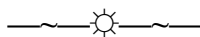




## Volume 8, No. 4: August 2021

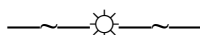
### Contents list:



***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**



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**"Subscribe" free to Pioneer or contact the editor –**  
**[pioneer@snu.org.uk](mailto:pioneer@snu.org.uk)**

All references to Psypioneer in this issue are archived at <http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/>



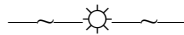
# PIONEER

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

*The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.*

*This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.*



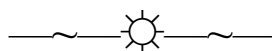
## **The AGM this year, 2021**

### **Marking the journal's eighth birthday**

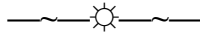
**Pioneer is pleased to announce  
it has reached:**

**TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED  
individual subscribers!**

**Additionally, there are SNUi & on-line readers**



# What the Pioneers Actually Said



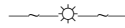
The article below was published in *The Two Worlds*, June 1st, 1934, at that time looking back over the last forty-seven years of its editors' viewpoints during their editorship. It's interesting now, a further eighty-seven years later, to look back and see whether or not we would now agree with their comments.

As a good example, some will say these early years were the heyday of Modern Spiritualism—when physical mediumship was prevalent, with the introduction of partial and full-form mediumship, i.e. materialisations, in the early 1870s.

Many of the early mediums started in various forms of physical mediumship, like Emma Hardinge Britten and James Morse, who are featured in the article below, but they were soon to be developed into what was looked upon as a higher mediumship—passive mental development, mainly trance orientation; this was considered the best way forward to bring the new Spiritualism to public attention.

Dark séances were considered problematic in their development and with public presentation due to their nature, with the use of psychic fluids—its sensitivity and reaction causing numerous claims of fraud, e.g. impersonation, within the Spiritualist movement and outside. However, the problem was in some cases more probably a lack of understanding with such a complex form of mediumship—these avenues, examples and problems are discussed in the Pioneer three-part series: "A Question of Fraud".<sup>1</sup>

The *Two Worlds* has always had a very close association with National Spiritualism from the birth of the Union, with free space given in the then weekly journal, the publication of its AGMs, etc., which can be found referenced within the pages of Pioneer.



## Forty-Seven Years of Propaganda !

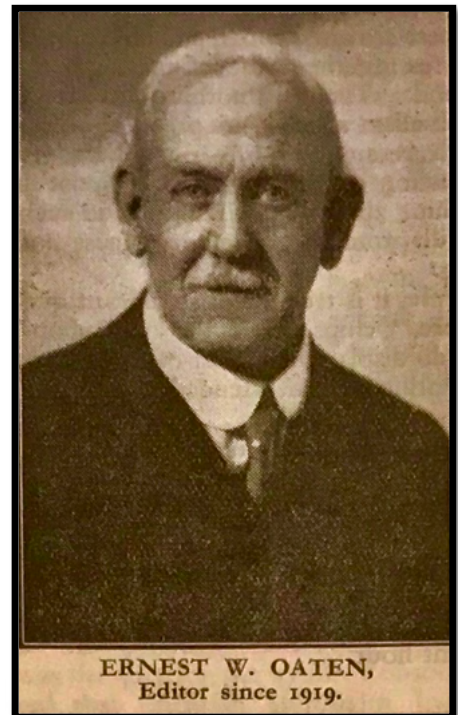
### What the Pioneers Actually Said

By JAMES LEIGH

WHAT *did* the pioneers say?

One overhears frequently in Spiritualist circles expressions of admiration for the vision which inspired the early missionaries of Spiritualism. Less frequent are the expositions of what those pioneers actually taught; and there is the possibility that in the case of Spiritualism, just as has happened in other religious movements, men will forget the *message* of the enlightened one in idolising the exalted nature of his personality.

It is not an accident that *The Two Worlds* has numbered among its contributors nearly every figure of note in Spiritualistic records; nor that its Editors have included some of the most brilliant

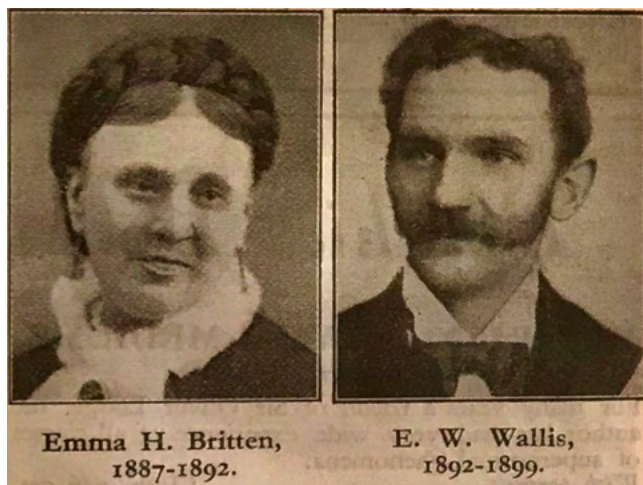


<sup>1</sup> Available in a free Pioneer pdf booklet: see "New SNU Pioneer Page", as advertised elsewhere in this issue.

minds that the Movement has known. Emma Hardinge Britten, who founded the journal in 1887,<sup>2</sup> was undoubtedly the greatest woman propagandist, and the most prolific writer, we have ever possessed. E. W. Wallis, J. J. Morse, and E. W. Oaten had enviable reputations as trance orators.

Browsing through past volumes of this adventurous organ, one reads leading articles which display such freshness, and singular adaptability to the conditions of the moment, that they might have been written for present-day publication. It becomes increasingly evident that although there have been changes of heart and mind during the last fifty years, yet the Spiritualist Movement is substantially the same. The changes have been superficial only: they do not apply to fundamentals.

Writing in 1889 on the attitude of inquirers, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten said :—



There are three classes of believers inimical to the association of Spiritualists in the form of union. The first of these are the selfish and apathetic, who, having obtained all the information they desire for themselves, care nothing for what becomes of the matter in relation to others. The second class are those who fear that their particular form of sectarian belief may be in danger if Spiritualism becomes strong. The third class are the few who have assumed leadership, set themselves up as “the hub” around which all the spokes of the human wheel must

revolve or stop—in a word, the arrogant and selfish who are determined to “rule or ruin.” With all or either of these classes the true and rational Spiritualist has nothing to do.

### **Platform Inefficiency**

She had definite views on the question of professional mediumship—to-day a topic of considerable controversy—and always advocated that those who gave their time and “their very life, to say nothing of the anxiety, fatigue, and persecution attending such an unpopular work,” should be adequately rewarded. But her voice was ever raised in condemnation of the illiterate exponent. . . . “The idea of placing the illiterate on a platform to teach the educated, or expect the cultured minds of a higher world than man’s to do justice to noble and exalted themes through ignoble or imperfect instruments, is an absurdity.”

### **Spiritualist Principles**

Her successor, Mr. E. W. Wallis,<sup>3</sup> spoke often and clearly in defence of a broad and comprehensive Spiritualism :—

Spiritualists (he said) look towards the dawn. They are no longer slaves to tradition, nor do they bow in idolatrous worship of a fetish. Their Church is the world. Their Bibles are the books of books: the human spirit and Nature’s wondrous pages. Their

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that The Two Worlds was co-founded by Emma Hardinge Britten and Edward Wallis; for further information please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 9, No. 5: “After Forty Years – An Outline of the History of “The Two Worlds””.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 5: “Edward Walter Wallis (1855–1914)”, “Forming of a National Spiritualism”, “A National Memorial Tribute to the Life and Work of Edward Walter Wallis”.

worship is work for humanity. Their prayers are pure thoughts, loving sympathies, and kindly services. Their altar is truth. Their aim is to be true to the light within. “Onward” is their motto. Their salvation is by knowledge and love, from ignorance and wrong. Their atonement is at-one-ment with God. Their heaven is harmony, here and hereafter.

What a fine set of affirmations !

Mr. Will Phillips, a writer with almost a pugilistic style, was another who never minced words. In these days of dark circles, it is noteworthy that a former Editor should have written in strong and unqualified denunciation of darkness as the arch-enemy of spiritual progress. “If the dark seance is necessary, then it is no place for the man in the street,” said Mr. Phillips. “It is fit for laboratory research alone. What can people expect of the hysterical man or woman who, worked up to a high pitch of excitement by music and expectation of the marvellous and uncanny, loses grip of his reason and acts in the most foolish fashion in face of a phenomenon which demands all the resources of reason and judgment ?.”

Those words have their significance for today. Indeed, darkness was said by Mr. Phillips—and with abundant testimony of fact—to constitute the “curse on materialisation.”

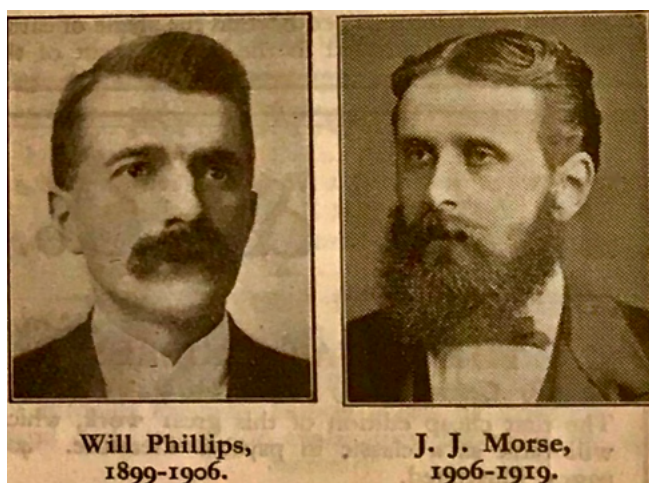
### College for Mediums

He was another who worked for the founding of a training college for psychics. . . .

Mrs. Britten, who occupied the Editorial chair of *The Two Worlds* at its inception, constantly advocated the founding of a modern “School of the Prophets.”<sup>4</sup> We have done our best to faithfully second her efforts, feeling convinced that in the principle of education, especially of a psychic nature, lies the greatest hope for the future of Spiritualism. Mediumship is the backbone of Spiritualism, but if the vertebra be weak and ill-developed, how can the body be held in a position both healthy and dignified ?

A pertinent question, and one that recalls Mrs. Britten’s attitude to undeveloped speakers, exponents and mediums.

Mr. J. J. Morse more than once sounded a note of warning in reference to “royal roads” of psychic unfoldment. “Mystery, he said, “is always to be avoided. The safest road, not the royal road, to the development of mediumship is not a promiscuous public developing circle; not the secrecy of meetings said to be guarded by signs, symbols, perfumes, incantations or mysterious Mahatmas. No! the safest road is that which sensible Spiritualists have followed these sixty-odd years—the private home circle—where the spirits whom we know may come to us and aid us in the unfoldment of those faculties which they use for communication.”



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<sup>4</sup> See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5: “Wanted: A College For Mediums – Emma Hardinge Britten” – “A Spiritualist’s College – Lorraine Haig”.

## **A Silver-Tongued Orator**

Mr. Morse spent many years on the public platform, and his trance orations are among the best in Spiritualistic literature. His articles were also said to be written under the influence, though not control, of his inspirer, “Tien Sein Tie,” whom another pioneer once described as “wise as Plato.”<sup>5</sup>

“Tien” was familiarly known to Spiritualists as the silver-tongued Chinese orator. The work in which Morse and this personality were engaged became very dear to them, and they were always concerned for its welfare. An editorial article written in 1906 reveals this concern :—

“Is our Cause in danger of drifting from the principles for which our early workers fought so hard, and suffered so much to establish ?” he asked; and he contended, “The boast and pride of the early Spiritualists were that Spiritualism stood for facts and not beliefs, for progress and new ideas, for liberation from the thralldom of opinions no matter how ancient or sacrosanct, if they were demonstrably founded upon inaccuracies. The Cause in those early days stood for reform in religion, science, morals, and advance in our social and industrial conditions. Has it lost its grip upon the radical thought and utterances of the past? Have we surrendered to others the work which we at one time appeared destined to undertake ? Have we missed our opportunity ? Has the putting aside the philosophy deducible from our facts, in favour of sensational and emotional methods, flooded our Movement with those who care for nothing more serious than a public seance ?”

### **Spiritualism or Psychism ?**

During the period Mr. E. W. Oaten has occupied the position of Editor, he has insisted on maintaining standards of his predecessors. “We need to realise that mediumship is something more than the exercise of psychic faculties,” he says. “There is a growing tendency to concentrate upon psychic phenomena rather than upon the sound mediumship which gives evidence of spirit activity. Mediumship implies co-operation with the Spirit World in such a certain fashion that the evidences of spirit activity can be determined behind all psychic phenomena.”

Elsewhere he declared :—

The main fact which emerges from Spiritualistic investigation is that it is possible to commune with humans who have passed through the gateway of death. They might well have attained more knowledge concerning the spirit world since their residence in their new abode, but it must not be forgotten that they are still human beings with human failings. The wisest souls on the spirit side of life are those who have long passed beyond the shade of earth. While they are interested in the development of the human family as a whole, they have very largely lost their close and detailed touch with the everyday events which form our lives. Let us not be mistaken ! They cannot, and will not, put the bit in our mouths, and by pulling the reins guide us wherever we desire to go. Nor is any message infallible which comes from human minds.

### **Inspiration for To-day**

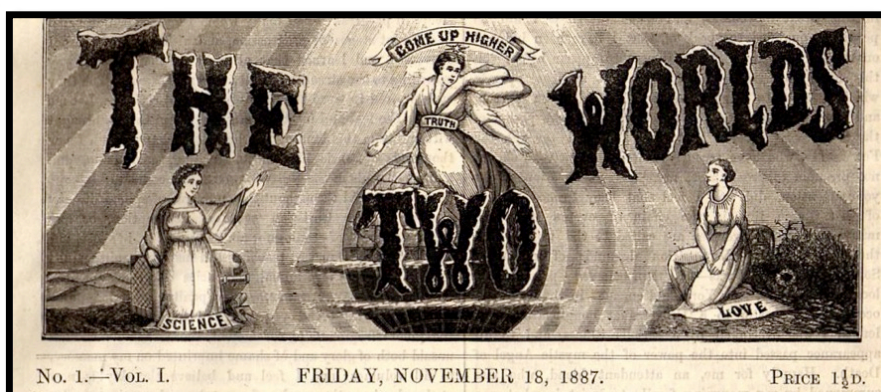
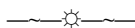
These sane words, and bid us be cautious in assessing the value of messages from the Beyond. There is nothing in Mr. Oaten’s Spiritualism which is not practical—a statement which is amply borne out by his frequent expression belief that “the most

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<sup>5</sup> The name 'James Morse' frequents many issues of Pioneer, for example see Vol. 6, No. 3: “Emma Hardinge Britten & James Johnson Morse – Full Script”.

important thing about life is living it” in such a way as will promote general happiness and wellbeing.

These, it is true, are insignificant quotations—mere “chips from the workshop”—but they do display the matter-of-fact nature of the inspiration which attended the early instruments of Spiritualism. That inspiration is as necessary and important to-day as ever it was. Incidentally, the New *Two Worlds* aims at maintaining the high idealism of its founders. Every week we shall print some pregnant quotation from a pioneer medium—some message which, though perhaps an early record, has nevertheless a significance for the needs of the present hour.



## Editors of the “Two Worlds”

Emma Hardinge Britten 1887-1892

Edward Walter Wallis 1892-1899

Peter Lee (acting editor) 1898-1899

Will Phillips 1899-1906

James Johnson Morse 1906-1919

Ernest Walter Oaten 1919-1945

Ernest Thompson 1945-1952

J. W. Herries (acting editor)

Crestern Roskelly 1952-1957

Maurice Barbanell 1957-1981

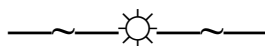
Tony Ortzen 1981-1985

Kay Hunter 1985-1988

Ray F. Taylor 1988-1993

Tony Ortzen 1993-<sup>6</sup>

*In 2016 the directors of the “Two Worlds” had decided to offer the Union all their volumes from 1887 to present on permanent loan. The Editor, Tony Ortzen, contacted President David Bruton to see if the Union would accept this offer; of course there was little to consider and the offer was met with an overwhelming “Yes, please!”<sup>7</sup>*



<sup>6</sup> Italic denotes circa: Possibly another editor between Roskelly and Barbanell, Taylor and Ortzen.

<sup>7</sup> Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: “The “Two Worlds” and the Spiritualists’ National Union – “Again Unite!”

# AM I DEAD OR ALIVE ?

There are various accounts of passing generally under extreme conditions like wartime, tragic accidents, etc., where the spirit is said to be totally unaware of its transition. This is evident in some of the Leslie Flint direct voice recordings, where the *dead* person seems totally unaware of what has happened. Another example is Carl Wickland; see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "Story of Dr and Mrs Carl A. Wickland".<sup>8</sup>

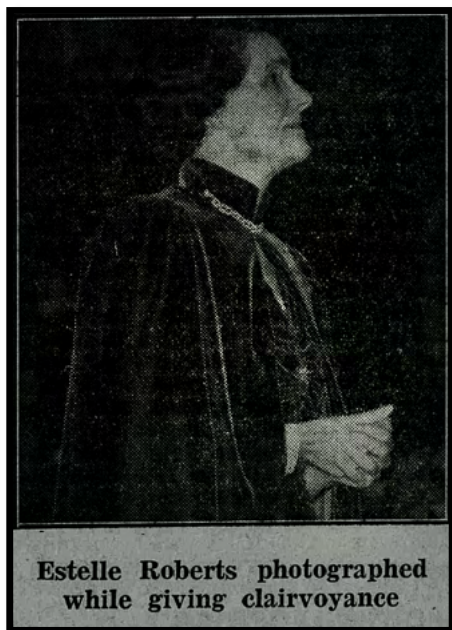
"Often these spirits were ignorant of the fact that they were "dead," and did not realise they had attached themselves to people on earth.

"The task of Dr. Wickland and his helpers was to convince them, once they controlled the medium, that they could release themselves from their earthbound state. The investigators interrogated these spirits, obtained proofs of their identities and then showed them how to progress. It often took more than one seance to convince the obsessor that he had passed from earth."

As a public demonstrator Estelle Roberts aired this question during WWII.<sup>9</sup>

*Estelle Roberts Proves—*

## War "Dead" Are Not Always Aware Of Their Passing On



WAR brings its own difficulties to spirit communication, as Estelle Roberts has discovered. The famous medium refers to these problems by asking three questions:

"Do our boys always realise that they have passed on?

"Why is it that loved ones on the Other Side and also the guides occasionally say that they have not come into contact with a certain person who has recently left the earth, and state further that they know nothing of his whereabouts ?

"Is there an intermediate state of life between the earth and the spirit world, where such souls sometimes temporarily dwell, eventually to be reached by the guides who make them realise that they have gone through the experience called death ?"

### The Missing Airman

These questions arise because of this medium's own experiences. She cites some examples. The authorities reported a young airman as missing. His parents have been Spiritualists for many years. They approached Estelle Roberts with a view to getting definite evidence of his whereabouts.

Their spirit daughter, a good communicator, and others members of the family who had passed on, all declared that they had not seen the missing boy. They knew that his

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Wickland's book, "Thirty Years Among the Dead", originally published in 1924.

<sup>9</sup> Psychic News, February 7th, 1942.

aeroplane had crashed into the water, but they could supply no further evidence. One spirit relative volunteered the information that the boy was badly knocked about.

### **Between Two Worlds**

These communications were regarded by Estelle Roberts as inconclusive. Later in the day, she herself got into touch with Red Cloud and asked him why further information had not been forthcoming. Red Cloud explained that in all probability this young airman was somewhere in a state between the two worlds of life and that the guide would “lower his vibrations” in order to try to reach him.

The medium then arranged for another seance to take place with the parents. When they arrived, Red Cloud told her that he wished to place her in trance—most of her sittings are given normally these days—as he had found the boy, who was now settling down in the spirit world. The guide had promised the airman that he would speak to his parents.

Then, through his entranced medium, Red Cloud explained what happened after the crash. The young airman, not realising that he was “dead,” had returned to his aerodrome to carry on with his duties. When Red Cloud got into touch with him, the airman would not at first listen, but after much persuasion he consented to accompany the guide, on the distinct understanding that he could personally speak to his parents.

Red Cloud got the airman to take control of the medium. The evidence that the boy gave his parents startled them in its conclusiveness, especially when he referred to certain documents which he had on earth, and his knowledge of how his parents had dealt with them since his passing. Definite proof was given that this young man had been killed. The body has since been recovered.

When the medium came out of trance and learned from the parents all that had happened, she said it seemed strange that a member of a family so interested in Spiritualism should find himself earthbound. The parents replied that he was the only member of the family who refused to interest himself in Spiritualism !

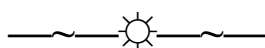
Estelle Roberts quotes another example. The mother and wife of an airman reported missing, both complete strangers to the medium, came for a sitting. The sitters received proofs of spirit identity from members of their family. Then one who was not a relative communicated and gave his name. From his many statements they were able to confirm that he was the only other person in the aeroplane.

### **“I Have Not Seen Him”**

This is what he said, ‘We were on night patrol and were shot down over the water. I remember seeing K— (the name of the missing man), just as we went down. I have not seen him over here.’”

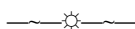
Arising from this spirit communication, Estelle Roberts asks, “Where is this missing man? Red Cloud has not yet found him on the Other Side. Is he between the two worlds, or still alive somewhere on earth? Why did the other occupant of the aeroplane communicate ?” In the light of these experiences, Estelle Roberts comments:

“These examples go to prove how necessary it is for mediums to be absolutely certain before they state definitely whether a soul is still upon the earth or has passed on to the Other Side. They should be very careful not to jump to the conclusion that, because they cannot get into contact with a soul, this means he must still be on the earth.”





***The National Laboratory of Psychical Research:***  
*Its director, Harry Price, transferred the National Laboratory under the direction of the University of London Council in 1934; the article below, published in the Two Worlds, July 20th, 1934, outlines this valuable resource:*



## **LONDON UNIVERSITY'S INTEREST**

### **Another Psychic Research Centre Formed**

THE National Laboratory of Psychical Research, which was formed to apply scientific methods to the investigation of supernormal phenomena, has just become merged in a new body—the “University of London Council for Psychical Investigation.”

This involves the transference of the Laboratory to a University group composed of representatives of the various faculties and colleges.

In a circular announcing the change, it is stated that the formation of the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation is of considerable historic interest, as it is the first academic group in Great Britain to study mediumship, and the first academic group in any country to possess a laboratory specially equipped for the study of psychic phenomena.

The “National Laboratory” was founded in 1925,<sup>10</sup> and possesses a valuable library of works devoted to the various aspects of Psychic Science. The new group will continue to use the rooms of the Laboratory—13D, Roland Gardens, South Kensington, London, S.W. 7.

Mr. Harry Price, late Director of the Laboratory, will become Hon. Secretary of the new organisation, and the Council is composed of those professors and other members of

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<sup>10</sup> The National Laboratory of Psychical Research was established in Bloomsbury, London in 1923; further details at the end of this article.

London University who are interested in psychical phenomena. It is not, however, officially connected with the University. Its members are:—

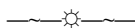
Prof. F. A. P. Aveling, Professor of Psychology at King's College; Dr. Guy B. Brown; Prof. Cyril Burt, Professor of Psychology at University College; Prof. J. C. Flugel, Assistant Professor of Psychology at University College, and President of the British Psychological Society; Mr. C. E. M. Joad, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology at Birkbeck College; Mr. C. A. Mace; Prof. J. MacMurray, Grote Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic; Mr. E. D. Macnamara, Physician to the West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases; Mr. S. G. Soal, M.A., B.Sc.; Rev. Prof. E. S. Waterhouse, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion.

In a statement which appears under the above names, it is declared: "It is sincerely hoped that all persons who are possessed of abnormal powers will place themselves in the hands of the new Council, as it is only with the cooperation of what are known as "mediums," that it will be possible to elucidate those mysteries of the seance room which for nearly 100 years have been studied under the term 'Psychical Research'."

Mr. Harry Price, when interviewed by telephone on Tuesday morning, told our representative that the move was inspired principally by the wish to interest orthodox and official science in the analysis of mediumistic phenomena.

In answer to other questions, Mr. Price said: "The history of this Council is that about 12 months ago, I offered, through Mr. C. E. M. Joad, my laboratory and library to the London University. I also offered to equip and endow a Department for Psychical Research—if the University would accept it. After many months of deliberations and consultations, the authorities regretted that, owing to lack of accommodation, and to the fact that no college could be found to 'father' the suggested department, my offer could not be accepted. They were entirely sympathetic with the idea.

"A long list of Foreign Correspondents, of academic status, has been prepared,"



### **Editor's Note:**

As referenced in the above footnote, the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR) was established in Bloomsbury, London in 1923. In 1926 the NLPR relocated to Queensbury Place, South Kensington; this was the building of the London Spiritualist Alliance, where Price rented the top floor.<sup>11</sup> In c.1929 it again moved, this time to 13, Roland Gardens in South Kensington.

In 1933 Harry Price made a formal offer to the University of London to provide a Department of Psychical Research and to loan the equipment of the National Laboratory and its Library. In 1934 the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation was formed, with Price as Honorary Secretary and Editor. Two years later, in 1936, Price transferred the library on permanent loan to the University, followed shortly by the laboratory and investigative equipment. It appears that all experimentation was halted with the outbreak of WWII; Harry Price died in March 1948.

Today this valuable archive is available for researchers, historians, etc., at Senate House (Library Archives), University of London, Malet Street, London.

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<sup>11</sup> In 1955 the LSA changed its name to the College of Psychic Science; later, in 1970, it became the College of Psychic Studies, as it remains today.

### The 'National Laboratory' Council Séances

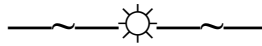


Séance room at: Roland Gardens, South Kensington, S.W.7

Room: 22' 7" long by 15' 7" wide and 9' 9" high  
Cabinet: 6' 3" wide 3' 3" deep

The photograph is the séance room at Roland Gardens in South Kensington; it was in this room that the NLPR Council carried out five experimental séances with Helen Duncan in 1931; also during this time period the London Spiritualist Alliance's research department, the "London Psychical Laboratory" (LPL), was also carrying out test séances with Helen Duncan.

*Both subsequent reports were very unfavourable towards the medium – owing to the analyses of "ectoplasm" and the suggestion of "regurgitation" mentioned in both reports.*



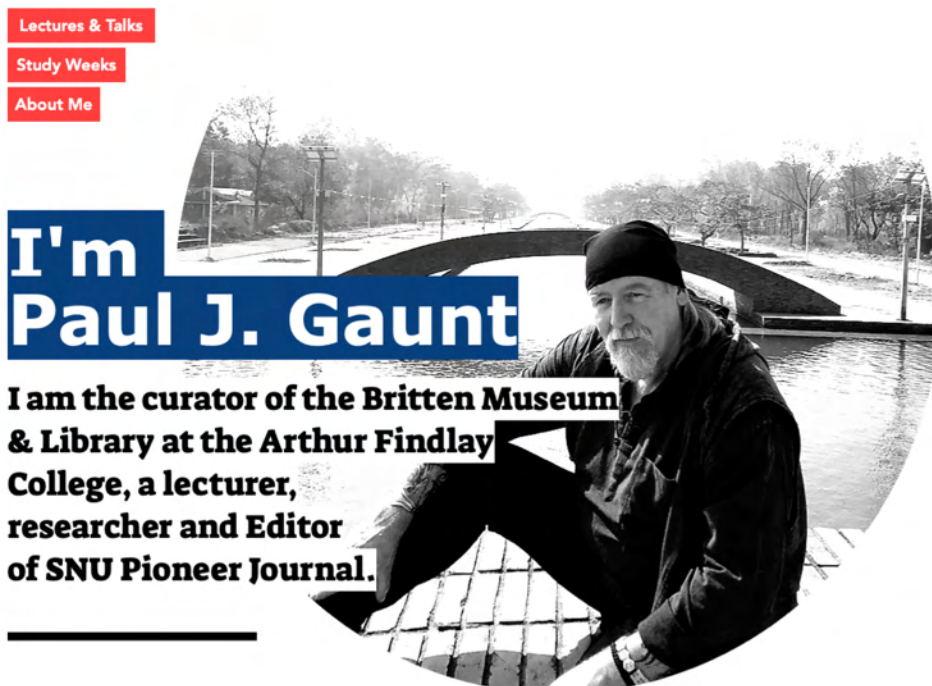
**Later this year Pioneer will publish the claims of "regurgitation" in the Helen Duncan mediumship from the archives at Senate House, University of London.**



Stereogram 1. May 14th 1931



Stereogram 2. May 14th 1931



## New One-stop Website:

[www.pauljgaunt.com](http://www.pauljgaunt.com)

The home page gives a direct link to all the back copies of “Pioneer”; subscribe free, etc.

The home page links to:

**Lectures on the History of the Spiritualist Movement with some specialist subjects.**

**Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College as advertised elsewhere in this journal, with a link to book and further information**



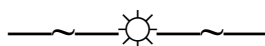
This page also has some free downloads of the factual information on

**“Hydesville”**

**“SNU Seven Principles”**

**Primarily advisable for the SNU educational courses**

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



Continued from the last issue:

## A War-Time Remarkable Healer

### W. H. Lilley

Over the last three issues of Pioneer we have been publishing a series of articles from Psychic News; this issue of Pioneer concludes this early period of Lilley's setting up of his healing ministry.

Below is taken from Psychic News, February 7th, 1942:

#### SPIRIT DOCTOR PLANS THIS HEALING HOME

##### Sanctuary To Be Mecca For Hundreds Of Sufferers

By A Special Correspondent



*"The Ninth Wonder of the World." That is how our special correspondent, resuming, in his fourth article below, the story of the spiritual healing nursing home opened at Tudor Lodge, Cheltenham, describes the famous healer who controls it, W. H. Lilley, of Leeds and Hull.*

WHEN first I knew that W. H. Lilley, the healer with 20,000 patients to care for, had "broken the back" of my debilities by curing my back—had broken the physical bondage of 20 years—I couldn't believe it.

Some of the greatest truths *are* unbelievable—at first. Their realisation, their implications, are too staggering. You want time to adjust yourself, to get the "feel" of your new world.

To tread again in the sunlight, to feel fitter and to look fitter, to own stronger nerves, to be enjoying, not apostrophising, life again, to know a deeper spiritual awakening—the sudden mutation that drops you back into this world you left behind, leaves you first bewildered, then deeply thankful, and finally, as the full awareness of your rebirth dawns on you, delirious with joy.

#### THE NAME DID IT

My cure was made possible in the beginning through Mr. and Mrs. John Lilley. Five years ago, they bought Tudor Lodge. They converted one of the ground floor rooms into a church. They lavished money on it, so that it became a very beautiful church. Mediums came from all parts of the country to conduct the week-end services. Cheltenham Fellowship Sanctuary they call it.

Then, 13 months ago, they decided to go a step further. Having met the needs of the soul, they turned their thoughts to the needs of the body. Struck by a coincidence in nomenclature, and having read of his cures in *Psychic News*, they offered the house to their namesake—but not kinsman—W. H. Lilley, the Leeds healer, as a spiritual healing nursing home. They travelled to Yorkshire. Lilley and his colleague, Arthur Richards, came west. And so was laid the corner stone of spiritual healing of the future.

## CHOSEN IN TRANCE

The house was planned for its new purpose. Dr. Letari, entrancing Lilley, decided to what use the various rooms should be put. He chose his treatment room—"the osteopathic room," they call it.

On the same floor is the consulting room—"the doctor's room"—giving on to the north side of the garden, where they are already talking of building an annexe, as the demands that will inevitably be made upon the house exceed its capacity.

Upstairs, the doctor selected his main dormitory, and before very long had six gleaming white hospital beds installed.

The blue and cream colour scheme in this suntrap room where the sick will be made whole is entirely the doctor's doing. So are the decorations and furnishings in the osteopathic room beneath it. A simple, restful corner, this, with just sufficient to fulfil its object, and no more. A plain, ordinary osteopathic couch. Sunlight, infra-red, and radiant heat lamps—massive pieces, these. A surgical instrument cabinet. A surgical trolley. Basins. A chair. That is all. The same healing colours are seen in the decorations here as upstairs.

In this comparatively small room, overshadowed, almost, by the peaks of the Cotswolds, lies the hub of the whole organisation. It is the temple of healing to which I owe a debt that at the moment I cannot attempt to repay.

## LICENCE REFUSED

Still, despite all I have told you, the house lacked one thing. A licence. The first application was peremptorily refused—a decision which was "not likely to be varied."

Then Arthur Richards engaged a state registered nurse—soon there will be two in the home, in addition to three assistants brought from the Leeds and Hull Sanctuaries—and forthwith appealed to the local committee for a further hearing.

This maternity and child welfare committee of 25 men and women was specially convened to meet him and William Lilley. Here are some of the facts that emerged from their answers to the committee's questions.

The House of Divinity is not a profit-sharing organisation: monies over and above the bare needs of maintenance are put back as capital. It is from this money, as well as from the gifts of benefactors, that the cost of founding, equipping and maintaining future nursing homes will be met.

## SERVICE WITHOUT PAYMENT

For his own herculean labours in the cause of healing, Arthur Richards draws no financial reward. As he explained to the committee, he is managing director of a firm engaged on the production of aircraft components, and employing 200 persons.

**The Leeds Sanctuary was once the board-room of his company. So you get the strange juxtaposition of a hive of engineering and a healing sanctuary in one and the same building, a common entrance serving each.**

Richards is as heart and soul in healing as Lilley. He devotes the greater part of his day to the work of the House of Divinity—not just a day here and there, but every day—and yet his business flourishes. It has considerably expanded, in fact, since he joined forces with Lilley and turned his premises into an ever-open door for the sufferer.

As chairman of The House of Divinity—Lilley is its president—his duties are many and varied. Healing by hypnosis and psychology—it was Dr. Letari who developed these gifts in him—and the handling of a heavy daily post are only two of them.

He is a man of immense personal charm, whose utter sincerity is apparent the moment you meet him.

He is deeply concerned that all credit for the work done by the Leeds, Hull and Cheltenham Sanctuaries should go to his colleague, and none to himself. The attitude is typical of him.

As with all healers, his work is his reward. “It is a tremendous privilege,” he confesses to me, “to be used, along with other colleagues, as a terminal for the material expression of the power from the infinite source. Whose secret has been lost because of materialism over the past centuries.”

To return to the maternity and child welfare committee. How many patients, they asked, had Lilley ? When he told them they nearly collapsed.

**“Twenty thousand,” he replied.**

One thousand of those are personal patients.

## **DECISION REVERSED**

In a few minutes, Tudor Lodge had its licence. The three of them had walked in and upset a decision which was “not likely to be varied” !

**Yes, the three of them, for the good Dr. Letari was there, too. He had said the previous day that he was going, and sure enough he went.**

**“Don’t worry,” he had said, “all will be quite well.”**

**That is how a bit of history was made in Cheltenham on December 10, 1941.**

Since Mr. and Mrs. John Lilley’s offer was accepted, £1,000 has been spent by The House of Divinity on the equipment of Tudor Lodge. As much as £2,000 more is likely to be spent. Part of this huge sum will go upon curative baths of all types, to be laid down in the lower ground floor.

Accommodation at present is for 12 in-patients, including free beds for those unable to pay the fees. You see, they think of everything.

As the work of the home becomes known, as word of its beneficent mission spreads from person to person, hundreds of out-patients are expected.

## **GROWING POSTBAG**

Already, as the result of these articles, they have had to clear the decks for action, to cope not only with the personal callers, but with the huge accretion of mail and the consequent heavy calls made upon William Lilley’s diagnostic powers. So if some of you do not receive a reply by return of post, you will understand, won’t you? And you will, all of you who are sick and send an article in daily use, get a detailed diagnosis and other advice.

A detailed diagnosis and an accurate diagnosis. In the last three years Lilley has given over 12,000, every one confirmed as correct !

It was his ability—call it genius—that, having emerged triumphantly from the most searching tests, was the means of bringing Arthur Richards into such a felicitous association with the healer. From that day in 1939 they have marched forward together.

## TRAINED TO DIAGNOSE

Thus far, all diagnosis has been made by Lilley's spirit guide, Lejan Tari, or by Lilley clairaudiently. Now Lilley is being trained by Letari to do all this work himself. The healer in turn will instruct his colleagues, so that when he passes on—long years are predicted for him, by the way—the work will continue unabated and unaffected.

It is a crowning attribute of genius to make the hardest task appear simple. A woman, a would-be out-patient whom Lilley had never seen, walked into Tudor Lodge to consult him.

"Of course, your trouble—," began Lilley at once. He was off again. And, as usual, he was dead right. Another remarkable diagnosis.

I turned away. I myself had experienced the most wonderful healings. I had seen. I had talked. I had read. And the more I learned about Lilley the more enthralled I became.

I recalled those words of the Editor when announcing the passing of Margery Crandon—"The Eighth Wonder of the World." I gazed up at the Cotswolds, and the wonder that is ever in the East. "And Lilley is the ninth," I said aloud.

I have been wrong many times in my life. I am right now. William Lilley, ninth wonder of the world.

The healer with 20,000 patients.

The man with the many spiritual gifts.

The most exhaustive and the most accurate diagnostician of the lot.

The man who was offered a fortune to do nothing else but diagnose for a famous London hospital.

The man who has mastered medicine, anatomy, manipulation, osteopathy, homeopathy, chiropractic, chromotherapy, biochemistry, electrotherapy, and herbalism.

The healer who is literally a Godsend to many doctors in difficulty.

The healer who is blazing a trail for future healers to follow.

I could go on talking to you like this all day. But why, when I can compress it all into eight words ?

William Lilley, the ninth wonder of the world.

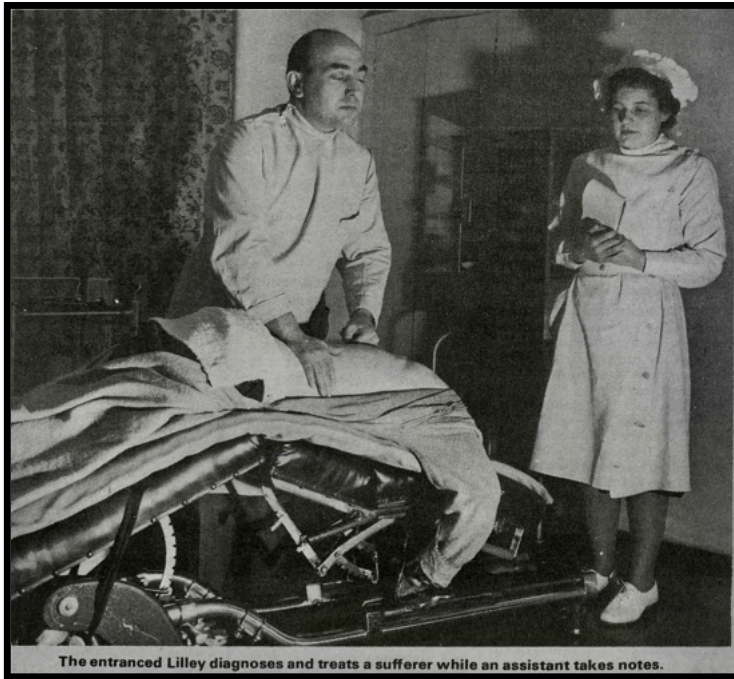


This concludes the series by a Psychic News correspondent who has given his first-hand accounts of his treatment and cure, as a patient of William Lilley over several years. He has given the reader a detailed foundation of the work and methods, his development with Dr. Letari etc., carried out by William Lilley, affectionately known as "Billy", and his supporter and colleague, Arthur Richards, during the WWII years; albeit in the above article it is predicted that there are long years ahead for Lilley, he died aged 58 in Pretoria.

Lilley emigrated to South Africa in the early 1950s; the article below gives a tribute to his work, published in Psychic News, January 13th, 1973.

## ROYAL PHYSICIAN CONSULTS SPIRIT HEALER

### He says guide's diagnosis and remedy saves his patient's life



The entranced Lilley diagnoses and treats a sufferer while an assistant takes notes.

THE NEWS of famous healer William H. Lilley's passing enables us to reveal the untold dramatic story of how a British physician who attended royalty acknowledged that the medium's guide saved the life of one of his patients.

We learned last week from South Africa that Billy Lilley, 58, had passed on in Pretoria.

Yorkshire-born Billy came from psychic stock. His maternal grandfather was a medium. His mother was a practising medium and healer.

His parents were disappointed when their third son was born. They hoped for a daughter.

Their father predicted that the latest arrival would conduct a "great healing mission."

Lilley grew up in a psychic atmosphere where Spiritualism was accepted as natural.

At the age of ten, attending his first circle, he was entranced for over an hour by a North American Indian. This entity spoke in a language unknown to Billy.

#### Doctor controls him

At his fourth seance the young medium was controlled by a Hindu doctor, Lejan Tari Singh, always called Dr Letari. He said he had died a few months before Lilley's birth in 1914.

From then on Letari was Billy's main healing guide.

Lord Dawson of Penn, physician to three British Kings, once utilised Billy's mediumship to diagnose a difficult case.

Known as a great diagnostician, Lord Dawson contacted the healer through a group of Leeds (Yorks) doctors with whom Billy co-operated without this fact being publicised. Then, as now, medicos could be struck off the register for this "offence."

#### Gift is praised

Billy was working in an engineering factory and healing in his spare time.

One medico who worked unofficially with him had arranged for Lord Dawson to treat a baffling tropical disease case.

**Letari accurately diagnosed this rare illness and outlined a course of treatment, which proved successful.**

When Lord Dawson discovered the origin of the diagnosis and remedy he telephoned Billy's fiancée, Nancy. Having the use of a telephone she acted as one link between Billy and the medical group.

Lord Dawson asked her to thank Letari who "had been the means of saving a man's life." He added that her future husband had a wonderful gift and she should look after him.

Maurice Barbanell wanted to publish this first-class story in 1945 after Lord Dawson's death. Letari was emphatic it should not be told because medical etiquette was involved. The doctors working with Billy might have found the revelation embarrassing.

Billy's first healing sanctuary in a Leeds suburb, Hunslet, was opened in 1939. He was then 25.

It was the result of his earlier healing "miracles" which spread by word of mouth.

**A boy dying from nephritis (kidney inflammation) sought 15-year-old Billy's aid. He was cured in three weeks.**

His next patient was a woman suffering from dropsy who had been under medical supervision for two years. Billy cured her in as many months.

Then came a development which played a large part in Billy's healing, his use of herbs and homoeopathic remedies.

Walking in the Yorkshire countryside after his factory night-shift a blue spirit light guided him to the appropriate herbs.

These he gathered, cleaned, boiled and bottled for delivery to his many patients.

### **Stocked 7,000 herbs**

After he married Nancy, she took over his herbal chore. Later Billy's father, affectionately known as "Pop," acted as dispenser for the 7,000 stocked remedies. He was so familiar with them that he could choose the right bottle without hesitation.

Billy's mother and miner brother were also active members of his healing band.

Asked by a psychic reporter why Letari used homoeopathic treatment to aid the spirit healing, the reply was, "It is the only method of healing by pure vibration because it is based on infinitesimal doses which are truly representative of the spirit."

Latterly, after being fined twice in South Africa for "practising medicine," Billy confined his activities to herbal and homeopathic treatments.

### **MP conducts case**

It was not his first experience of legal trouble. In 1942 he lodged an appeal against a London County Council decision to reject a licence for massage and special electrical treatment at his West London nursing home in Bulstrode Street.

Veteran Spiritualist healer Sidney J. Peters, who, when a Liberal MP, played a large part in the Parliamentary campaign that brought us legal and religious freedom, conducted Billy's case.<sup>12</sup> He is a Doctor of Laws.

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<sup>12</sup> See the Pioneer series, "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The work of the Spiritualists' National Union", available in a Pioneer pdf booklet, as given elsewhere in this issue.

The LCC committee were given extracts from PN reports of Billy's successful healing and told of Letari's 53,000 worldwide absent healing patients.

Billy's sponsor, Arthur C. Richards, a sceptical industrialist who was convinced by Letari's accurate diagnoses, paid tribute to the healer's "great gift." But the essential LCC licence was refused.

The next year Peters reviewed the Psychic Press Book, "The Gift of Healing," by Arthur Keith Desmond on Billy's work.<sup>13</sup> (Copies are obtainable £1 post free from Fred Partington, Letari, New Road, Llanddulas, Abergele, Denbighshire, N Wales. He was trained by Letari.)

### Astounds him

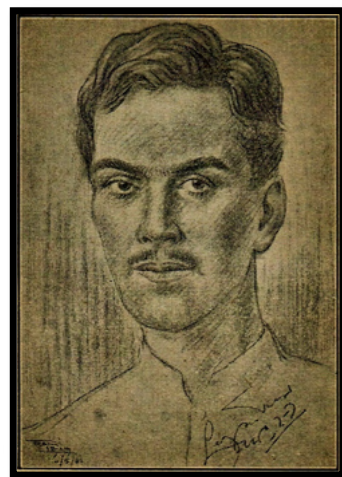
"Rarely have I read a book which has gripped me more," said Peters. He confessed to carrying always the Frank Leah psychic portrait of Letari.<sup>14</sup>

Peters was astounded by Billy's accurate diagnosis.

His tribute is worth quoting:

"Within a few moments of giving the names, addresses and ages of three people, I was confronted with a clear exposition of their maladies for which I could personally vouch.

"In one case I was able to have confirmation of a deep seated cause of the trouble which I had not suspected."



In 1950 Scotland Yard officers called on Billy and Richards.

There had been a complaint they said, that under the guise of spirit healing, the pair were defrauding and exploiting the public.

After 12 months' investigation they came armed with diagnoses, saying "this racket has to be stopped."

Richards produced certified accounts of their activities since they began in Leeds in 1939. These proved the philanthropic nature of their healing mission.

### Police seek aid

**The sequel to the four-hour interview was one police officer's request for treatment for several patients, including a close relative. He said he was so impressed he could easily fill the sanctuary with patients!**

Billy emigrated to South Africa where he was responsible for many dramatic cures.

At a memorable Johannesburg public demonstration Letari conducted a "psychic operation unparalleled in the annals of medical science," said PN correspondent H. P. Smit in 1953.

**"I witnessed a miracle of healing," wrote Smit. "It involved the painless, bloodless removal of a diseased humerus (bone of the upper arm) from Desmond Jackson, a 12-year-old boy.**

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<sup>13</sup> Published in 1946 by Psychic Press, London.

<sup>14</sup> Detailed in Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 1: "Guide Praises Psychic Sketch – "As Faithful As My Own Reflection".

**“He was suffering from tubercular osteomyelitis (inflammation of the marrow of bone) and could not have been expected by medical science to live long.”**

Smit was only a few feet from Billy during the entire “operation.”

Letari said he would ligature the arteries with ectoplasm and divide the arm muscles to permit the ‘diseased bone to be removed.

**When the bandages were removed from Desmond’s arm “it seemed little more than putrid matter. I could clearly see the end of the bone protruding through the skin.”**

### **Bone withdrawn**

Many in the large audience turned away from the distressing sight.

Letari, with deft movements so quick that it was impossible for onlookers to follow them, began to remove the diseased bone.

Eventually he “gently with-drew it from the arm — a sight never to be forgotten. It was impossible to express one’s feelings . . . I did not know whether to laugh, cry, or pray, such was my amazement.”

Some people fainted, others were so overcome they had to leave the hall. Letari held up the bone for all to see.

**Taking the boy’s arm, he revealed “an incision approximately eight inches long and about two inches deep, through which the bone had been removed. I, as well as others, could clearly see ‘inside’ the boy’s arm!”**

### **Seen by 2,000**

An even greater “miracle” followed as Letari said he would rebuild a new bone.

After a few minutes’ speedy fingerwork he asked Desmond to stand and lift his arm over his head — a movement impossible unless a bone had been replaced in that arm.

Smit saw the open wound had been neatly closed with no bleeding or pain. We had witnessed the entire ‘miracle’ which had taken a few minutes to perform from start to finish.

**“On the table before me lay the bone as proof to me and nearly 2,000 people that what we had seen was not a dream but a reality.”**

Billy’s comments on Smit’s eye-witness account were: “The medical opinion was that the entire arm would have to be removed to stop the progress of the disease.

“Letari used ectoplasm to sever the bone at the elbow joint, removing and replacing it with a new bone.

“This meant ligaturing the arteries to stop bleeding, applying ectoplasmic strands to the muscle fibres to separate them and permit free removal of the bone.”

This “miracle operation” became the talk of Johannesburg. The Press, with medical specialists, took Desmond to hospital for extensive X-rays.

### **Verdict is ‘normal’**

**The radiologist’s report — a perfectly normal, regular, healthy humerus. Five years later Desmond was swimming, boxing, and driving his own car.**

A typical example of Letari's outlook was that he never recognised a cure until after one to five years elapsed, depending on the severity of the case.

Desmond later appeared as a witness for Billy when he was fined for "practising as a medical practitioner" at Pretoria Magistrates' Court in 1955.

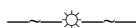
Magistrate P. J. van den Burg "apologised" for the fact that technically he had to find Billy guilty.

**"I have reliable people before me who testified that through your skill you were able to cure children classed as hopeless by the medical profession. It hurts me to find you guilty."**

Desmond certified that a bone exhibited in court was the one taken from his arm during Billy's public "operation."

A well-known Johannesburg doctor also testified to Billy's healing. She said when he took over her son's case his condition was critical.

Billy was determined his son would not have to face any orthodox opposition. David Lilley is a qualified doctor.



The above article mentions the contribution from fellow psychic healer Dr. Sidney J. Peters; he also worked for healers being exempt on the new "Pharmacy and Medicines Bill". The article below gives the account of Peters' efforts as an M.P to amend the Bill.<sup>15</sup>

## **Spiritualist M.P. Tries To Get Our Healers Exempted From New Bill**

### **AN "ASSURANCE" FROM MINISTER OF HEALTH**

THE new menace to certain psychic healing activities was raised by Dr. Sidney J. Peters, the M.P. who is a Spiritualist and a psychic healer with many cures to his credit, when the committee stage of the Pharmacy and Medicines Bill was reached last week.

This Bill would prevent mediums prescribing herbal and other remedies for certain diseases, the use of psychic healing pads for these complaints, and the publication of any cures achieved in this connection.

Dr. Peters was not allowed to put an amendment exempting healing centres from the provisions of the Bill. He moved a second amendment exempting from the possibility of proceedings "persons engaged in medical research."

"There are people, like myself," he said, "who for a number of years have taken an interest in all kinds of healing. It need hardly be said that over that long period one has found that the medical profession, for which I have the greatest respect, in some cases does not produce a cure.

"I am anxious that other people who are not registered practitioners, but who are engaged quite earnestly, in finding out what all these various methods of healing point to,



<sup>15</sup> Taken from the front page of Psychic News, July 26th, 1941.

should have the benefit of those provisions which apply to medical men and other bodies.”

Ernest Brown, Baptist lay preacher and Minister of Health, opposed this amendment on the ground of its alleged vagueness. If Dr. Peters had in mind a particular point, affecting a definable group, he would be very glad to talk to him about it and see whether anything could be done.

After this assurance, Dr. Peters withdrew the amendment. Later he referred to “spiritual healing centres in which you do not get spiritual healing, but prescriptions of herbs. Herbs are prescribed in the vast majority of cases, plus some other treatment, but I leave that out. Those people, undoubtedly, will come within the ban. There are hundreds of these healing circles up and down the country.

“I want to see all these different cross-sections of healing brought together, so that we shall not have all this friction. When persons are suffering and they cannot get healing from one form of medical science, let them go somewhere else. Do not let us try to prevent them. . .

“I do not want to see the Government taking part in anything that will stop people who can cure these sufferers doing so—and they have cured them in hundreds of cases on record.

“I know that the Minister of Health does not want to do it, but the provision in this Bill is the thin end of the wedge. I hope that he will not lend himself to any measure which would stop suffering humanity from getting treatment elsewhere, if effective treatment cannot be found in the orthodox manner.”

An outspoken speech was made by Mrs. Mavis Tate (Frome). “The less power there is left in the hands of the medical profession, the more pleased I shall be,” she declared.

Dealing with the clause which prohibits the advertisement of remedies for the named complaints, she said: “I should like to ask the Minister of Health whether, under this clause, as it stands, if at some future date someone outside the medical profession produces a cure for any of these diseases, it will be impossible to describe it in the public Press. I visualise a purely imaginary case, which might, however, arise.

“Although I have had very great kindness from many members of the medical profession, I am one of those people who have absolutely no faith in them whatever.

“I consider that a doctor’s plate on the door might be considered, in many cases, to be advertising of a dishonest kind, for it leads the gullible public into the illusion that if they enter that door they may be relieved of their ills, whereas they are far more likely to be relieved of the contents of their pockets and of part of their bodily organs. In this country the main idea of a cure among the medical profession is to eliminate as large a portion of the body as possible.”

The Rev. G. S. Woods (Finsbury), referring to the contribution made by unorthodox practitioners, said these diseases were so baffling to the medical profession that they often had, to acknowledge “they are bunkered, in spite of their training and equipment.”

It was then that an inspired man with no special training and no professional status might be able to benefit mankind. The Bill would prevent him from making his remedy known. It would also circumscribe him in experimental work.

Ernest Brown could say that such a person could advertise if he had the Minister of Health’s sanction. Before it was given he would probably be referred to the medical profession who would be so annoyed because an inspired amateur had put them in the

shade that they would turn him down and advise the Minister to have nothing to do with his remedy.

The Minister should make some definite provision for research. They did not want to create the impression, because the medical profession might be baffled, that they did not want research to continue.

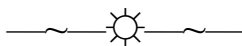
Miss Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, said the Bill “does not stop anyone from making every effort to use his or her skill to alleviate human suffering, but it does prevent certain remedies being advertised as cures, or for the treatment, of particular diseases.”

Dr. Morgan said he was not satisfied. Certain of the diseases mentioned are perfectly curable according to certain researches going on now,” he stated. “It is quite possible under certain modern methods of treatment to cure locomotor ataxy. I have seen it done, provided the disease is caught at a certain stage.”

He instanced the case of a doctor, struck off the roll for some minor offence, who might discover a cure for one of the diseases mentioned and be unable to exploit his discovery because of the prohibition against advertising it.

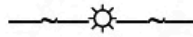
Speaking as a doctor, he thought this a most dangerous clause. He wished the Minister would promise to look into the matter again to see whether he could not find some amendment to meet the situation, which some of them viewed with great concern.

**However, with further efforts by Dr. Sidney J. Peters and others, The Pharmacy and Medicines Bill became law, receiving the Royal assent in early August 1941.**

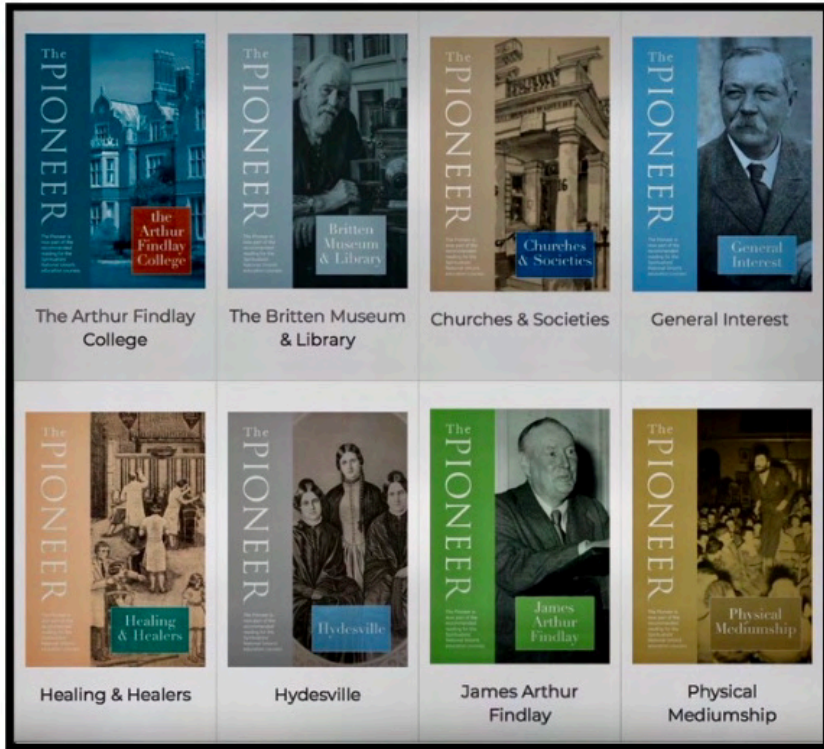


# NEW SNU PIONEER PAGE

## Looking for a specific subject?



*All the articles published in Pioneer over the last seven years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible*

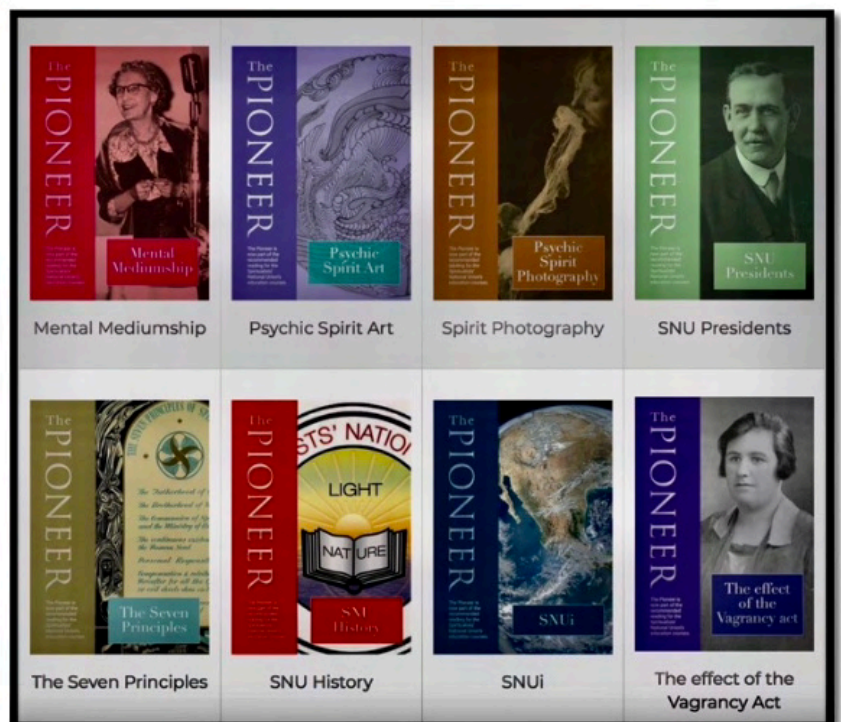
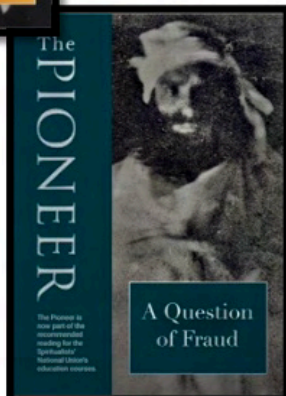
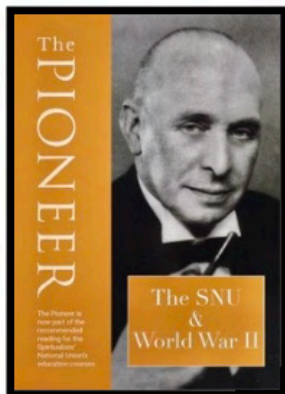


A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

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.

<https://www.snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal>

*The Pioneer journal is a unique insight into the history of the Spiritualists' National Union and its pioneers.*



# MAURICE BARBANELL

## *Before he was famous*

Maurice Barbanell was asked to read his paper, “The God Idea”, at the third Annual S.N.U. Summer School at Matlock Modern School, Derby, August 3rd to 24th, 1929, inclusive. Information on the SNU Summer Schools (“What we did before Stansted”) is published in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5. Other speakers over the three weeks were: John McIndoe, Aaron Wilkinson, Ernest Oaten, George Berry, Ernest Keeling (all former Union Presidents), and Alfred Kitson.

### **Barbanell was well-known within the SNU in the 1920s**

In October 1926, the AGM minutes were published in the Union’s monthly journal, “The National Spiritualist”,<sup>16</sup> and Barbanell was recommended for a Diploma as a result of the Exponents and Education assessment; his marking was Class B (Honours). In a further report of the 1926 examinations published in May 1927 Barbanell achieved Class A (Honours). At this time education was under the “National Spiritualist College and National Joint Education Scheme” (Union/Lyceum), which entailed a three-year course of study with yearly examinations – for details see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: “Early S.N.U Education History”. By April 1928 it can be noted that he was M. Barbanell, Dipl. S.N.U.

It can be further noted in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6: “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”:

At the 1927 SNU Annual Consultative Conference held on Sunday July 3rd at the Art Workers’ Guild Rooms, Queen Square, London under the presidency of Robert Owen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hon. President, moved the following:

“That a new principle be added to the Seven Principles of Spiritualism, declaring that while admitting that every Creed has its own message from on high, however by human frailty, we in the Western World acknowledge the original teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth and look upon them as an ideal model for our own conduct.”

### **Barbanell opposed the resolution, stating:**

If this new principle were added to the seven it would mean that any who felt themselves unable to subscribe to this principle would not be eligible as members of the organisation. He objected also to the term “original” (“the original teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth”) in the resolution. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, one of the greatest pioneers, claimed that Jesus did not originate a single ethic. He read a passage from her works as follows:—

“But even if he (Jesus) were a man there is no evidence of such a personality save the four Gospels, the authorship of which has conclusively been denied by the best authority to have belonged to any disciple of Jesus. No contemporary historian makes any mention of such a personage. The events stated to have occurred at his trial and death are neither found in Roman nor Jewish records, neither in the writings of the officials nor the historians of the time. Yet Philo, the learned historian of the Essenes, wrote of his period without ever alluding to him. Josephus, the voluminous historian of Herod and his times, makes no mention of him.”

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<sup>16</sup> See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 1913: “The First SNU Journal”.

If Spiritualism wanted a leader, let it go to the highest and best it knew—a God who was all perfect... (*See the Pioneer issue for further information.*)

In 1928 Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Spiritualist, Richard Boddington (brother of Harry), as London's Area Representative, a position he would hold for many years. In 1930 Barbanell stood for SNU President and Vice-President but was pipped at the post by John Brown McIndoe and Alexander George Newton respectively.

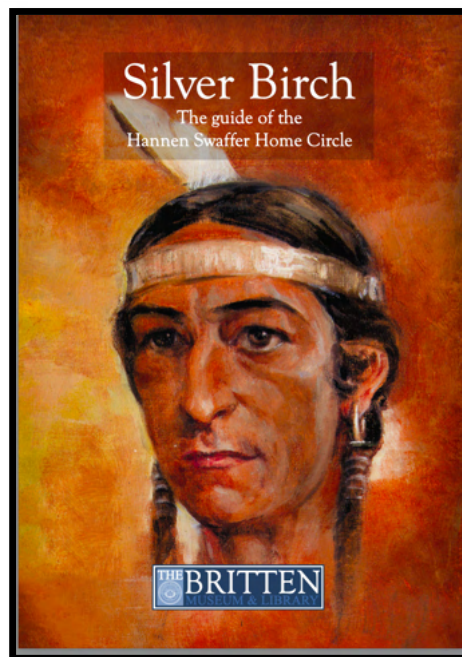
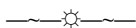
The early 1930s would bring Barbanell to wide public attention with his extensive propaganda work, for example in the above-mentioned Pioneer issue: "On Tour with Hannen Swaffer We Continue Our Crusade". In 1932 Barbanell would become a household name as founder editor of Psychic News; the last issue outlines in detail the founding of this *then* weekly newspaper: "Psychic News was Founded by Maurice Barbanell and Jack Rubens".

After the founding of Psychic News, the name "Silver Birch" was brought about for the main reason to find an appropriate name for the publication of the guide's teachings from the "Hannen Swaffer Home Circle". Maurice Barbanell was first entranced in or around 1920; after about four years he met Hannen Swaffer and a friendship and working relationship were formed which would last for almost forty years. The "Hannen Swaffer Home Circle" was formed, with Barbanell as the medium; this would remain a highly-guarded secret, in fact not revealed until 1957 by Barbanell himself. See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 6: "An extraordinary secret was held in the Spiritualist movement for over three decades: who is Silver Birch's medium?"

The circle's guide was called "Big Jump," a fact which would remain within the circle until the medium's death in 1981; the name "Silver Birch" was used solely as a public name to bring about the guide's teachings.

Quoted from "Silver Birch – The guide of the Hannen Swaffer Home Circle":

... when The Teachings were printed it was thought a more suitable name should be used. Barbie <sup>17</sup> has said that the name 'Silver Birch' was decided one evening at a sitting and the next morning in his office he received a post card with a picture of a silver birch tree on the front. It had come from a member of the public he did not know. <sup>18</sup>



<sup>17</sup> Used by Barbanell's friends.

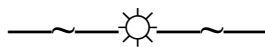
<sup>18</sup> Booklet available at: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/silver-birch>

Below is taken from the S.N.U. "National Spiritualist" over several issues: October, November and December 1929.

## **The God Idea**

*A Paper read to the Summer School Students,*

BY M. BARBANELL, Dipl., S.N.U.



When I was originally approached and asked whether I would speak at the Summer School, it was suggested that the subject be one which lent itself to controversy, and also one on which we could ask questions. This explains the title of my address; for surely of all questions that have puzzled thinking minds throughout the ages and is still unsolved, it is the great mystery we call God.

One of the difficulties in approaching this subject is due to the fact that man's idea of God has been subject to evolution, and the ideas that were accepted generations ago have become considerably modified, as undoubtedly will current conceptions in a generation hence, and it is still true to say that no matter how much ideas and conceptions may alter, God must of necessity remain the same, and unalterable.

In order to gain some idea of this constant evolution, one has only to take the Bible, and compare the conception of God depicted in the very early pages of the Old Testament, where we have delineated a very jealous and personal God, who takes sides, who is war-like, who sends pestilences and diseases, who exterminates lives, who incites wars, and blood-shed, and who is tyrannical.

Then we turn to the picture of God as revealed by Jesus in the New Testament, and the conception has become completely changed, and we have a God who is depicted as the loving Father of justice and mercy. One would be inclined to say that the two conceptions referred to two different Gods, yet they were both depicting the self-same idea.

Similarly we find that the modern conception of God has evolved, and so startling is the evolution, that were a modern preacher to have stood in a pulpit seventy years ago, and expressed ideas which modern Christianity now accepts, he would without doubt have been denounced as a heretic. Bearing this in mind, one approaches the subject with great difficulty, realising this constant modification of ideas.

The first questions we have to ask ourselves are, Does God exist, and if so, what is God?

The answers are far more difficult than the questions. For the essence of the God idea is that God shall be greater than any definition, and so it must be realised that any definition of God could only be a crude attempt to express in language an idea greater than any language is capable of expressing.

Does God exist? Let us see. It is true to say that the last generation has witnessed a tremendous number of discoveries in all phases of scientific research, and as a result we have learnt a great deal concerning the universe which was hitherto considered mysterious and unknown. We have measured the stars, and the planets, and have even calculated their movements. We have delved into the earth, and wrested from her, secrets which have been buried for countless ages, which have enabled us to reconstruct pages of past history. We have discovered how to manipulate many of the vibrations of light and sound, and have invented apparatus to harness them for our requirements.

Yet in all fields of research, no matter what discovery has been made, behind every fact, new or old, is the question of law. Whatever happens does so because its happening

is regulated by law, and this is true not only of the mightiest things in the universe, like tides and planets, but even of the humbler and lesser kingdom of microbes and insects.

Let us pause and consider. The movements of the tides are regulated by law, the stars and planets wheel in their courses, all by law. The sun rises and sets by law. The seasons follow each other by law. All growth, be it inanimate or animate, is subject to unalterable law, and so perfect are these laws, that they have been in operation now apparently for millions of years, working without a single mistake. Further, these laws never have to be modified or withdrawn or altered in any shape or form. Now the existence of law must postulate intelligence which creates the law, and sets the law in operation. Laws do not and cannot create themselves. If you throw a handful of type into the air a million times, it will never fall so as to make intelligent sentences. Not until you apply your own intelligence, which is external to the type, will you have sentences.

We too have laws, and in England we have laws which are considered to be the finest in the world. So much so that year by year Law students and lawyers visit our country in order to learn from us something of the standard of our laws. Yet we are always making fresh laws, we are always altering past laws, we are always repealing old laws that are now defunct and bad, and making new laws to meet new conditions. Although our laws are supposed to be the finest in the world, they are full of errors, and so liable to misinterpretation, that we have to have courts of law and barristers, solicitors, magistrates and lawyers, all of whom are employed day by day to see that the law is properly interpreted and carried out. No one would ever say our laws are perfect.

We ask ourselves the question. Why the necessity for repealing old laws? and the answer is that the minds who made those laws were imperfect minds and so the result was imperfect laws, the imperfections of which the sequence of time has discovered. Yet on the other hand there are laws made centuries ago which are still in operation to-day because the minds which made those laws were greater minds. So we are forced to conclude that the greater the laws the greater the minds which conceived them, and the poorer the laws, the poorer the minds which conceived them.

If we compare man-made laws with natural laws and follow the same lines of reasoning, we are forced to admit that because the laws of the universe are perfect both in their operation and their administration that the mind which created and set them in operation must be equally as perfect. Hence in this somewhat round-about fashion we get some conception, however faint and obscure, of a perfect mind which exists behind the laws of the universe. Beyond that it is almost impossible to get definitions and ideas. We are in the habit of referring to God as "He" and "Him," yet the term is a bad one, although I shall be forced to use it. Obviously perfection cannot be human and have a gender which is either masculine or feminine. This, of course, eliminates the idea of a personal God, unless one is willing to make personality so elastic as to include the whole universe as the personality of God.

Having said all this, however, I must also say that there are many problems to be faced: problems to which it is impossible to give an immediate answer, and which are at present right beyond the range of human thought. It might be asked if God created the universe and the laws in it, what was there before the Creation, and if the universe is the effect of which God is the cause, what is the cause of which God is the effect? Or who created God? Or whether there was a series of Gods who created one another; I do not know. Whether there was anything in existence before the Universe, I do not know. We human beings are forced to conclude that we know nothing at all about first causers whatsoever.

There are some, however, who will not conceive the idea of a perfect God at all, because they say that God essentially is a part of the Universe, and if this is so, and it be

admitted that the Universe is subject to evolution, they say that God must be subject to evolution too. An evolving God cannot possibly be a perfect God, as perfection surely would be the summit of evolution. Then, too, there are others who are puzzled and at a loss to understand the relation of God to Man, for, say they, "If God made man, and man is imperfect, then surely God must be imperfect too, otherwise we would have to admit that perfection produces imperfection, whereas one would have thought that the natural results of perfection would be perfect."

Were we created by God? Is it true that God is spirit and we are spirit too, and that in a lesser degree we are all potential gods, and that a stream of divinity, be it small, flows throughout all our natures? Is it true that we are parts of God, and that God is composed of the totality of all our parts, and that apart from us, God has no existence? Then, too, how are we to understand so much which seems illogical and unjust to us as being the supposed action of a perfect God who is perfect in wisdom and in love?

There are the great twin mysteries of Pain and Evil for which there has never been any satisfactory explanation. Perhaps you may believe that there is no explanation that we would understand at present, but if so, I must reply that we must strive to understand, however difficult and elusive the problem. The reason for our existence on earth is only justified in an attempt to unravel the mysteries of nature. Can we honestly say that all pain exists merely as a chastening effect from which the soul emerges more purified than it was before?

Are we satisfied to believe that Pain provides the comparative experience to happiness, and without experiencing it there could be no happiness. If so, how do we explain the fact that so many seem to receive a measure of pain that seems unjust in comparison with other lives? Then too, the apparent suffering of innocent and good living men and women who are subject to some of the worst diseases of humanity, sometimes inherited with their birth. It does not seem just that an innocent child should be forced to go through life suffering the results of its parents' wrong living. Of course I know I shall be told the answer is that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, that is the Law, but surely if we made the Law and if we had the power that apparently God had would we make unjust laws? The only other explanation is the belief that in the larger life after death, compensation can be offered and an adjustment made, but this still leaves unanswered the great question—Why is it necessary for suffering to be inherited through the misdeeds of parents?

Then, too, there are some who say that all the suffering in the Universe is not the action of God or natural law, but due to human beings. Here again one has to pause and remember that this does not explain earthquakes, tempests, tornadoes, whirlpools, icebergs, etc. all of which certainly are not man-made. I have heard this objection met with an answer that the suffering of a thousand people is no greater than the suffering of one, but this seems to me to be a very callous outlook, for surely we know as Spiritualists the effect that a sudden exit from life produces in the individual.

Then let us turn again to this question of suffering that is produced by human action, and let us see whether the responsibility altogether rests on human shoulders. We say God made us. If we are brutal, tyrannous, bullying with evil in our hearts, God made us so. Just as easily he could have made us sweet natured, amiable and full of love, but rightly or wrongly he chose to make us as we are. We were not consulted, we were not given a choice, and the responsibility for our organised being rests not upon us but upon God. And equally also surely the responsibility for our actions which are the results of our being, too, so that one could fasten all suffering and evil upon God as the intelligence who created us.

In passing, I have always wanted to know the opinion of Mr. Blatchford,<sup>19</sup> who so very cogently advances this Determinist argument, since his acceptance of Spiritualism. There are some who are quite satisfied to believe the only answer is that one day we shall know all, and that at present we are merely trying to form hasty judgments from incomplete portions, but we must refuse to be placated with this argument, and press on and investigate until our reason is satisfied.

It is advanced in some quarters that we only have pain, evil and suffering because of the fact that we have been given free wills, but certainly it is true to say that our free will is far from free. It is so restricted and limited by laws and circumstances over which we have no control, that its freedom is in a measure almost, but not wholly, insignificant. One wonders sometimes, if it is not too blasphemous a thought, whether, if we were god, with the powers divinity possesses, we would create a race of beings such as we are to-day, or whether we would produce far different results.

Let us turn to the question of Prayer, and here we see also much of the illogicality of the human mind. Recently we had a drought, and the water supplies of our country were threatened. Immediately the suggestion was thrown out by the Church that we should have prayers for rain. Why? Is it suggested that a perfect God was unaware of the fact that there was a drought, and needed to be reminded of it by our supplication? If so, this is a very curious state of perfection; and further, could our prayers influence or change the natural laws which determine rain and sunshine? Then again, we praise God for the Sun, but no-one blames God for the rain. We praise God for the flowers, but no-one blames God for the weeds. We praise God for all the beautiful things in life, but no-one blames God for the ugly, yet if God made one surely He is responsible for the other?

Have prayers any value at all apart from the spiritual exercise, and is there any point in reminding God of all the things, which, as God, He should know; and further, since 90% of prayer is generally personal request, is it not really a waste of breath? One could enlarge on this a great deal, particularly by making reference to the invocations offered by Speakers on public platforms at Services, which would certainly be far better were no attempt made at prayer whatsoever. This reminds me that there is a tendency both in the Spiritualist movement and in religious movements generally, to assume that it is only possible to make this contact with God in some place called a "Church," whereas, the idea is obviously contrary to the whole spirit of the nature of God.

God is Love we are told, but God is Law, and often it is difficult to reconcile the two, but one thing remains steadfastly certain, no matter what our desires or requests may be, unalterable and immutable law control and reign the universe.

Sunday after Sunday we have repeated what is supposed to be the Model Prayer for all human beings, namely the Lord's Prayer, which when examined in the light of reason is illogical. God in order to be God must be something more than a Father, and must exist not only in Heaven. Why should God's name require hallowing? The will of God is law and it is already "done on earth" for no man or woman has the power to interfere with the will of God.

It is useless praying to God for daily bread. It can only be obtained by our own efforts. It is vain asking God to forgive us our trespasses. We know that our trespasses cannot be forgiven until we have put right that which we have made wrong. Forgiveness can never cancel out sin. Asking God not to lead us into temptation is surely absurd, for it is suggesting that a God who loves us would lead us into temptation. From evil we can only deliver ourselves. So I am afraid that the whole conception of the Lord's Prayer requires considerable modification in the light of our modern knowledge.

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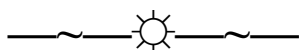
<sup>19</sup> Robert Blatchford; see *Psypioneer*, Vol, 7, No. 3: "More Things about Robert Blatchford ... – Leslie Price".

It might be true that we never shall understand God, because the lesser cannot understand the greater, but we must persist in the attempt. Mere worship and praise are insufficient. One would imagine that God required nothing more than a constant reiteration of His praises day by day and a repetition of hymns and texts that have been uttered for hundreds of years, that surely by now He must be completely weary of them. For myself, I can only say that the question of God bristles with many problems, some of which we cannot understand, but nevertheless, which I hope some day will be understood.

Do not, however, let us be hypnotised into the acceptance of ideas because they have been dinned into our minds week after week, month after month, and year after year, and have now become woven into the subconscious fabric of our beings.

If there is any portion of us which is divine, it is our mind, and unless we are constantly stimulating our minds into action and persist in asking how, why, where and what, we might just as well revert to animal lives, and be content with mere sleep and work, and eat and drink.

The human race can only progress as long as it refuses to be baffled by the so-called mysteries of life, and civilisation can only be advanced as long as we are determined that the generation which comes after us shall know more about God and the universe, and nature through our efforts. We must hand on the flaming torch of knowledge, and add something to its lustre and brightness, for if we have not contributed any fresh illumination and helped to dispel some of the gloom in the universe, then indeed our lives have been in vain.



*Maurice Barbanell (note Helen Hughes sitting behind him) at Edinburgh 1942*