the the truth and suppress it.

Let Christianity get back to the simple saintly life of Jesus and the early Church. There is its true salvation. Christianity will then rest on the same foundations as Spiritualism, viz: spirit teaching reinforced by phenomena produced through mediumship. Cut the creeds, dogmas and sacerdotalism that have overlaid the simple truth. Exorcise the demons of interest and power which have been wielded by vested interests. Let it abolish the theatrical stage trappings which hide the real players and peer behind the scenes, and it will find that religion consists in a life rather than a profession. The function and purpose of Modern Spiritualism is to take Christianity back to its founder and enable it to forget its wanderings in the wilderness.

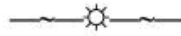
Modern Spiritualism has been called into being to do this, and with the mighty power of the spirit world behind it, neither priests nor prelates, principalities nor powers, can prevent its accomplishment as long as Spiritualists are true to the spirit world, for the spirit message is ever the same, and the spirit world is always true to itself.

It should be noted that at the time of the above debate Oaten was SNU President – the points made are in his own words and opinion.



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A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

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