

The Enigma of Survival

The Case For and Against an After Life

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[1888-1967]

(Selected chapters only)

Springfield - Illinois - U.S.A.

1959

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Chapter 1

WE SEEK THE TRUTH ABOUT A VITAL QUESTION

IN OUR materialistic age, death looks like the final curtain. The materialist insists that beyond death is utter blackness, absolute silence.

But all through the ages there have been those who have insisted that this dark verdict is false. They have claimed to have proof that personalities go on beyond the death of their mortal bodies—that life beyond the grave can be, and for those who have lived rightly is, more glorious, more beautiful, more creative than our existence here on earth.

The question is momentous

When our hearts finally stop beating—when our brains grow cold and start decaying—what then will become of that which has been thinking "I" within that brain? Does consciousness go out for ever, like the flame of an extinguished candle? *Or can this 'I'-thinking personality go on somehow or other into a continuing—and perhaps fuller—experience*

Beyond the grave?

All human values are wrapped up in that question. A young business executive, his wife, and their two small children are riding together down the highway in their family car. The man is enthusiastic about his work; he loves his family; he is intensely ambitious for their present and future welfare. The wife loves her husband and her children; she has been utterly devoted to helping her life partner succeed, and to giving her children the best possible start in life. The children are full of vitality, excited about the trip they are taking, eager to explore the mysteries and the thrills of living.

Then suddenly, without warning, another car collides head-on with this one. All the four members of this family are instantly killed. What happens to these values? Does death cancel them? Is all of our aspiring and striving a mere brief surge of activity whose whole meaning is to be blotted out utterly (so far as we ourselves are concerned) at whatever moment death happens to come?

THIS DEBATE HAS BEEN RAGING FOR CENTURIES

More than two thousand years ago, Job debated with his comforters, the question: "If a man die, shall he live again" Ever since that time, the issue has been argued ardently in the temples of religion, in the halls of philosophers, and (in modern times) from the rostrums of scientists.

We can listen in on their debate

Strangely enough, the full impact of the arguments on both sides has never, till now, been adequately, summed up between the covers of any single book.

If we really want to know the answers to the basic questions—and millions of us do—an obviously sensible way to go about it is to examine open-mindedly the conclusions which the most thorough students have reached—both for and against survival. We need to hear the debate out.

To review all the evidence and to hear all the arguments is (of course) impossible for practically all of us. But the results of searchings by the best minds who have come to grips with the problem *can* be distilled and placed before us. That is what this book undertakes to do.

EMINENT SCIENTISTS HAVE TAKEN OPPOSING POSITIONS

Some have emphatically denied survival

Sir Arthur Keith, one-time President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and an eminent authority on human paleontology, asserted that the mind or spirit has a material basis, and dies with the body. Sir John Bland Sutton, a famous surgeon, said: 'Death is the end of all. My experience is that all of those who have studied the subject scientifically and deeply have come to the same conclusion.' Clarence Darrow, though himself not a scientist, doubtless felt that he was expressing conclusions reached scientifically when he said that the 'evidence against the persistence of personal consciousness is as strong as the evidence of gravitation, and much more obvious'.

Other eminent scientists have expressed strong conviction of survival

In contrast with such negative conclusions as those cited above, a number of men distinguished for their scientific achievements have

announced that their researches have led them to strong belief in the reality of a future life and of an unseen world.

Sir Oliver Lodge, recipient of the Rumford medal of the Royal Society, President of the Physical Society of London, and of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, recipient of honorary degrees from Cambridge and from five other universities, stated his position as follows:

'Speaking for myself and with full and cautious responsibility, I have to state that as an outcome of my investigations into psychical matters **I have at length and quite gradually become convinced, after more than thirty years of study, not only that persistent existence is a fact, but that occasional communication across the chasm—with difficulty and under definite conditions—is possible....** The evidence has thoroughly convinced me (1) of human survival, (2) of the possibility under favourable circumstances, of communication between the dead and the living, and (3) that **death is only an episode in a continuous existence.** I also think it fairly established that some kind of help, guidance or inspiration reaches us at times across what is sometimes called "the gulf " or through what is often called "the veil".... The hypothesis of continued existence in another set of conditions, and of possible communication across the boundary, is not a gratuitous one made for the sake of comfort and consolation, or because of a dislike to the idea of extinction; **it is a hypothesis which has been gradually forced upon the author—as upon many other persons—by the stringent coercion of definite experience.** The foundation of the atomic theory in chemistry is to him no stronger. **The evidence is cumulative, and has broken the back of all legitimate and reasonable scepticism.'**

Sir William Crookes was the inventor of the Crookes tube—an electrical device which became the lineal ancestor of all the radio and TV tubes in the world. He began, in 1869, a scientific investigation of psychical phenomena which led him to the conclusion 'that **invisible and intelligent beings exist who say that they are the spirits of dead persons**'. His most sensational conclusions, relating to the materialization of 'Katie King', were published in 1874. Subsequently Crookes was elected President of the Royal Society, of the Chemical Society, of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, and of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He discovered the chemical element

thallium, and invented the radiometer and the spinthariscopes. In 1880 the French Academy of Sciences awarded him a gold medal and a prize of 3,000 francs in recognition of his scientific achievements. That the same intellect which made these other monumental contributions to science gave allegiance to his findings in psychical research is evident from the following statements from his presidential address before the British Association in 1898:

'Thirty years have passed since I published an account of experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals.... I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto.'

Sir William F. Barrett, F.R.S., Professor of Experimental Physics in the Royal School of Science for Ireland, is another scientist who spent decades in psychical research. Discussing experiments in which an automatic writer produced messages purporting to come from people who had passed beyond death, he said:

'Certainly, for our own part, we believe there is some active intelligence at work behind, and apart from, the automatist, an intelligence which is more like the deceased person it professes to be than that of any other we can imagine.... It is difficult to find any other solution of the problem...than that there is an attempt at intelligent co-operation between certain disembodied minds and our own.'

Why do scientists thus contradict each other?

The opinions of the distinguished men who have just been cited appear to be highly contradictory. How can it be that men so eminent in the use of scientific methods can be so opposite in their conclusions?

The answer is fairly obvious. The fact that a man is a distinguished expert in one field does not make him an authority in fields in which he, has made no thorough and critical investigations. Some scientists eminent in other fields *have* earned the right to offer scientific conclusions in Psychical research. But merely to be a noted psychologist or biologist does not justify a man in dogmatizing about

There IS a remedy

When the findings of honest investigators differ widely, we still have available a truth-seeking process which may provide highly valuable illumination. We can, if we are determined to do so, detach ourselves sufficiently from our own prejudices so as to explore impartially the evidence and the arguments which are offered by those investigators who avow their allegiance to scientific methods, including those who conclude that personalities do not survive bodily death, those who are agnostic doubters, and those who have concluded that survival is an actual fact. To carry out such an exploration is the primary purpose of this book.

BOOK II

SURVIVAL EVIDENCE THROUGH MEDIUMS

Chapter 5

CONTACTS WITH THE DEAD HAVE BEEN REPORTED

SOME mediums have received honestly information which they could not have obtained normally, and which cannot be explained as due to lucky chance. That much has been made clear in Chapter 4. But **does this mean that they 'were really giving messages from the dead'?** In this chapter and the next two we shall look at some cases and arguments put forth by those psychical researchers who have made outstandingly strong mediumistic cases in favour of survival. Then, **in Chapters 8 and 9, evidence apparently adverse will be considered.**

WHAT IS THE SPIRITISTIC HYPOTHESIS?

Before the adverse evidence is presented, it will be of interest, in our review of this great survival debate, to examine a luminous statement by one of the outstanding scientists of modern times, who started out as a sceptic, but who found himself driven to accept the survival hypothesis. That scientist is Sir **Oliver Lodge**. His statement, made in 1933, is as follows:

'The spiritistic hypothesis in its simplest and crudest form is that we are spirits here and now operating on material bodies, being, so to speak, incarnate in matter for a time, but that our real existence does not depend on association with matter, although the index and demonstration of our activity does. We demonstrate ourselves to our fellows only by means of the material organisms that we have unconsciously constructed and utilized for the purpose; **hence if the organism is damaged our manifestation becomes imperfect, and if the damage is serious, we may have to quit the organism and remain normally dissociated from matter.** Our activities, on this theory, are supposed to go on as before, but now presumably in space; and only when we manage to re-establish some temporary connection with Matter are we able to make any sign, or supply any demonstration,

of our continued activity. This is the spiritistic hypothesis, **called into existence to account for a large number of otherwise inexplicable facts of observation and experiment, i.e. of concrete experience.**'

HERE IS THE PLAN OF THIS CHAPTER

Four outstanding examples are cited

The problem of survival is the main issue stated in the title of this book. Here **in this chapter some of the better evidence is sampled.** These four cases have not been centres of major controversy—hence the counter arguments have not been set forth by adverse critics. In Chapters 6 to 9 we shall view clashes of opinion with regard to some cases on which controversy did focus. But here in Chapter 5 we shall simply review the available facts about four alleged contacts with the dead.

The investigators have been of high calibre

The persons referred to in the title of this chapter have not been gullible or fanatical crusaders, attempting to produce evidence to support wishful prejudices. A vast amount of bigoted and wishful propaganda in favour of survival could be cited. But such material has been excluded from the present discussion. What we have **here is a series of cases in which competent psychical researchers have sought evidence critically,** considering the points both for and against, and have published evidence which convinced them that they have been in direct communication with departed personalities.

The mediums are of attested probity

The evidence in the cases now to be cited has been transmitted through mediums who have been shown in Chapter 4 to be above suspicion of fraud, and also to have been channels through which supernormal information has been registered. Without further preface, then, let us consider the four examples:

I. THE 'GEORGE PELHAM' PERSONALITY

Probably the most famous, and certainly the most intensively studied of the mediums listed in Chapter 4 was Mrs. Piper. That she obtained information from sources other than the ordinary senses, and

wholly without fraud, seems to be the only reasonable conclusion from all the available facts. But **did that information come from disembodied spirits?** Did this particularly famous and honest medium actually make contact with the dead? Difficulties which have been raised by disbelievers in that conclusion will be dealt with later on. But here we are to examine what is probably the most outstanding piece of evidence produced by Mrs. Piper.

Before he died

In 1888 a promising young professional man, 'whose real identity has been concealed in the published records under the name George Pelham, had a sitting with Mrs. Piper. **The sitting was under an assumed name, and Mrs. Piper did not learn Pelham's identity.**

The post-mortem communications

Four years later, a month after his death, communications alleged to come from Pelham began to be received through Mrs. Piper. During the next six years, at least 150 sitters were present when 'Pelham' communicated. From among these, he recognized 30 whom he had known when living, and he never claimed acquaintance with a sitter whom he had not known. The network of associations with his friends was revived with convincing and dramatic realism. **Richard Hodgson, who followed the case closely, felt that, through the course of the years, the manifestations of this communicator behaved like a continuous, living and Persistent personality, and that whatever change was observable was not of disintegration, but rather of integration and evolution.**

This failure seems evidential

Even the failure of Pelham to recognize a certain young lady whom he had met before death seems to point towards the existence of a real surviving personality rather than merely a fragment of Mrs. Piper's unconscious. The young lady, a Miss Warner, had been only a little girl when Pelham saw her, eight or nine years previously. She had changed greatly. If Pelham had still been in the flesh when he encountered her after this lapse of time, the natural thing would have been for him to have forgotten her, as his alleged surviving personality did in this sitting. **But if the supposed personality was a mere construct by Mrs. Piper's unconscious, patching together telepathic information, it would have been natural for Miss Warner to have been 'recognized'.**

Both she and Dr. Hodgson were aware of the fact that Miss Warner had known Pelham when she was a little girl, so that sources for telepathy were at hand. Moreover, correct information not known to the Sitters was given about Miss Warner's relatives, so that the unconscious of Mrs. Piper must have been aware of her identity. The non-recognition thus seems to be an argument in favour of the independent existence of Pelham.

Gardner Murphy summarized in 1957:

'The recently deceased George Pelham appeared to communicate in so convincing a fashion as to lead both Hodgson and Professor J. H. Hyslop to the conviction that the survival of death and the reality of communication had been established.'

II. 'DEAD' HUSBAND TO LIVING WIFE, THROUGH MRS. LEONARD?

The following case is so striking and so well authenticated, that it has been related in several different books on Psychical research. The case was reported originally by Mrs. Sidgwick, in 1921. It is summarized once more here because we are seeking to examine the best evidence and the best arguments on both sides of the survival debate.

Mrs. Hugh Talbot, in one of the earliest book-tests of which we have a record, had two sittings with Mrs. Leonard on 17 and 19 December, 1917. At that time Mrs. Leonard knew neither Mrs. Talbot's name nor address; Mrs. Talbot had never been to Mrs. Leonard or to any other medium. During the second sitting Feda gave a very correct description of Mrs. Talbot's deceased husband's personal appearance, and from then on he alone seemed to speak through the medium, evidently trying by every means in his power to prove to his wife his identity, and to show her that it was really himself communicating. Various trivial but highly evidential incidents were minutely and correctly described.

Suddenly Feda began a description of a book

She said it was made of leather, dark in colour, and she tried to indicate the size. Mrs. Leonard showed a length of 8 to 10 inches with her hands and a width of 4 to 5 inches. Feda said: 'It is not exactly a book; it is not printed. Feda wouldn't call it a book, it has writing in it.'

Mrs. Talbot found this description quite tiresome, but I finally connected it in her mind with a red leather notebook of her husband's. Fedra seemed puzzled at this and the replies were rather inconclusive. Fedra insisted that Mrs. Talbot was to look on page 12 or 13 for something written there which the communicator indicated would be 'so interesting after this conversation'. Mrs. Talbot responded half-heartedly but Fedra was not satisfied. She started all over again and went on to say: 'He is not sure of the colour; he does not know. There are two books. You will know the one he means by a diagram of languages in the front.' Here followed a string of words, including 'Indo-European, Aryan, Semitic languages' and others. Fedra said: 'There are lines, but not straight—going like this,' drawing with her fingers lines going out sideways from one centre. Then Fedra repeated: 'A table of Arabian languages, Semitic languages.' Fedra kept saying: 'Will you look at page twelve or thirteen. If it is there, it would interest him so much after this conversation.' Finally, in order to close the sitting, Mrs. Talbot promised to look for the book.

The verification came later

That evening, on the insistence of her niece, Mrs. Talbot (still insisting that it was all nonsense) went to the bookshelf, and, after some time, right at the back of the top shelf, found one or two old notebooks belonging to her husband, which she had never felt she cared to open. One, a shabby black leather, corresponded in size to the description given, and Mrs. Talbot absent-mindedly opened it. To her astonishment, her eyes fell on the words 'Table of Semitic or Syro-Arabian Languages', and pulling out the leaf which was a long folded piece of paper pasted in, she saw on the other side: 'General Table of the Aryan and Indo-European Languages.' Fedra's description of the diagram as having lines going out from the centre is correct; this branching out from points and from lines happens repeatedly in the diagram.

Then Mrs. Talbot looked at page 13. On that page she found the following extract from a book entitled *Post Mortem*, published in 1881, the author's name not being given:

'I discovered by certain whispers which it was supposed I was unable to hear and from certain glances of curiosity or commiseration which it was supposed I was unable to see, that I was near death....

Presently, my mind began to dwell not only on happiness which was to come, but upon happiness which I was actually enjoying. I saw long-forgotten forms, playmates, school-fellows, companions of my youth and of my old age, who one and all, smiled upon me. They did not smile with any compassion—that I no longer felt that I needed—but with that sort of kindness which is exchanged by people who are equally happy. I saw my mother, father, and sisters, all of whom I had survived. They did not speak, yet they communicated to me their unaltered and unalterable affection. At about the time when they appeared, I made an effort to realize my bodily situation...that is, I endeavoured to connect my soul with the body which lay on the bed in my house.... The endeavour failed. I was dead....'

III. DID THE DEAD CAPTAIN OF A WRECKED AIRSHIP REPORT?

At six-thirty on the evening of Saturday, 4 October, 1930, a crowd of thousands who had waited all day in the biting wind at Cardington Airfield, in England, cheered as the R-101, the greatest airship ever built, slipped her moorings and headed for France on the first stage of her voyage to Egypt and India. The R(for Rigid)-101 was as long and as costly as an ocean liner.

Among the fifty-odd people who set out on the voyage was the Labour Government's Air Minister, Lord Thompson, who had often said: 'She's as safe as a house—except for the millionth chance.' Three hours later the ship crashed on a hillside near Beauvais, in France, and only half a dozen of the people on board survived.

The sittings with Mrs. Garrett

Three days after the disaster, while the causes of the crash were still unknown even to those high in the Government (and, indeed to the best informed among all living people), Harry Price was holding a seance at his 'National Laboratory of Psychical Research' in London. Through the mediumship of Mrs. Eileen Garrett he was attempting to make contact with the spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who had died three months previously, leaving instructions in his will that such attempts at contact should be made. As Mrs. Garrett went into trance her voice changed to a masculine quality. But instead of giving a message from the author of *Sherlock Holmes*, she spelled out 'Irving or Irwin'. The man who appeared to be speaking announced himself

as 'Flight Lieutenant H. Carmichael Irwin', who had been captain of the airship R-101. He spoke in staccato sentences as though under great difficulty:

'The whole bulk of the dirigible was entirely and absolutely too much for her engine's capacity. Engines too heavy. Useful lift too small. Oil pipe plugged.'

The voice gained depth and authority as it continued:

'...Flying too low altitude and never could rise. Disposable lift could not be utilized. Load too great for long flight.... Cruising speed bad and ship badly swinging. Severe tension on the fabric which is chafing.... Engines wrong—too heavy—cannot rise. Never reached cruising altitude—same in trials. Too short trials. No one knew the ship properly. Weather bad for long flight. Fabric all waterlogged and ship's nose is down. Impossible to rise. Cannot trim.

Almost scraped the roofs of Achy. Kept to railway. At inquiry to be held later it will be found that the superstructure of the envelope contained no resilience and had far too much weight in envelope. The added middle section was entirely wrong...too heavy, too much overweighted for the capacity of engines....'*

The verification

Although neither Mr. Price nor Mrs. Garrett had any technical knowledge of airships—nor indeed of anything aeronautical—the comments which had issued through the mouth of Mrs. Garrett were subsequently found to have been technically correct. On 1 April, 1931, the Court of Inquiry issued its report. The basic facts communicated through Mrs. Garrett were essentially established. Among other things, the Town of Achy, though not on ordinary maps of France, was located on the route traversed by the airship.

IV. DID THIS 'DEAD' SON SEEK A PROXY SITTING FOR HIS FATHER?

Gardner Murphy is an agnostic, not an anti-survivalist. His objective has been (in his own words) 'to represent the reasonableness and credibility of both the pro- and the anti-positions'. In his, Outline

* From Leasor, James, *The Millionth Chance: The story of the R-101 Disaster*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1957, page 159.

of Survival Evidence,' he presented, in 1945, the following as an outstandingly persuasive case:

'At a Leonard sitting on the 28th October, 1938, Mr. Drayton Thomas' regular communicators, who purported to be his father and sister, told him that he was to expect a letter from a father about his son. The father was said to be middle-aged, and to have at one time lived in a place where Mr. Thomas lived—Morton or a name sounding like that. The son, so the communicators said, had been killed outright—an accident case connected with a motor car. Mr. Thomas agreed to await developments.

In less than two weeks after this sitting, he received a letter from Mr. Lionel G. Aitken, of whose existence he had hitherto been unaware. Mr. Aitken wrote that about a month earlier he had heard Mr. Thomas give a lecture and that he had planned at that time to write him a congratulatory letter. But he had procrastinated and had not actually written until then—November 8th. Mr. Aitken continued in this letter to say that he had recently lost a young son, and he asked for advice on taking sittings with mediums.

Entering into correspondence with Mr. Aitken, Mr. Thomas learned that the son had been killed outright in an accident case (an aeroplane accident, however, not a car accident), and that he had been born and lived with his family for twelve years in the village of Norton, which was only a mile and half away from a town where Mr. Thomas had once lived.

The young Aitken communicator appeared in two subsequent sittings which Mr. Thomas took with Mrs. Leonard. Striking veridical material was given which was unknown to Mr. Aitken, but which was verified by his surviving son, the brother of the supposed communicator. Fedra reported that the young man wished to refer to a friend of his who had passed over, a young man whose name began with the letters BR. As evidence of BR's identity, an elaborate description of a model ship was given. Mr. Aitken was unable to make sense out of these references, but his living son reported that he and his brother had a friend named Br——, who had been killed about a year after the Aitken communicator. He had worked for a firm which made model ships.'

Commenting on the above case, Dr. Murphy wrote:

'Here the devotee of the telepathic hypothesis, as ordinarily conceived, would be somewhat bewildered to devise a simple

explanation. Mr. Aitken, the father, had heard Mr. Thomas lecture on psychical research, but he had been a member of a large audience and had not made himself known to Mr. Thomas. He had simply decided, after the lecture, that he would write to Mr. Thomas asking for advice in getting in touch with his boy. Procrastinating he had not actually written for some weeks, and not until after the first sitting had occurred. If one accepts the survival hypothesis, it is fairly reasonable to believe that the boy may have known his father's intentions; but it is a considerable wrench to any ordinary telepathic hypothesis to assume that Mr. Thomas made sufficient telepathic rapport with members of his audience to set going in the medium's mind a histrionic representation of a son desiring to communicate with his father.'

THE SCEPTICS WILL BE HEARD FROM MORE FULLY LATER

Some readers will accept the above four cases as clear-cut examples of contacts with the dead. Other readers will be sceptical. But these cases do provide a background against which the more detailed inquiries of the following chapters may become more meaningful. At the present point it may be well for the reader to suspend judgment, waiting until certain objections can be weighed, as they are developed in Chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter 6

DRAYTON THOMAS BELIEVED THAT HE HAD AMPLE EVIDENCE

A LIFE-LONG PSYCHICAL RESEARCHER

CHARLES DRAYTON THOMAS was a Methodist minister in England, who devoted a major portion of his life to systematic psychic study.

His father, John Wesley Thomas, was also a Methodist minister. Drayton, after having gone into business, had felt a call to the ministry, and entered Richmond Theological College in 1889. From 1892 to 1907 he served various Methodist circuits in England. He then gave up circuit work, and was appointed to the Leysian Mission, City Road, London, where he remained until he retired. He continued preaching and lecturing until a few months before his death, in 1953, at the age of eighty-five.

His career in psychical research

As a minister he had for many years been interested in the life after death. On 3 February, 1917, he had his first sitting, anonymously, with Mrs. Osborne Leonard—the medium who (as already pointed out in Chapter 4) had become famous as the channel through which Sir Oliver Lodge had secured the evidence published in the book to which he gave the name of his son, *Raymond*.

Drayton Thomas's father had passed on in 1903. Drayton had a married sister, Etta. She shared his Psychical researches for three years, and passed over in 1920, at the age of forty-six. In 1922 Mr. Thomas began publishing his long series of books and articles. In these he presented cumulative evidence which, even at that early date, had convinced him that, through the mediumship of Mrs. Leonard, he was in full communication with his father and sister (as well as with other departed friends). The list of sources at the end of this present book includes references to fifteen of his publications, nine of which

appeared in the *Proceedings* or the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research.

Drayton Thomas as a scientist

Mr. Thomas was an outstanding example of a believer in survival who was loyal to the scientific method. He showed this loyalty by his industrious collection of systematic data. During his third of a century of this work, he personally experienced over 500 sittings with Mrs. Leonard. The scientific quality of his research won for him the admiration of his associates. Helen De G. Salter wrote, in 1953:

'He kept full and annotated records of his sittings with a care none too frequent among sitters, and generously made these available to other investigators. He also had gramophone records made of some of the communications from his father John...and presented copies to the Society. The early sitters with Mrs. Leonard were fortunate in having to deal with a medium and control who fully entered into the spirit of scientific investigation, and indeed themselves proposed various methods of research which would provide crucial tests as to whether or not the content of the communications could reasonably be assigned to telepathy.'

The recognition of his scientific integrity led to his election to the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, on which he served for nineteen years. His membership in the Society extended over a period of more than half a century.

Drayton Thomas as a spiritualist

His strong conviction of survival did not destroy his capacity to use critical scientific methods. Mrs. Lydia W. Allison wrote of him in 1954:

'A convinced spiritualist, Mr. Thomas was able to act with entire sincerity during his mediumistic sittings, mainly with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and his attitude, devoid of scepticism may, at least partially, have contributed to his long-continued success in obtaining evidence of a high order which pointed to the survival of human personality after death. It should be emphasized that Mr. Thomas whole-heartedly embraced the rigorous standards for mediumistic investigation introduced and developed over the years by the S.P.R. This combination of personal conviction of survival and

willingness to accept scientific conditions in his experiments won for him the respect of psychical researchers of the most diverse opinions. "One of the advantages of having been trained in the ways of the Society for Psychical Research," he wrote, "was an appreciation of the value of exact note-taking, leaving nothing to memory."

Adverse criticisms will be presented later

By no means all psychical researchers accept Drayton Thomas's conclusions. The arguments of the sceptics and disbelievers will be presented in Chapters 8 and 9. But in the present chapter we shall be concerned to understand as clearly as possible just what Drayton Thomas's conclusions are.

WHAT TOOK PLACE DURING TYPICAL SITTINGS

When 'Feda' was in control

The nature of Mrs. Leonard's 'Feda' control has already been explained in Chapter 4. When Mrs. Leonard went into trance, a childish voice began to speak through her lips, announcing that Feda was in control and was speaking. The voice then went on talking as though Feda were conversing with (or, at other times, observing) spirit personalities who had come to communicate with the sitter. Feda would act as intermediary, transmitting messages.

While control by Feda was usual, another type of communication also took place. C. D. Broad, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Cambridge University, described it as follows in 1955:

Ostensible possession by communicators

'With some sitters, after they have had a good many sittings, there happens a further development of a very startling kind. The voice and mannerisms change completely, e.g., a gruff male voice or a typical clergyman's voice may issue from the medium's lips.... It is as if a certain deceased person, e.g., John, or Etta, were using the body to speak with. It is alleged by the sitters that the intonations, verbal mannerisms, etc., of the ostensible communicator are often reproduced with startling exactness, although Mrs. Leonard has never met the individual in life. However that may be, it is certain that the most surprisingly different voices and modes of speaking are produced, and that they range from the gruff male voice of an elderly Scotsman afflicted with bronchial asthma,

through the cultivated clerical tones of the John-persona, to the piping childish treble of the Feda-persona.

The earlier attempts at possession by an ostensible communicator are generally marked by great difficulties. The voice seldom rises at first above a hoarse whisper, and the medium is liable to show signs of choking. Each such early attempt seldom lasts more than a few minutes. But certain ostensible communicators learn by practice, and as they grow more experienced, the difficulties generally diminish....

Normal Mrs. Leonard has no more knowledge of the experiences of an ostensible communicator who is in possession of her body than she has of the experiences of the Feda-persona. But Feda seems to be in much the same position. There is no reason to believe that she is aware, either simultaneously or afterwards, of anything that an ostensible communicator perceives, thinks, feels, or says 'While in possession of the medium's body. Her knowledge about the ostensible communicators seems to be confined to what they choose to communicate. It should be remembered that the Feda-persona, like the other personae, claims to be a spirit with a life independent of Mrs. Leonard's body. Both the Feda-persona and the other personae claim to meet from time to time in that independent state between sittings, and to communicate with each other directly.'

Lady Trowbridge described a vivid case of direct possession

The case of the 'elderly Scotsman' referred to by Professor Broad was described with impressive detail in 1922 by Lady Una Trowbridge. She first commented on the fact that a ventriloquist, whom she had seen perform, perspired profusely during his act, and seemed greatly exhausted after twenty or thirty minutes of producing pseudo voices. But she gave the following account of 'direct possession' by the Scotsman:

Following upon a Feda control of some length, an elderly Scotch gentleman purported to control the medium for forty minutes. The control was, as far as my experience goes, an unusually strong one. It spoke throughout most of its duration in robust and fully audible tones of a surprisingly masculine quality, interrupted at intervals by paroxysms of coughing and wheezing characteristic of the bronchial asthma which had afflicted the gentleman

purporting to control during his lifetime. The fits of coughing were violent, conveying to me the impression of unavailing efforts to break up accumulations of phlegm obstructing the bronchial passages. The entire effort was unquestionably that of a masculine sufferer, and the timbre of the speaking voice was not only masculine in quality, but gave every appearance of acquiring this quality in a normal and effortless manner from the larynx. Except for the wheezing I did not receive any impression of the voice being strained or forced. From this control, lasting...forty minutes, Mrs. Leonard awoke to normal consciousness in less than one minute. Her face showed no signs of perspiration or exhaustion, she entered immediately into conversation with myself without a trace of hoarseness, and appeared as devoid of cough or chest obstruction as she had been before the sitting....'

What happened as understood by Drayton Thomas

On the basis of his more than thirty years of sittings with Mrs. Leonard, Mr. Thomas developed the following conception of what was occurring in these seances. As he interpreted his records, the entranced medium provided a brain and a body which were used by Feda and by some of the communicators to transmit messages when they took direct possession. When Feda was acting as control, the communicators were actually present (according to Thomas's views) as what might be called invisible apparitions, occupying definite positions in space a few feet in front of the medium's body. He believed that these communicators had etheric bodies recognizably similar to what their earthly bodies had been (though subject to modification by their own deliberate or even unconscious thinking), and that these etheric bodies had speech organs corresponding to those of physically embodied persons. Feda stated that, when she was acting as control, she could see these etheric bodies and could hear their etheric voices speaking.

TWO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication through Mrs. Leonard—or through other genuine mediums—is not to be thought of as having the simplicity of a conversation by telephone. According to the findings of the psychic investigations of Drayton Thomas and others, those who have

survived bodily death live in a state so different from earthly embodiment that an intermediate state must be created to serve as a communication centre. The creation and use of this intermediate state involve major difficulties, some of which may be explained in terms of (1) fluctuations in the mediumistic power; and (2) the abnormal mental condition which the communicators must enter.

The mediumistic power and its fluctuations

Granting that Mrs. Leonard and various other mediums are genuine, they must possess some sort of power which is absent or undeveloped in non-mediums. Drayton Thomas, in 1947, explained as follows his understanding of this 'Power':

'The communicator comes to the sitting in that body which is now normally his in the Ethereal Realms. He takes up the position, some two or three feet in front of the medium, which Feda finds most convenient for her reception of the messages. He speaks his message in words during those periods of the sittings which favour this method of communication, while for other periods it seems more effective to give it by telepathy. The difference between these periods in a sitting is caused by variations in the output of an emanation which flows from the medium, with possible additions from sitter and notetaker. This emanation is termed by Feda "The Power"; it varies in density from moment to moment, and its gradual exhaustion brings progressive difficulty in communication and finally stops it altogether. During the sitting both medium and sitter are within this field of psychic energy, which although but rarely luminous itself yet renders visible to Feda any object or person, incarnate, or discarnate, who is also within its limited range. Hence Feda's ability to describe the personal appearance of Communicators.... My sister once said of her condition when within the circle of power: "It is a no-man's land between the two conditions, yours and ours.... It is supposed that communication concerns earth people and spirit people, whereas there is also the peculiar *bridgeway* which has to be used and which is neither one nor the other, but has some of the characteristics of each...." It is convenient in this paper to use the term "Power" since it is so named in Feda's quoted remarks, but I should prefer to call it a psychic emanation. A study of Mrs. Sidgwick's article

on the Piper sittings shows that the same thing is there termed "light".'

The abnormal mental state of the communicators

Thomas reported:

'My father has repeatedly mentioned that his mind is not so clear when entering the circle of power, yet only when within it can he transmit thought in *words*.'

The communicators insisted that when they were communicating they were in what was for them an abnormal mental state, in which they were cut off from full access to their own normal memories, and in which their capacity to answer direct questions and to produce specific names and even particularly difficult words, was markedly limited. However, when a stream of thought was moving freely, and when suitable subjects were being discussed, they said that they were able to communicate fairly satisfactorily, so that major blocks of what they said could be accepted as genuine and valid.

TESTING SPIRIT IDENTITIES BY WORD ASSOCIATION

A pivotal question in psychical research with mediums is this: Are the communicators really the surviving spirits they profess to be? Very early in his work with Mrs. Leonard, Drayton Thomas set up experiments for the purpose of getting a trustworthy answer to that question. He reported a typical experience of this sort in 1922:

'In the autumn of 1920 I decided to give my father and sister an opportunity of showing how appropriate an answer they could give to questions relating to a town of the north in which we had lived for three years when I was a boy. It was essential to this experiment that I should so phrase the questions as to give no clue or information. I therefore asked them to tell me what was suggested to their minds by the words I was about to say, and proceeded to name *the title* by which we had habitually alluded to a popular social function in my father's church in that northern town. I coupled with it the name of a friend who used to add to the gaiety of those occasions. I also asked for facts relating to the colleague who had occupied the house adjoining ours, and about "The little hurt bird". This was a name we used for my sister's little playmate there.

The replies, given partly through Feda, and partly through direct personal control, left no doubt as to each question being fully understood. Twenty-three statements 'were made, and these included descriptions, initials, and names of persons connected with the town in question, all correct, and entirely appropriate in their setting. Nothing was said which was contrary to my recollection of the facts, although there were seven further statements which, at this lapse of time, I have no means of verifying. These may or may not be correct. They were matters likely to have been within my father's or my sister's recollection, although not in mine.'

Similar evidence of personal identity through word association comes out repeatedly in two other of the systematic researches for which Drayton Thomas has been noted. One of these types of experiment consisted in the book-tests which are described briefly in Chapter 4. The second major research project in which this kind of evidence crops out consists in the newspaper tests to which brief reference is made in Chapter 3. The earlier summary of the book-tests was presented as an example of an unquestionably honest medium obtaining supernormal information; the earlier summary of the newspaper tests was presented as one piece of evidence bearing on precognition. But in both of these types of experiments the evidence frequently takes the form of the communicators revealing in a spontaneous way their personal recollections of persons, places, and events. The reactions in innumerable responses of this sort are thoroughly characteristic of the way in which surviving personalities might have been expected to respond, and are not the kind of reactions which would have been expected if the medium was obtaining the information merely by telepathy and clairvoyance.

These qualitative studies were followed up statistically, a few years later, by the British psychical researcher, Whately Carington.

A DIRECT-VOICE' COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH MRS. LEONARD

In his 1947 article on 'A New Hypothesis Concerning Trance Communications', after having discussed the emanation of mediumistic power, Drayton Thomas went on:

'I have reserved until last that quality of the emanation or psychic energy which is most important for my hypothesis, namely, that it carries to Feda the *spoken* words, which she hears more or

less plainly, although the sitter usually hears nothing whatever save what comes from the medium's lips. I say "usually" because of the exception which will be described hereafter at some length. This is an occasional utterance of a word, or words, in a clear and distinct whisper, akin to what one is accustomed to hear from Communicators at Direct Voice (or "Trumpet") sittings with what are termed physical mediums.'

Questions about Mrs. Leonard's 'direct-voice' phenomena

The last sentence in the above quotation suggests that the words which sitters reported as having been uttered in 'Direct Voice' constituted a kind of physical phenomenon. In this connexion some comments by Professor Broad on this aspect of Mrs. Leonard's mediumship are pertinent. Having referred to 'the production of male voices by [Mrs. Leonard's] female speech-organs,' Broad continues:

'There is one further development which looks *prima facie* like a paranormal physical phenomenon. At times, when an ostensible communicator is *not* in possession of the medium's body but is ostensibly communicating indirectly through the Feda-persona, the following events happen. The sitter will hear a single word or a fragment of a sentence or even a whole sentence, spoken in an audible whisper which appears to come, not from the medium's lips, but from a position in empty space some two or three feet in front of her. Such sentences or fragments stand in close relationship to what is being spoken at the same time or immediately before or afterwards through the medium's lips by the Feda-persona. Of the occurrence of these whispers, and of their intimate connection with the remarks which the Feda-persona is making at very nearly the same time, there is no doubt. Nor is there any doubt that they seem to the sitter to come from a position in empty space some distance in front of the medium. I understand that tests made with appropriate physical instruments have failed to show that sound-waves are actually emanating from a source at this external point. But I do not know how easy it would be to establish or refute such a possibility by physical apparatus.'

Evidence that Feda heard actual words spoken by communicators

In order to get the full significance of these 'direct-voice' utterances,

it is important to establish first the fact that Fedra did hear the communicators speaking to her. Mr. Thomas said:

'In my earlier sittings I supposed that Fedra received the thoughts of the Communicator telepathically, 'It has been necessary to modify this supposition. There is much to convince me that the best parts of a good sitting are independent of telepathy, as Fedra is listening to messages given in spoken words which are audible to her. What is the evidence for this?

1. *Fedra's actions:* [Judging from the direction of the eyes of the medium when she is controlling, Fedra] always looks directly in front of the medium towards the place where she says the Communicator is. Her attitude is that of one listening intently; often she bends forward as if to catch the words more distinctly as when I ask a question and the medium bends forward in a listening attitude, Fedra saying, "I'll ask him what he thinks about it."

2. *Fedra's remarks:* She often asks for a word or sentence to be repeated [by the communicator], or expressed in a different way. She complains of long or difficult words. At times she seems not to understand what is being said although the meaning is quite clear to me. When unable to catch the correct sound of a proper name she will often give its first part according to its sound, although not according to its spelling; as C for Sidney....

3. *My observations:* Long passages are given a few words at a time, exactly as if they were being repeated by one listening to a dictated message; in fact, I have long ago named this type of reception "the dictation method". In the best sittings this dictation method is used for all the most important parts of a discourse.

Fedra frequently complains that she cannot hear and asks that it may be repeated: "What? What did you say? I've missed a word; perhaps he will say it again."

She puzzles over the pronunciation of an unfamiliar name exactly as one often does over the 'telephone.'

Very impressive are the little dialogues between Fedra and the Communicator. Fedra will, at times, flatly contradict the Communicator as at other times the Communicator contradicts Fedra!

Occasionally a Communicator uses a word which seems new to Fedra; she will assert that there is no such word, and when I explain its meaning she will presently use it herself, often incorrectly!

The Communicator may correct Fedra's pronunciation, as when

objection was taken to Feda's way of saying interesting: "Don't say that. Say interesting"!

Frequently when Feda has mis-heard a word it is corrected by the Communicator....

A rather dignified speaker had alluded to his sister coming next year for her spring sitting. Feda gave this as "spring chicken". At this the speaker expressed displeasure, saying, "Not spring chicken! I do not want you to mix up my words. I said 'spring sitting'. I had no idea of saying 'chicken'." "

From the hundreds of instances in which the Direct Voice (or whisper) appears in the Leonard records, Thomas selected many examples, and classified them under fifteen appropriate categories, as follows:

'The Direct Voice supplies the required word: (1) when Feda hesitates; (2) *when* Feda asks for it; (3) without its being asked for; (4) in commencing a new topic. (5) It gives assent. (6) It expresses emphasis. (7) It addresses Feda. (8) It corrects Feda's mistakes, (9) her pronunciation, and (10) her grammar. (11) It contradicts Feda! (12) It exclaims, remonstrates, or expostulates. (13) It may be unheard, (14) mis-heard, or (15) only partly heard by Feda.'

Thomas's conclusions from the above

On the basis of the systematic evidence presented in his 1947 article, Drayton Thomas reached the following conclusions:

'In the course of my 28 years of Leonard sittings there has been nothing to throw doubt on Feda's ability to see and accurately describe the Communicators, and also to hear their spoken words....

And then, during the sitting, everything happens exactly as if the Communicator were just in front of the medium and at the sitter's left shoulder; that means that he occupies a definite position in space.

It would be difficult to accept the above without admitting that the Communicator is present in body, even if we were unable to picture exactly what kind of substance forms the body which to our senses remains intangible and invisible. We have quoted sufficient to show that Feda and Communicators stoutly assert such bodies....

The new evidence which is adduced in this paper concerns the Direct Voice and Leonard sittings. It is difficult to believe that this

Voice could be produced without a producer, and a producer who was using bodily organs of some kind for his speech...

This paper does not go beyond the view that the other-world body is essentially the one which we already possess, but which does not come into its full activity until it has broken free from the flesh at death.'

How much confidence can be placed in the Leonard direct-voice phenomena?

In Dr. Broad's account of these phenomena he said: 'I understand that tests made with appropriate physical instruments have failed to show that sound-waves are actually emanating from a source at this external point.' The tests in question were made by Theodore Besterman and Gerald Heard, in 1933. The findings of that study were admittedly inconclusive.

The qualitative evidence points rather strongly towards the genuineness of these phenomena. The reasons given above by Drayton Thomas do not stand alone. In Lady Trowbridge's intelligently critical study of the *modus operandi* of Mrs. Leonard's trances, she cited the graphic example of direct possession by the asthmatic Scotsman (as quoted on pages 84-86 of this chapter). This description of the Scotsman's male voice issuing through Mrs. Leonard's lips is consistent with the hypothesis that some actual physical modification of her vocal organs took place during direct possession. Lady Trowbridge intimates that it would be difficult to explain such radical modifications of the medium's voice without assuming actual physical modifications as an aid. But if such modifications did occur, this tends to increase the plausibility of Drayton Thomas's belief in the actuality of independent voice utterances from points physically removed from the medium's vocal organs.

THOMAS BELIEVED THAT THE SPIRITS USED PRECOGNITION

Precognition, in and of itself, need not necessarily be evidence of survival. But Drayton Thomas, in 1948 and 1949, made an analysis of precognitive items which seemed to him to give clear evidence of Purposeful activity and guidance on the part of surviving personalities. In his 1948 study, Mr. Thomas made the following observation:

'Both before, during, and after the war my Communicators gave forecasts of events which were to concern me personally. These

rarely failed to materialize. Their accuracy impressed me, and it seemed desirable to inquire if they could be explained.'

He found that these forecasts fell naturally into the following six groups:

Class A. Forecasts based on plans perceived in human minds

In introducing Class A, Mr. Thomas said:

'In one of my earlier sittings, Feda said that my father was wishful to discover if he could ascertain some plan for the future which was unknown to me, but which he might perceive in the form of thoughts directed towards me. If successful this would be one way of predicting the future.

From time to time this was attempted and usually with success.'

The following is one of the examples:

'My father remarked one day through Feda that there would shortly be some building erected close by our home. Now this seemed impossible. The houses on both sides come close to ours and no vacant sites are near. Moreover in the deeds regulating our road there is a clause which forbids any building in front gardens within thirty feet of the road.

Yet it was not long before my next-door neighbour erected a garage just beyond the thirty-foot limit and touching our dividing fence! No inkling of this intention could have reached me. I had not then met him.'

Thomas commented:

'Reviewing our examples, we note that those least difficult to understand related to human plans already existing in some incarnate mind. It would seem that our purposes can sometimes be observed by friends in the Beyond and made the foundation for a statement that such-and-such a thing will come to pass. And it usually happens! But if, meanwhile, we change our plan, or its execution should be delayed, the forecast becomes to that extent inaccurate.'

Class B. Forecasts on plans perceived in human minds which Communicators help to carry out by influencing human action

Of this group he said:

'Secondly, we found a type of forecast which seemed to depend on the ability of agents in the Beyond to use, and perhaps modify, our human plans, adapting them to plans of their own.'

The following is one of the examples:

'At a sitting in April 1933 I had a long conversation with Elsie, a lady with whom I had close friendship in the long ago and whom I hoped to marry. She died. During this talk she made a forecast which puzzled me at the time and to which I had absolutely no clue. Its substance was as follows:

"Quite soon you have to go to a place very closely associated with me. You may not know yet that you will have to go, but when you do you will say, 'Oh, full of memories of her!' What I say now belongs to a big subject, the plan of life. Part of our lives is planned, but we are free co-operators. If we do not interfere, the plan outworks, for us. There is no forcing, but instinct guides us to co-operate with it. One is free to fall in or to step aside. It applies to you; your steps are being guided easily and firmly. Well, I have a feeling that soon you will find yourself at a place associated in your mind with me. You have been there several times and I have been there several times with you. You think of me there where you walk down a little hill, not a steep place, and if you notice it you'll remember other times."

Feda then added: "When you get to a corner is there the word 'Avenue' written up, or is she only thinking 'Avenue'? "

As above remarked, I failed to find any satisfactory interpretation of this and, as usual with forecasts, put the matter aside until time and the event should explain it.

Six days later I went to Liverpool Street Station to meet my friend Major Mowbray, whom I was to accompany for a meeting in Cambridge. As there are two routes to Cambridge, via King's Cross or Liverpool Street, I had written to Mowbray asking him to decide which route and train. So that it was he, and not I, who fixed the route. As I reached the sloping road leading down into the station, I suddenly realized that this fitted with Elsie's forecast. It was impossible to enter that station without recalling the many times we had been there together: indeed it was one most memorable conversation we had there which finally led to our engagement. On our many journeys together for days in Town, this was the

station to which we came. It is for me ever redolent of her memory....

To my surprise [a map of the district] showed, close by the station, two streets the names of which both ended with the required word. There was Finsbury Avenue, a small and unattractive lane, and Throgmorton Avenue which, I found when going there, displayed its full name conspicuously on both sides at its end only some 200 yards distant from Liverpool Street Station.

Thus within six days of receiving the forecast I found myself fulfilling it to the letter, and by no choice of my own....'

Class C. Forecasts made by Communicators for the carrying out of which they request human co-operation

Thomas commented:

'Thirdly, we saw that human co-operation is occasionally asked for in psychic sittings which provide opportunity for the request.'

One of the examples given in this class is as follows:

'Dr. Arthur T. Shearman...was one of my boyhood friends.... A few years after his wife's death he retired to the isle of Wight, after which we rarely met. We continued to exchange Christmas cards but rarely corresponded. He knew my interest in Psychical Research yet evinced little interest in it. I last saw him in June, 1931

To my surprise he was mentioned, in my Leopard sitting of 26 June, 1936, by my sister Etta. She had known him well and had been on intimate terms with his wife. At this sitting Etta told me that Arthur's wife wished me to take a message for him, yet not to send it until hearing from him, which she was confident I should presently do.

Towards the end of September there arrived a gift from Arthur, his latest volume of poems. When writing to thank him I enclosed the above message and explained how it came to me.

This message, taken down on June 26th, was about 650 words in length and contained reminiscences which I knew to be correct, together with six statements about which I knew nothing.

In his reply, dated 3 October, 1936, Dr. Shearman gave his

opinion of the evidence as follows: "This is immense! The chief matter of the declaration is so direct, and the touches are wonderful, accurate. There is scarcely anything that is doubtful. I should have pounced on anything that would not bear investigation. I am bound and glad to say that in my judgment proof is established. Against three uncertain items I could point Out 33 things that are true. I did not look forward to a revelation so really important from a scientific point of view and as welcome to myself as this is."

Note that this man had *specialized* in logic. By his Will he left money "to University College, London, to found a course of lectures on Symbolic Logic and Methodology.....

We exchanged letters about this; he made no allusion to his health and I had no reason to suppose that he was in anything but sound physical condition.

It is important to add that, in addition to the long message for Dr. Shearman, I received strict injunctions not to tell him that there was a special reason why it was being given now. Etta said that his wife did not wish to suggest to him that he needed help....

On 30 January, 1937, Arthur died. On seeing a notice of this in the Press I made inquiries and learned from the doctor who had attended him that "Dr. Shearman had been ailing for some months, from a failing heart". Thus the message I received for him was given at about the time when Arthur's physical condition was entering its final stage.

Class D. Forecasts made by Communicators based on plans made by themselves

Mr. Thomas remarked that this fourth class, though 'somewhat similar to the second, differs from it in that the original plan, which forms the background, was not man's but one devised in the Beyond'. One of the examples is as follows:

'My friend Frederick Lawrence, F.R.I.B.A., of Southbourne, received through several sensitives a definite forecast to the effect that he would build many churches. How unlikely this seemed will be seen from the following quotations.

"January 30, 1930, sitting with Mrs. Hester Dowden.

F.L. What kind of work do I do? Ans. Architecture.

F.L. Can you put it more definitely?

Ans. Churches.

F.L. You speak of churches and of my work? Is the designing of churches then my work?

Ans. It is.... Ye will build several churches."

Commenting on this Lawrence writes: "I had been an architect for a good many years and had erected about one thousand buildings. All but one of these had been secular.... On the best reckoning, the proportion of churches to other buildings was thus two in a thousand, or one-fifth of one per cent.

On May 7, 1932, this question was referred to again. Many will remember the period around 1932. Building, among other forms of production, seemed to have come to a natural and final end; and I thought and said that the references to my designing more "Houses of Prayer" were the outcome of faulty judgment. Quickly and emphatically following this thought came the words: "Ye need not care or be worried about these Houses that ye are to build. Of a sudden will the work come on ye and ye will find it hard to do all that is required of ye."

Practically nothing but a letter or two from church building committees followed that for two years. About October, 1934, a veritable avalanche came upon me. The words just quoted were more than merely fulfilled. Indeed, within a year, I used to fear to go to my office in case another committee should have written. Letters from about seventy towns and villages came to me during a period of a few months.... As I write in midsummer, 1939, there have been somewhere over 30 church contracts completed, and there are about 20 more in various stages of being planned and many are not yet begun.

I have written fully on this point because here was a very material result following a prediction which no living person could normally have made. I, least of all. Every medium I have seen since has referred to "your churches".'

Class E. Experiments which discarnate intelligences undertake for purposes of their own

The chief example which Mr. Thomas gave in this class consists in the Newspaper Tests, which have already been discussed in our Chapter 3 (pages 38 to 71).

A general summary of classes A to E

With regard to the above five classes, Drayton Thomas registered the following findings:

'We thus conclude that in such forecasts of the future we have a body of evidence for the existence of intelligent action in minds other than those of earth.

It has been suggested that Time is an illusion, or that there is a different time-scale in other-world conditions, so that events yet to happen here have already happened there.... Yet such considerations do not lead me to feel satisfied that, if I see a car accident this day week opposite my house, it has already happened in ethereal realms!

Hence I have suggested explanations, which do not run counter to life as we know it, and which agree with what we are told about activities in the life Beyond. It is, in brief, that *higher minds can infer from what they observe, combined with what they themselves plan to do, that such-and-such an event will presently happen*. Compare this with the planning of enterprising businessmen, of cabinet ministers, of generals in wartime. What these do in earthly life is done, I suggest, by their predecessors in the Great Beyond....

Men with spiritual experience rest satisfied that, as they step firmly forward in the path of duty, a further length of that path will be made clear, step by step, by the Providence which has shaped the pathway hitherto. For such men the Guiding Light is a most real fact.'

Yet, having drawn the above conclusions, Mr. Thomas found himself led to point out the existence of a sixth group:

Class F. Pure precognition

He explained:

'There remains a mysterious aspect of precognition....

A few of the forecasts received by me through Mrs. Leonard looked like pure precognition, i.e., veridical cognition of the future obtained by some means other than rational inference....

What [our Communicators] say is that they themselves can sometimes become aware of the future event without knowing how this awareness comes to them.

During a Leonard sitting on December 17th, 1943, while Feda

was speaking for my Sister Etta, she remarked that a visitor was coming to stay at our house. Fedra said: "Don't think I mean today or tomorrow. I'm not quite sure of that.... When they come they will come without much notice or—do you see?—perhaps no notice."

This struck me as absurdly impossible, for the following reasons. We had but recently resumed occupation after having closed the house for three years. Our two maids, both over sixty, were now exerting themselves to the utmost in cleaning the place from attic to cellar and although the task was far from ended they were both visibly weary and overworked. It was out of the question to impose extra labour on them, such as a visitor would involve. Besides this, my wife was seriously ill, so ill indeed that it was necessary to obtain outside help in nursing her, and a Miss Eastwood came for this purpose each morning. As for myself, household shopping and attendance on my wife left no leisure for entertaining visitors. We were all living under pressure of exacting conditions. And so I regarded this announcement as nonsense.

Yet the visitor actually came and stayed with us five nights!

About midnight on Sunday the 2nd of January, there was short air raid over Bromley, where we reside. Two bombs fell near the town centre but did not explode. The Fire Wardens therefore cordoned off adjacent streets and shepherded the residents to a public shelter where they might remain until the bombs should have exploded or been removed.

Among these people were the above-mentioned Miss Eastwood and her two sisters. The former arrived next morning looking tired and overwrought. She informed our maids of the night's experience and of the public shelter in which they had sat, cold and miserable, until daybreak. She also mentioned that they were to make that shelter their home for a probable five nights, and were dismayed at the prospect.

Our housemaid repeated the story to me and then suggested that it would be a kindness to offer the three sisters the use of our spare bedrooms. Realizing that this housemaid would have to shoulder the chief part of all extra work involved, and as the cook said she had no objection, I discussed the matter with my wife and we then invited the three sisters to come. They accepted the invitation and spent the following five nights at our house.'

According to the verbatim notes of the forecast given sixteen days before, Drayton Thomas exclaimed 'Very unlikely!' when the forecast was first broached. In the notes several highly significant phrases occurred:

'A. "This may be something to do with Clara." Clara is my wife and her dressmaker for 30 years has been one of the Eastwood sisters.

B. "Someone who has been linked up with that house. It is like a return of someone." The dressmaker has often visited our house, besides which she spent two of her summer holidays here. Her sister, as previously mentioned, had been coming Lily to help....

C. How perfectly apposite were the phrases used: "a return", "to do with Clara", "someone coming back into your house that was connected with it before", "not quite an ordinary visitor", "rather quickly, rather suddenly", "nothing you have arranged for".

All the above are accurate descriptions of what came to pass. It was only after the invitation had been given and accepted that its relevancy to this forecast occurred to me: for the forecast had in the meantime quite passed from my memory.

Note the chain of events which led to the fulfilment of my sister's forecast. Of these there were five:

1. A German airman flew over Bromley dropping two bombs; and of all the extensive area of the town it was within a small rectangle of streets which included the Eastwoods' home that they fell.
2. These were delayed-action bombs. Had they exploded on falling it is unlikely that the Eastwood sisters would have quitted their house.
3. Two of these sisters had been intimately connected with my wife.
4. But for the fact that one of them was now in daily attendance at our house we should have remained unaware of their plight.
5. Had not the housemaid suggested our offering hospitality it would not have occurred to me to invite them.

Our guests remained with us for five nights. And so it was that various "chance happenings" combined to bring about the exact fulfilment of the prediction given at my sitting 16 days before!"

PROXY SITTINGS

One of the most widely known series of experiments conducted by Drayton Thomas consisted in the proxy sittings which he carried on with Mrs. Leonard for many years. Proxy sittings were developed primarily to answer a question frequently raised by sceptics—namely this:

Could telepathy from the sitter explain mediumistic successes?

The most powerful arguments against the mediumistic evidence arise from a set of facts which most of the dogmatic anti-survivalists have sought strenuously to deny—namely, the established reality of various forms of ESP—and particularly of telepathy. The question kept being raised whether veridical information transmitted by honest mediums might not have been derived from knowledge which was already in the conscious or unconscious mind of the sitter. In order for information to be accepted by the sitter, at the time, as evidential, it had to be known to the sitter in advance of the sitting, and hence it might be derived telepathically by the medium instead of coming from the spirits, as the mediums alleged.

In order to eliminate dramatically and conclusively this hypothesis that telepathy from the face-to-face sitter accounted for the evidence supposed to come from spirit communicators, the technique of proxy sittings was developed. In the better type of proxy sitting, individuals who desire to hear from their deceased loved ones request that a sitter holding a sitting with a particular medium obtain something personally for them. In some cases the actual proxy sitter does not even know who the distant person desiring to receive the message may be.

Such sittings are often conducted by giving to the medium some object closely connected with the person who seeks the sitting, or from whom communication from the other world is sought. As Drayton Thomas conducted his proxy sittings, he usually merely gave to his communicators through Mrs. Leonard the name of the distant person who sought a proxy sitting, and then at the next sitting, he would record the information given, and send it to the distant individual for his appraisal.

The Bobby Newlove case

Outstanding among the proxy-case results were those obtained in eleven sittings which Drayton Thomas held with Mrs. Leonard in

response to a letter which he had received from a Mr. Hatch, of Nelson, Lancashire. Mr. Hatch had a stepdaughter whose ten-year-old son, Bobby Newlove, had died recently of diphtheria. Mr. Hatch was eager to obtain contact with his little departed grandson. Neither Mr. Thomas nor Mrs. Leonard had ever met any member of the family, and she knew nothing and he next to nothing about them.

In the course of the sittings many statements were made which were highly appropriate and characteristic for the supposed communicator, Bobby, and which contained specific facts not conceivably within the normal knowledge of either Mrs. Leonard or Mr. Thomas. This information included an intimate knowledge of Bobby's home, his surroundings, and his friends.

Outstandingly important was the fact that a number of items were given which were not in the mind of Mr. Hatch, but which he was able subsequently to verify. Among such information was a reference to a broken still on a walk which Bobby liked. Mr. Hatch later discovered from a friend that a stile had been there but was removed shortly before Bobby's death. Another remarkable piece of information included details of a route to a place where Bobby and a little friend of his played frequently for some weeks prior to his death. Statements were made about some 'pipes' near this place, and directions were given as to where these pipes would be found. The communication through Mrs. Leonard stated that the child's health had been undermined by his playing with some contaminated water which flowed from these pipes.

When Mrs. Newlove and Mr. Hatch read the scripts, they were utterly puzzled by these references. However, when the clues given in the sittings were followed up, the pipes were located. At Mr. Thomas's request, a medical officer examined the water flowing from them. He testified that the water was contaminated and that an acute infection might result from drinking it. Following up still further the clues provided in the sittings, Bobby's friend, Jack, was questioned. He admitted that he and Bobby had played with the water.

Commenting on the above facts, Raynor Johnson remarked, in 1953:

'Many who read Drayton Thomas's detailed account will probably decide that the simplest explanation is that which assumes the survival of Bobby, and that he communicated directly or indirectly through Mrs. Leonard. Others will take the view that

telepathic rapport having been established with Mr. Hatch (unknown, of course, to him), the clairvoyant faculties of the medium applied to his home and neighbourhood—with perhaps a flash or two of retrocognition—will account for these data.'

Gardner Murphy, in commenting on the same case, said:

'We have to face here...the difficulty of assuming that the trance-consciousness pieces together fragmentary bits of information, gathered from disparate sources, in order to make more convincing a histrionic pose representing a continuing personality.'

In Chapter 9 of our present book this 'difficult' assumption will be referred to as 'the super-ESP hypothesis'.

Proxy sittings to evaluate mediumistic material

As super-ESP has come increasingly to be considered, the value of merely eliminating telepathy from the sitter has declined. But proxy sittings also have value as a means of preventing the giving away of information by the physically present sitter. Even more important is their use as a method of getting unbiased appraisals of the correctness of information transmitted by the medium, along the lines which have already been indicated in Chapter 4.

THE RATIONALITY OF MEDIUMISTIC COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THOMAS

One of the points about Mrs. Piper's sittings which has counted most heavily against the hypothesis that surviving personalities were communicating through her, in full intelligence and with wider afterlife knowledge, has been the fact that many of the 'messages' proved to be nothing more than pompous nonsense. An important question, therefore, is whether the material received by Drayton Thomas through Mrs. Leonard tended also to be of this nonsensical character. Certainly, Drayton Thomas believed that it was not. In his more than thirty years of converse with the communicators whom he believed to be the surviving spirits of his father, his sister, and his many other departed friends, he elicited answers and explanations for a long series of basic questions about the nature of life beyond death, about the process of communication, about the nature of God, and about many other problems. Many critics will disagree strongly with various

conclusions which he presented. Many will hold that his sources were fictitious or at the very least are open to major challenge. But the views which he has expressed have a degree of consistency and rationality which commands respect. He himself disavowed any claim to infallibility on the part of his communicators. But the present writer, at least, finds the content of these books and articles worthy of serious study and critical examination.

The crucial question, of course, is whether Drayton Thomas's major and central belief in survival is adequately established. Or is it open to question but still worthy of debate? Or can it be demolished by showing fatal defects in the evidence or in the reasoning based on that evidence? To examine these alternatives will be a central task of Chapters 8 and 9, and of later chapters in this book.

DRAYTON THOMAS'S CONCLUSIONS AND METHODS MAY BE SUMMED UP AS FOLLOWS

These are his outstanding beliefs

That human personalities do survive bodily death was the conviction which Drayton Thomas maintained and for which he believed that he found ample justification. By survival he meant continuity of memory, of character, and of basic interests. He believed that surviving personalities retain vivid and detailed memories of their earth-lives, and that they retain their basic attitudes and character traits; he believed that these surviving personalities, through Mrs. Leonard and through other competent mediums, have been able to converse and co-operate with those whom they had left behind in earth-life and who sought such contacts. He believed that outside the seance room and apart from the aid of special mediums, contact between the two worlds could be maintained through meditation, and that spiritual guidance could be a basis and highly significant resource in daily living.

With respect to the process of communication itself, Drayton Thomas offered what he believed to be satisfactory evidence in support of what may be called a realistic interpretation of what goes on in the seance room. The evidence which he had collected seemed to him to fit perfectly into the interpretation that his communicators were literally present in their etheric bodies in definite spatial positions a few feet from the medium, that Feda was the actual spiritual survivor of one of Mrs. Leonard's ancestors, that Feda was able to see the communicators and to hear their voices, and that she also communicated with them

by telepathy, that the communicators themselves at times whispered or uttered aloud brief words or phrases which the sitters would hear coming from the point in space occupied by the communicator, and that at times the communicators themselves could take Possession of Mrs. Leonard's body and could speak through her vocal chords with voices and mannerisms characteristically distinctive of the persons involved.

Thomas accepted the explanation given by his communicators that the reason they were able to communicate through Mrs. Leonard was because of a 'power' which extended a few feet around her body, and which faded away towards the end of the sitting so that communication was no longer possible. He accepted also their explanation of difficulties which prevented their communicating freely and fully the knowledge and the ideas which they possessed when they were not in the abnormal state necessary for communication. In spite of these difficulties, Thomas believed that not only the evidential details which he was able to verify but also major blocks of the communications which he received were authentic and represented the actual ideas which his father, his sister, and his other communicators had been endeavouring to get through to him.

Types of evidence which Thomas presented

Two of the most striking types of evidence assembled by Drayton Thomas consisted in his detailed analysis of 'direct-voice' utterances, and his analysis of the nature of predictive messages which he himself received. The direct-voice phenomena appear to be consistent with his realistic interpretation of the seances. His analysis of the predictive messages offers a body of evidence which appears to show independent purpose and superhuman knowledge on the part of his communicators.

But these are only two outstanding bodies of evidence from among a number of systematic investigations which Drayton Thomas carried forward during his prolonged researches with Mrs. Leonard. His use of word-association tests to establish the identity of his communicators, his persistent and painstaking studies of proxy sittings, and the large collection of book-tests and newspaper-tests which he accumulated and interpreted, produce a major body of evidence which is consistent with his general conclusions, and which would offer major difficulties to disbelievers in survival even if his studies of direct-voice and predictive phenomena had not been carried out.

Such is a brief summary of the case built up by the third of a

century of systematic Psychical research which Charles Drayton Thomas accomplished through the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard. In the present chapter this case has been presented as a unified without digressing to interject the objections which opponents of survival have offered—or perhaps might have offered. In Chapters 8 and 9, the other side of the argument will be discussed with an endeavour to bring forward every major objection 'which has been presented, and to seek diligently for any further weaknesses in or objections to the Drayton Thomas conclusion—,.

Chapter 7

HAVE CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES BEEN PRODUCED BY THE SPIRITS?

ONE FINAL BLOCK OF MEDIUMISTIC EVIDENCE REMAINS

THE mediumistic evidence in favour of survival has now largely been completed. But the mediumistic case would be incomplete if we failed to consider one more type of evidence. This type is so complex that it is hard to do it justice in a chapter of this length. Yet, for many Psychical researchers, it comes the closest towards being convincing proof of human survival beyond bodily death. That conclusion (on the other hand) is strenuously rejected by various other Psychical researchers. The evidence in question is called 'cross-correspondences'.

Just what is meant by 'cross-correspondences'?

That F. W. H. Myers, after his death, working with other deceased classical scholars who had been interested in Psychical research before their death, devised an intricate method for proving survival in a way which could not be explained by telepathy from living minds, was a conclusion which Alice Johnson, Research Officer of the SPR, suggested in 1908. She had reached this conclusion through her study of messages received, by automatic writing or in trance, through various mediums at about the same time, in places as far apart as India, New York, and London. In the scripts of Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Willett, Mrs. Verrall, Miss Verrall, Mrs. Forbes, and others, she found fragmentary utterances which (taken each by itself) had no particular point or meaning, but which supplemented each other, so that, when selected and put together, they gave a coherent idea in each instance.

A brief summary of the plan

Probably the most helpful book on this subject is H. F. Saltmarsh's

Evidence for Personal Survival from Cross-Correspondences (1938). In that book appears the following explanation:

'Briefly, the plan which purports to have been devised by Myers and his associates on the other side is as follows:

Suppose a message in cryptic terms be transmitted through one automatist, and another message, equally incomprehensible, through a second at about the same time, and suppose that each automatist was ignorant of what the other was writing, we have then two meaningless messages entirely disconnected with each other....

A form of Cross-Correspondence would be where two automatists independently produced scripts which, taken separately, are meaningless, but 'when put together are found to be complementary and mutually explanatory. Of this type we have several good examples....

This, then, is the scheme or plan which, by their own account, was invented by the communicators on the other side, and we have passages in the scripts to bear this out. For example, the automatist is sometimes exhorted to "weave together" and told that singly they can do little. In Mrs. Verrall's script we find: *Record the bits and when fitted they will make the whole*; again, *will give the words between you neither alone can read but together they will give the clue he wants*.

Moreover, there occurred in several instances instructions to the automatist to send his scripts, either to one of the other automatists, or else to one of the investigators; in fact, it was on account of such instructions that in one or two cases the automatists were first brought together.*

The personalities concerned

The following description of the chief participants in this cross-correspondence project has been given by Tyrrell (1938):

'The principal members of the "other-side" group were: (1) F. W. H. Myers, a classical scholar and minor poet, whose intense interest in Psychical research led to the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, and whose work, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, has long been a classic. He died on January 17, 1901. (2) Edmund Gurney, his friend and collaborator, who carried out much early experimental work in the

* From Saltmarsh, H. F., *Evidence for Personal Survival from Cross-Correspondences*, G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., London, 1938.

subject, and wrote a comprehensive book entitled *Phantasms of the Living*. He died on June 22, 1888. (3) **Henry Sidgwick**, well-known as a philosopher, having conspicuously occupied the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge. He was a strong champion of Psychical research against the incredulity of the nineteenth century, and was the first President of the S.P.R. in 1882. He died in August 1900. (4) **A. W. Verrall**, a celebrated classical scholar and Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who became interested in psychical work through his wife's participation in it. He died in June 1912. (5) **Henry Butcher**, also a Cambridge scholar of high distinction and a friend of Dr. Verrall's, who later occupied the Chair of Greek at Edinburgh University. He died in December 1910.

Prominent members of the "this-side" group were **four ladies who possessed the power of automatic writing**, namely **Mrs. Verrall**, wife of Dr. A. V. Verrall, and Lecturer in Classics at Newnham, of whom Frederic Myers had said that she is "among the best observers"; **Mrs. Holland** (a pseudonym), a lady who had lived for some time in India, and whose interest in the work of the S.P.R. developed out of her own natural faculty for automatic writing; **Mrs. Willett** [identified after her death in 1956 as **Mrs. Charles Coombe Tennant**], an automatist of remarkable power, introduced to the experimenting group, and, apparently, in a way sponsored, by Mrs. Verrall in 1910; and **the daughter of Mrs. Verrall (afterwards Mrs. Salter)**. In addition to these, **contributions to cross-correspondences were made in some of the sittings of Mrs. Piper**... Dame Edith Lytton, Miss "Mac", Mrs. "Forbes", and Mrs. Thompson also produced automatic writings which entered into the cross-correspondences, though to a lesser extent.*

Since the surviving spirit of Myers purportedly communicated through various mediums, the custom has been adopted of referring to the communicator through these various channels as 'Myers,', for Myers as purportedly communicating through Mrs. Piper; 'Myers', for Myers as purportedly communicating through Mrs. Willett, and so on.

SOME SIMPLE EXAMPLES

In order to illustrate the basic idea of cross-correspondences, the following may be cited:

* From **Tyrrell, G. N. M., *Science and Psychical Phenomena***, Methuen & Co. Ltd. London, 1938, pages 232-3

Laurel and *laurel wreath* form the subject of a simple cross-correspondence which was recounted by Piddington in 1908. On 26 February, 1907, in the waking stage of Mrs. Piper's trance, the word 'laurel' was repeated several times, and 'I gave her that for laurel' was said. (When the phrase 'I gave her' is thus used in Mrs. Piper's script, it refers to Mrs. Verrall.) On 27 February, Myersp said. 'I gave Mrs. Verrall laurel wreath.'

Mrs. Piper had, of course, not seen Mrs. Verrall's script (which was being produced in England) and she had no normal knowledge of what had been written there. But when that script for 6 February was examined, the following phrases were found: 'Apollo's laurel bough', 'a laurel wreath', a drawing representing a laurel wreath, 'with laurel wreath his brow serene was crowned', and 'a laurel crown'. In addition to these, three other obvious references to laurel appeared in that same script. Neither the word 'laurel' nor 'wreath' occurs elsewhere in Mrs. Verrall's scripts of this period.

On 17 March, Miss Verrall's script (written quite independently of her mother's, and without any knowledge of Mrs. Piper's February script) contained the words: 'Laurel wreaths are emblems. Laurel for the victor's brow.' This is the only occurrence of the word 'laurel' in her scripts of this period.

The 'death' cross-correspondences

In the waking stage of Mrs. Piper's trance on 23 April, 1907, the word 'thanatos', was uttered. This is the Greek word meaning 'death'. A groping attempt to get the word had already appeared on 17 April, 1907, when, in the waking stage, Mrs. Piper had spoken a word which at first was heard as 'sanatos', and which was then repeated as 'thanatos'. On 30 April, the word 'thanatos' was said three times, and on 7 May, in the waking stage, came the sentence: 'I want to say thanatos.' Repetition of a word in this disconnected fashion is usually a sign that it has been used for a cross-correspondence.

Mrs. Holland, in India, on 16 April, 1907, had in her script: 'Maurice Morris Mors. And with that the shadow of death fell upon his limbs.'

Mrs. Verrall's script of 29 April, 1907, had: 'Warmed both hands before the fire of life. It fades and I am ready to depart.' Then, after two indirect references to death, came the words: 'Come away, come away, Pallida Mors.' Finally, the script said: 'You have got the word plainly written all along in your own writing. Look back.' 'Come away,

come away' is from a song in one of Shakespeare's plays; the next word in the song is 'death'.

Thus, within a period of less than two weeks, in England and in India, the key word was given independently by three different automatists, in three different languages, with additional allusive references.

The Talbot Forbes case

Alice Johnson cites the following as a basic illustration:

'In one case, Mrs. Forbes' script, purporting to come from her son Talbot, stated that he must now leave her since he was looking for a sensitive who wrote automatically, in order that he might obtain corroboration of her own writing. Mrs. Verrall, on the same day, wrote of a fig-tree planted in a garden, and the script was signed with a sword and a suspended bugle. The latter was part of the badge of a regiment to which Talbot Forbes had belonged, and Mrs. Forbes had in her garden some fig-trees, grown from seed sent to her by her son. These facts were unknown to Mrs. Verrall.'

The more complex of these cross-correspondence cases can be appreciated fully only by persons who have three qualifications: (1) an educated interest in Greek and Roman classical literature; (2) an alert enthusiasm for the solving of literary puzzles; and (3) the time and patience to study the long and complex treatises which set forth the evidence. Highly important as this evidence is, the majority of intelligent readers will undoubtedly have to base their own conclusions on the second-hand evidence of those who have taken the time to become specialists in this field.

Nevertheless, in order to make the subject at all vivid and real, it is desirable to attempt to summarize in brief but understandable form at least one of the more complex examples:

THE LETHE CASE

This has been characterized by Gardner Murphy as 'one of the most cogent and satisfying of the many dozens of reported cross-correspondences'. The crux of the case is to be found in the comparison of what Myers_p and Myers_w responded in answer to the same question

as asked him through Mrs. Piper in America and through Mrs. Willett in England.

The reaction of Myers_P

Mr. George B. Dort, of Boston, had been having sittings with Mrs. Piper in March 1908. He was purportedly communicating with the surviving spirit of Frederic Myers. Mr. Dorr's object was to tap the classical and literary reminiscences of Myers. Among the Mall NT questions which he asked for this purpose 'was the following: 'What does the word Lethe suggest to you?' The answers contain references to 'cave', 'Olympus' 'Iris' 'flowery banks', 'Somnus', 'Morpheus', 'Ceyx', and 'poppies', all of which are explained in an article by Piddington as reminiscences of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book XI. The answers also contain the word 'Sibyl', which suggests the episode related by Vergil in which Aeneas, in company of the Sibyl, saw the River Lethe flowing by the Elysian Fields.

Other classical references from the same and the preceding book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were likewise given to Mr. Dorr through Mrs. Piper in connexion with his Lethe question—involving such names as Orpheus and Eurydice, Pygmalion and Hyacinthus. The real intention of none of these references was understood by Mr. Dorr at the time.

The reactions of Myers_W

At the time that Mr. Dorr was questioning Myers_P on the Lethe question, Sir Oliver Lodge was in Boston, and he became interested in the project. It occurred to him that worth-while evidence might be obtained if the Myers communicator who purported to write through Mrs. Willett (Myers_W) were asked the same question. So, in September 1909, he wrote a letter suggesting that Mrs. Willett ask the question of Myers_W: 'What does the word Lethe suggest to you?' It should be stressed that Mrs. Willett had no normal knowledge about this question having been asked of Myers_P, nor of the material which had been obtained in response to the question through Mrs. Piper.

In the series of pertinent allusions which immediately began to flow through Mrs. Willett's automatic writing, when this question was asked on 4 February, there occurred the sentence: 'There was a door to which I found no key.... This is disconnected but not meaningless.' Some days later Myers stated that he had introduced a highly significant word by means of a pun. Subsequent study of the

script, in the light of further puzzling allusions by Myers_w, indicated that **the pun was imbedded in the sentence about the door** (a quotation already familiar to Mrs. Willett), and that this was a means of getting through in a preliminary way what came out on **5 February**

'It is I who write Myers I need urgently to say this Tell Lodge...the word is DORR.'

Mrs. Willett had no normal knowledge that Mr. Dorr had any connexion with the 'Lethe' question.

The subsequent reactions of the purported Myers personality, as found in the Willett scripts, 'were summarized as follows by Gardner Murphy in 1945:

'Over a period of weeks the Myers personality gave a series of references to the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, appropriate to the question "What does the word Lethe suggest to you?"; appropriate, that is, for Myers, who had been a student of Vergil, but hardly so for Mrs. Willett, or for you and me. And finally, indicating his awareness of the whole large scheme, the Myers personality writes through Mrs. Willett: **"That I have different scribes means that I must show different aspects of thoughts underlying which Unity is to be found and I know what Lodge wants. He wants me to prove that I have access to knowledge shown elsewhere."**

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN COMMUNICATORS

Cross-correspondences, strictly speaking, involve communications received independently through two or more automatists which, when studied intensively in comparison with each other, indicate a common purpose and meaning—somewhat as the parts of a torn-up five-pound note, when brought back together, fit into a single, unified pattern. **But co-operative purpose on the part of two or more surviving personalities might also be shown by communications through a single medium.** This is what seems to have happened in the famous **'Ear of Dionysius'** case.

Murphy's introduction

In referring to this case in 1957, Gardner Murphy said:

'In my own judgment, if we put aside the very dramatic evidence of survival coming from spontaneous cases, such as apparitions and

dreams which give highly personalized information not easily attributable to any living source, the strongest survival evidence would appear to come from those mediumistic communications in which the message could not very well have been devised by any single person living or deceased, but in which two individuals after their deaths have compared notes on their life interest and have given through one or more mediums a message which represents a sort of compound or integrated shared bundle of information representing the two personalities. This is exactly what was reported by Gerald Balfour in the celebrated case, "The Ear of Dionysius", in which Dr. A. W. Verrall and Professor Henry Butcher, classical scholars, are represented as meeting after their deaths, contriving a message intimately conveying the personalities of the two delivered through the automatic script of Mrs. Willett and later deciphered and published by Balfour [in 1918].'

The content of the 'Ear of Dionysius' case

Murphy had presented, in 1945, the following lucid summary:

'The message dramatically makes the demand that "one ear be added to one eye"; throughout several sittings, numerous bits of classical poetry are given, linked with references to a "one-eyed monster" and a "one-eared" place. After a rather mysterious lapse of over a year, the story resumed and more and more details were given. Finally hints were supplied through which the investigators were able to discover the organic unity of the entire original thought. The "one-eyed monster" referred not only to the renowned Cyclops, Polyphemus, but also to a tyrant of Syracuse; and the "one-eared place" was the stone quarry near Syracuse, famed as a whispering gallery, the "car of Dionysius", in which the tyrant had imprisoned his slaves. The whole story is replete with classical elements utterly familiar to A. W. Verrall, one of the purported communicators—many of them, in fact, available in a book on Greek poetry which Dr. Verrall was known to have read in his lifetime. All the facts were normally unknown to Mrs. Willett, who had no special knowledge of the classics, and even Mrs. Verrall and the other scholars studying the scripts had failed to understand the allusions until the final clue was given.

Interwoven with the Verrall items there appeared appropriate references to Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, and to other Aristotelian associations characteristic of Professor Henry Butcher. Verrall and

Butcher are represented in the communications as symbolically walking arm in arm, and as **contriving this integrated series of messages, as a joint expression of their continuing personalities.** To devise a more adequate or a more beautiful instance of co-operative thinking on the problem of survival evidence would be difficult indeed. Here the question is whether it is as reasonable to attribute such co-operation to the unconscious minds of the living, who are utterly puzzled by the material at the time it is given, as to attribute it to the two surviving personalities from whom it purports to come.'

THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN HAVE DIFFERED WIDELY

The above description of what cross-correspondences mean has been taken chiefly from those favourably impressed by this type of evidence. But **by no means all careful students of the subject have been convinced.** Here again, the age-long debate about survival has continued. Let us sample some of the pros and the cons.

Additional comments by convinced survivalists

The conclusions of the primary discoverer, Alice Johnson, are well embodied in the following paragraph, which she published in 1908:

'We have reason to believe that the idea of making a statement in one script complementary of a statement in another had not occurred to Mr. Myers in his lifetime—for there is no reference to it in any of his written utterances on the subject that I have been able to discover. Neither did those who have been investigating automatic script since his death invent this plan, if plan it be. **It was not the automatists themselves that detected it, but a student of their scripts;** it has every appearance of being an element imported from outside; it suggests an independent invention, an active intelligence constantly at work in the present, not a mere echo or remnant of individualities of the past.'

Sir Oliver Lodge commented, in 1911:

'It is almost proverbial in science that whenever a fresh hypothesis has to be invented to account for every fresh case, it is an indication that the explorer is off the track. He feels secure and happy in his advance only when one and the same hypothesis will account for everything—both old and new—which he encounters.

But one hypothesis Which seems to me most nearly to satisfy that condition, in this case, is that we are in indirect touch with some part of the surviving personality of a scholar—and that scholar F. W. H. Myers.'

Lord Balfour concluded in 1914:

'The scripts which we owe to the group of automatists of whom Mrs. Verrall, Miss Verrall, and Mrs. Willett are the chief, go back for many years now, and require to be considered together and as a whole. A long and laborious study of them carried on from this point of view has brought me slowly but surely to a conviction that there is much in them that cannot be satisfactorily explained except upon the spiritistic hypotheses.'

Kenneth Richmond wrote in 1936:

'I think the most convincing evidence of all is that of elaborate cross-correspondences between different automatists, none of whom understand the significance of their script but whose allusions when they are put together represent knowledge, scholarship, or literary interest and a type of personal movement of the mind which are characteristic of a given communicator. This is the nearest thing to proof that I know, but on the basis of popular acceptance it is scarcely established, because few but professional research workers have given the time and the concentration that are necessary to grasp it.'

Comments by doubters and disbelievers

The favourable side of the argument was epitomized by Gardner Murphy, in the preceding section. But he himself, in 1945, in referring to 'The Ear of Dionysius' case, added the following:

'Even in these cases I must again unfortunately play devil's advocate if I am to try to maintain the role of dispassionate and objective scientist. I must remind you not only that living persons possessed the classical information given, but also knew that the two men possessed this information and that the two types of information interlocked in various ways.'

Murphy also pointed out, in 1957, that gross errors were mixed in with the veridical evidence:

'It was indeed shown beyond any reasonable doubt that large quantities of Myers—like material were produced year after year. Many things which had meant much to Myers in his lifetime were not only effectively reproduced, but were woven into fresh classical and philosophical constructions, often poetic and devout in very much the mood in which the poetry and devoutness of Myers had earlier been expressed; but with new content chosen under test conditions to meet the occasion. This meant, to many people, in so many words, proof of Myers' survival. But others pointed out, with equal vividness and emphasis, that the material contained many mistakes, some of them gross ones.

For example, any classicist such as was Frederic Myers, would know that there are two great heroes named Ajax in the Homeric poems, Telamonian Ajax and Ajax Oileus. The Myers_w personality gets the two Ajaxes mixed up. This would be very much like your getting Theodore Roosevelt mixed with Franklin D. Roosevelt if you were a specialist in American politics. It simply does not pass. If one goes on arguing as to whether the communicating entities really *are* or really *are not* the deceased, one gets into a tissue of contradictions.'

Professor James Leuba, aggressive disbeliever in survival, wrote in 1916:

'The experiments in cross-correspondence have been conducted chiefly through three English ladies, one of them residing in India, and Mrs. Piper. Chance coincidence is absolutely insufficient to account for the results secured, and collusion is rejected by all those who know something of these persons and of the conditions of the tests. There is apparently no escape from the conclusion reached by that acute critic and tenacious sceptic, Frank Podmore: "The automatists unquestionably showed that they furnished information which would not have reached their consciousness by normal means." Whether the explanation of these mysterious cross-correspondences will be found in telepathy acting at a distance taken together with the well-known fact of the reappearance in certain mental states (in trance consciousness, for instance) of things once known but long forgotten, even of things of which we never had more than an imperfect knowledge and should at no time have been able to reproduce correctly, remains for future investigation to disclose. As long as we can affirm with Podmore

that "the trance personalities have never told us anything which was not probably within the knowledge of some living person", telepathy will appear the more plausible and the less revolutionary hypothesis.'

Saltmarsh said, seven years before writing his book about them:

'A word about cross-correspondences. These, even in their ideally perfect form, can only afford evidence of a source extraneous to one of the mediums employed, and perhaps of a definite purpose or plan. It is a bare theoretical possibility that the subconsciousness of one of the mediums is the source, but it appears more likely that the messages originate from some independent mind. There is, however, nothing to indicate whether this mind is embodied or disembodied. It may, of course, be that the matter of the message gives a clue to the identity of the author, but this has nothing to do with the cross-correspondence as such.'

Professor Dodds—our leading disbeliever—stated in 1934:

'...I am not wholly satisfied, therefore, that the cross-correspondences are the result of design. But, secondly, even if they are, I know of no conclusive answer to the suggestion put forth by Mangin, Broad, and others, that the design of most of those hitherto published may have originated in the subconscious mind of Mrs. Verrall. It is certainly true that more difficult intellectual feats than the construction of these puzzles have before now been performed subconsciously; that Mrs. Verrall possessed just the sort of literary and linguistic knowledge which would be required for their construction; and that in all the more learned and elaborate of the published cross-correspondences her script played a prominent part. We shall be in a better position, however, to estimate the value of this theory when fuller information is available about the later work of the SPR group of automatists.'

Commenting on the above, in 1958, Gardner Murphy said:

'This idea that Mrs. Verrall could have originated the Lethe cross-correspondence is absolutely out of line with her ignorance of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; the same is true for the *Dionysius-Polyxenus* story; she hadn't anything like the necessary knowledge.'

On the negative side, again, Antony Flew stated, in 1953:

'Even the features of the cross-correspondences...have some parallels which could only be fitted into a spiritualistic account very artificially. In many experiments in telepathy the "receiver" seems to be groping near and far for the idea the "transmitter" has wished to convey. In one case—the Ramsden-Miles series—when Miss Miles wanted to send *sphinx*, Miss Ramsden recorded *Luxor in Egypt*, and when she wanted to produce *bishop*, Miss Ramsden ended *latme*, *Bishop Lattimer*, *Archbishop*. In another case, when a "transmitter" wanted Professor Gilbert Murray to think of *Sir Francis Drake drinking the health of Doughty, the mutineer*, what he actually got was *a faint feeling of Arabia or desert*: a neat example of the sort of disguised allusion attributed to Myers. [*Arabia Deserta* was written by (another) *Doughty*.] In a third case, especially interesting because two of the leading figures of the cross-correspondence work were involved—Dr. A. W. Verrall wanted to infiltrate into his wife's automatic scripts the three Greek words...(rendered as *one-horse dawn*: which gave a name to the case). In the period of the next six months these scripts did in fact give just such a series of groping references as would have been scored as a cross-correspondence if they had been occurring in the products of different automatists. (They also had, on different occasions, separate sentences which made sense only when put together, and they even had one of those recondite allusive passages: find *the herb moly; that will help—it is a clue*. The allusion was later tracked down by Mrs. Verrall to another of the papers set in the Cambridge Classical Tripos in the same year as that from which her husband had found the three enigmatic Greek words.)*'

A debate about some Willett scripts

In 1914 Balfour (having presented a brief resume of the 'Lethe' case) introduced as follows some new evidence about an additional case, involving purported communications from A. W. Verrall:

'The subject-matter in the present case seems to me to be more clearly outside the range of the automatist's normal knowledge than in the Lethe scripts, and, in this respect, to be more evidentially compelling.'

Balfour concluded by characterizing this as 'a message which must

* From Flew, Antony, *A New Approach to Psychical Research*, C. A. Watts & Co. London, 1953.

in any case take high rank among the evidences provided by automatic writings of the reality of communication from the departed'.

Commenting on the same script, the Rev. M. A. Bayfield said:

'We have here an extraordinarily faithful representation of Verrall.... The actor is...Verrall himself.'

But Hereward Carrington, commenting on the same article, objected:

'Reviewing the evidence, therefore, from a purely impersonal and impartial point of view, we see that it by no means points to Dr. Verrall as the author of the scripts; and that no vast amount of classical scholarship is involved or necessary to understand or interpret them fully.

They represent, rather, the piecing together of disjointed fragments of subconscious knowledge and subconscious memories; they have no systematic connection, and point to no "spirit" as their author. They are all fully explained upon purely psychological and naturalistic lines. And this criticism applies, it seems to me, not only to the Willett scripts in particular, but to almost the whole of the cross-correspondences.... I believe, with Dr. Maxwell, that the evidence afforded by these cross-correspondences has been vastly over-rated; that chance has played a far greater part than is usually assumed; and that the evidence for survival which they furnish is distinctly inferior in all respects to the straightforward communications supplied in the Hodgson and Hyslop reports, from which method many of us are sorry that the Society has ever departed. I also agree fully with Mrs. Anna Hude (*The Evidence for Communication*) in thinking that, while there is strong evidence for supernormal knowledge of a vague kind shown by these cross-references, there is practically no evidence of "spirit return"... I cannot help feeling that these communications lack nearly all the essentials necessary to inner conviction, and that the spiritistic hypothesis still rests for its most solid support upon the George Pelham sittings, and other "direct" communications coming through Mrs. Piper. The whole *crux* of the question ties there.'

Opinions differ

Thus it becomes clear, once more, that conclusions about survival are determined quite frequently, not merely or even primarily by the

evidence itself, but for many people by the emotional valuations, slants, selections and emphases which determine their interpretation of the evidence. But this appears to be true also, in some cases, with regard to decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States.

WHERE TO READ MORE ABOUT CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES

No brief summary can begin to do justice to the subtlety of the purported evidence for purposeful activity on the part of the communicators which the cross-correspondences contain'. The original studies on the subject occupy several hundred pages of the *Proceedings* of the SPR—particularly during the years 1906 to 1919. In addition to those reports, and the other sources cited above, there is Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh's excellent 1938 book on the subject, entitled: *Evidence for Personal Survival from Cross-Correspondences*.'

BOOK III

DOUBTERS CHALLENGE THE MEDIUMISTIC EVIDENCE

Chapter 8

DODDS AND MURPHY VERSUS DRAYTON THOMAS

I. The Issue Between Thomas and Dodds

A DILEMMA DEVELOPS

THAT various mediums have given what many people regard as highly evidential information about departed personalities through channels other than the normal senses has been shown in Chapter 4. The evidence is so strong that few if any careful students of mediumship deny the existence of masses of such extrasensory information. Our search of the literature has failed to show any exception, even among those who deny belief in survival. Extrasensory information certainly *does* appear in messages transmitted by many of the better mediums.

Moreover, a long list of investigators have reported what they believe to have been genuine contacts with the personalities of friends who have survived bodily death. The examples given in Chapters 5 and 6 show that Drayton Thomas and various other careful and intelligent investigators have reached such conclusions. For many psychical researchers, cross-correspondences have provided capstone-evidence of survival. Rightly or wrongly, these investigators, some of whom were highly sceptical at the start, have recorded their strong convictions that survival beyond the death of the physical body has been demonstrated to them through their experiences with mediums.

Yet now we encounter a mass of at-first-sight contrary evidence, such as no honest scientist can ignore. This factual evidence will be summarized in considerable detail in later sections of this chapter. First, however, let us focus our attention on the arguments of a learned professor who has taken a position directly opposed to that of Drayton Thomas.

Why select Dodds?

Several excellent reasons justify taking Professor E. R. Dodds as

key representative of the negative side in the debate. Among these are the following:

1. Dr. Dodds is one of the most outstanding examples of persons loyal to the scientific method who have rejected the survival hypothesis.
2. As a professor in one of the world's most distinguished universities (Oxford), his views have an intellectual prestige which makes them worthy of special consideration.
3. In his article on 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival', published in 1934, Dodds's summary of the negative arguments is arranged in a logical fashion which attempts to be fairly exhaustive, and which provides at least a start towards considering the negative case systematically.

II. Dodds and Others Rejected Spirit Possession

Dodds distinguished between two survival hypotheses

In his article on 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival', Professor Dodds wrote:

'The two current forms of the spiritualist hypotheses—the theory of telepathy from the dead and the theory of possession—seem to me to differ widely in their evidential status. Against the former no conclusive objection has been drawn, or is likely to be drawn, from the trance phenomena, for the excellent reason that we know nothing at all about the conditions which might govern this kind of telepathy.'

Why Dodds rejected the possession hypothesis

In rejecting belief in survival, Professor Dodds directed his major attacks against the hypothesis which was actually central in Drayton Thomas's beliefs. He stated this hypothesis as 'that which attributes [mediumistic communications] to possession of the medium's organism by surviving spirits of the dead'.

In rejecting that hypothesis, Dodds said:

'Against direct possession there is evidence which I find insuperable. It has been presented by Mrs. Sidgwick in her two masterly papers on the Piper phenomena; and it is not necessary here to do more than recall its general character. The main points are the shiftiness displayed even by highly veridical communicators like "George Pelham"; their confident statements in cases where they

can hardly fall to know that they are lying; the habitual lameness of their attempts to answer direct questions; and above all their acceptance of bogus personalities as genuine spirits (e.g., "George Pelham" guaranteed the authenticity of "Phinuit", "Hodgson" upheld the objective reality of a "Bessie Beals" whom Hall had invented, "Frank Soal" described "John Ferguson" as a spirit, and none of Mrs. Leonard's communicators, as far as I know, has given "Feda" away). These facts are not incompatible with telepathy from the dead—but I do not know how to reconcile them with the theory of direct possession, although I have read many attempts to do so. '

Gardner Murphy developed the same argument

Dodds's repudiation of the possession hypothesis (it will be noted) was based upon citation of specific facts—phenomena observed in the trance utterances of various mediums. He was not alone in taking this position.

Whereas Professor Dodds's article, 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival', was published in 1934, Gardner Murphy brought out a much more recent (and, in some respects, even more effective) statement of the negative position in 1945 and 1957, in his articles on 'Difficulties Confronting the Survival Hypothesis', and 'Triumphs and Defeats in the Study of Mediumship'. In these articles, Dr. Murphy referred to several of the same cases cited by Dodds, and added a number of others.

Much the same evidence and arguments were presented by Antony Flew, in the chapter on 'The Question of Survival' in his book: *A New Approach to Psychological Research*.

Since the scientific approach is based on the objective study of facts, it is essential that we examine in more detail the data on which Dodds, Murphy, Flew—and a series of other rejectors of simple spirit possession—have based their conclusions.

IN MRS. PIPER'S TRANCES VARIOUS PSEUDO-PERSONALITIES DEVELOPED

The impressiveness of the evidence received through Mrs. Leonora Piper has already been set forth in Chapters 4 and 5. So outstanding was she that a leading psychological researcher, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, made a study of the Piper mediumship which occupies 671

pages of the 1915 *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research. In preparing this report Mrs. Sidgwick consulted fourteen previous studies which occupy a total of more than 2,600 pages.

Mrs. Sidgwick accepted belief in survival. And yet she concluded that the 'spirit' personalities who professed to communicate through Mrs. Piper were actually dramatizations produced by the medium's unconscious mind, in a state of self-hypnosis. What were the facts which led Mrs. Sidgwick to such a conclusion?

Phinuit, one of Mrs. Piper's chief controls was evidently fictitious

For more than a dozen years, from 1884 to 1897, Mrs. Piper was controlled during her trances by a 'spirit' who gave his name as Phinuit. He claimed that he was a departed French physician who once practised medicine in Marseilles. He made numerous other statements as to his life on earth. Not one of these statements ever proved to be capable of being verified. Moreover, he was never able to explain the fact that he knew practically nothing of the French language.

Her 'Imperator' controls also appear to have been fictitious

In 1897, Phinuit was displaced by controls who professed to be a group of lofty spirits who had communicated in the 1870s through a famous medium named Stainton Moses. This group of guides had communicated under such pseudonyms as Imperator, Rector, and so on. The real names which they said had been theirs during earth-life had been communicated in confidence to a few people, but had not been published. When these supposed spirits communicated through Mrs. Piper, they were never able to tell what their real names had been, though, when asked about it, they solemnly gave out incorrect names.

When questioned about scientific matters, they gave nonsensical answers dressed up in pseudo-scientific jargon. When Dr. Richard Hodgson sat with Mrs. Piper, Imperator undertook to instruct him in the true inwardness of Old Testament history and of the mystery of Christianity. Imperator claimed to be a lofty spirit, who should be in touch with such matters. But he confined himself to vague generalities, and uttered a vast amount of nonsense.

Bessie Beals was another pseudo-personality in Piper trances

The famous psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, invented an imaginary niece, named Bessie Beals, and solemnly requested Mrs. Piper's

control to establish communication with her. There was no trouble at all in getting the same sort of 'communications' from this purely fictitious 'spirit' as had come through under the guise of messages from the dead.

Mrs. Sidgwick's summary

From the massive evidence which she had analysed, Mrs. Sidgwick derived the following conclusion in 1915:

'Veridical communications are received, some of which, there is good reason to believe, come from the dead and therefore imply genuine communication with the background. But the dramatization of even genuine communications, with the whole dramatic machinery implied, is probably merely dream-like....

'We have presented to us in Mrs. Piper's trance a number of *soi-distant* different personalities—some of Them known to have lived and to be now dead, some of them living, some probably imaginary. The statements and the intellectual calibre of many of them are utterly inconsistent with their claims, and even in the best personations there are lapses which cannot easily be explained if we are in direct communication with the professed communicator. These lapses and limitations, and other characteristics of the communications, are just such as have been frequently observed in secondary personalities, and in particular correspond to what we should expect to find in Mrs. Piper's secondary personality under the suggestive influence of the conditions of the sittings. I am, therefore, driven to the conclusion that Mrs. Piper's trance-intelligence has a strong tendency to unconscious dramatic personation; and is continually dreaming itself to be a number of different persons under the influence of suggestion (including self suggestion) somewhat as an ordinary hypnotic subject can be made by suggestion to assume different characters with startling dramatic effect.'

Tyrrell's summary

Probably the best comprehensive analysis of mediumship which has hitherto been published is contained in G. N. M. Tyrrell's *Science and Psychological Phenomena*, which was published in 1938. He summed up his conclusions from the above evidence as follows:

'Thus, reasons for regarding the communicators, as well as the

controls in the Piper case, as being hypnotically constructed pseudo-personalities, appear to be very strong.'

ARE ALL 'SPIRIT CONTROLS' SECONDARY PERSONALITIES?

Was Feda a secondary personality.

Mrs. Leonard's control, Feda, has already been presented in Chapters 4 and 6. Drayton Thomas was convinced that Feda was a genuine spirit, existing independently of Mrs. Leonard's personality. But a serious challenge to that conclusion was offered, in 1935, by Whately Carington.

He tested the reactions of both Feda and the normal Mrs. Leonard to lists of key words. It was found that Feda tended to respond slowly to various words to which Mrs. Leonard responded promptly. And Feda tended to react promptly to words to which Mrs. Leonard responded slowly. This 'counter-similarity' would not be characteristic of an independent spirit. Rather it is explained by assuming that Feda was a secondary personality, representing in dramatized form certain ideas and tendencies which were repressed in the normal Mrs. Leonard.

Carington's statistical conclusion was all the more impressive in view of the fact that it reinforced some qualitative findings which Lady Una Trowbridge had published in 1922. In her detailed and highly intelligent analysis of sittings which were held with Mrs. Leonard she found that Feda never conveyed any impression that she liked Mrs. Leonard. She frequently expressed scorn of her, and there was abundant evidence of a basic antagonism between her and her medium. These facts are closely consistent with the theory that Feda was a secondary personality of Mrs. Leonard's, built up around materials which had been repressed in her unconscious mind.

Has Uvani also been a secondary personality?

Mrs. Garrett's usual control is Uvani, who claims to be an Arab. Word-reaction tests applied to normal Mrs. Garrett and to Uvani show the same sort of counter-similarity as appeared between Mrs. Leonard and Feda.

Drayton Thomas maintained his belief

In spite of the above experimental evidence, published by Carington in 1935, Mr. Thomas said in 1947:

'Personally I believe Feda to be a distinct individual, usually resident in the Beyond, but allotting some of her time to work on earth. In that aspect of her personality which one sees during her control I am more familiar with her character, idiosyncrasies and habits of thought than I am with those of the majority of' my acquaintances on earth; but then I have listened to her at fairly frequent intervals during the last twenty-eight years!'

Do fictitious controls invalidate 'spirit communicators'?

A good many psychical researchers are prone to separate 'controls' and 'communicators' into two groups, and to assume that the controls might be secondary personalities while the communicators might be genuine, independent surviving spirits. But Professor Dodds points out that, in general, the communicators consistently maintain the independent existence of the controls. Could genuine surviving spirits be thus deceived on so basic a question?

As a possible solution of this difficulty, the Persona Theory will be presented in Chapter 13

PSEUDO SPIRIT-PERSONALITIES IN BLANCHE COOPER'S TRANCES

Mrs. Piper was not the only medium whose spirit communicators' could not always be taken at face value. Dr. Samuel George Soal (the British mathematician and psychical researcher who is referred to in Chapters 2 and 3) published, in 1926 and 1914, reports on some communications received through Mrs. Blanche Cooper, an English direct-voice medium. From those reports the following cases are abstracted.

John Ferguson—fictitious 'spirit'

At two sittings with Mrs. Cooper, held early in November, 1921, a communicator manifested who gave the name of John Ferguson, and claimed to have connexions with an address at 'Westcote'

Road in the Town of Brentwood (Essex). Soal had never visited Brentwood, though he had travelled through its railway station almost daily for many years. At subsequent sittings with the same medium 'John Ferguson' said that he had died from a chill contracted from a boating accident on March 3rd, 1912, at the age of 33 years. He also mentioned that he had a brother Jim, ten years

younger than himself, and still living. Later, this John Ferguson personality was found to be fictitious.

Apart from the unsolved mystery of the medium's getting the name of an obscure street in Brentwood and what afterwards proved to be a correct description of Highland Avenue, the most satisfactory interpretation of this remarkable case is to suppose that the alleged communicator was largely a joint fabrication at the subconscious level by the minds of Mrs. Cooper and Dr. Soal. In this telepathic collaboration, the fictitious John Ferguson confirmed one by one the unspoken conjectures made about him by Soal.

Week by week he had appeared at each sitting strong and confident, never making statements that conflicted with his earlier ones. He had a subtle answer for any attempt to trap him. The object of all this subconscious collaboration was clearly to deceive the conscious mind of the sitter. When, at the end, this became no longer possible, 'John Ferguson' collapsed immediately into a confused and feeble ghost.

Did James Miles communicate?

Towards the end of a sitting which Dr. Soal had with Mrs. Cooper on 9 January, 1922, there spoke a boyish voice saying in rather pathetic accents, 'Oh! where am I? I don't know where I am.'

This communicator then said that his name was James and that he had fallen into the water 'while trying to catch' something. At this sitting he was unable to give his surname but said that he was only 13 years old and had lived at Bath. He had fallen into the River Avon. At home they called him 'Jimmy' and he was very anxious that his father should hear from him. In reply to a question by the sitter he stated that he had 'passed over' only a few days ago.

In the sitting of January 16th, 'James' appeared again. The boy said that his father was a painter, who lived at 'Clarence Place'. He gave James Miles as his full name.

A careful inspection of the London press reports and comparison with the records of the sittings on January 9th and 16th, showed that all the verified facts given at those two sittings were published in at least one London newspaper, the *Daily Express*. Further we see that there is no correct statement obtained at these two sittings that could not have been deduced from the account in the *Daily Express* of December 30th. An interesting feature of this case is

the remarkable way in which every scrap of information given in the London press was utilized to support the impersonation of the deceased lad.

When the wealth of accurate detail given at the first two sittings is compared with the press account and then contrasted with the poverty and inaccuracy of the later 'communications', no doubt is left that the newspapers were the source of the information. To suppose that Mrs. Cooper had read the account of James Miles' death in the *Daily Express* and unconsciously dramatized it is, on the whole, the most rational explanation.

Dr. Soal added these comments:

'By the study of such cases as [that of James Miles and of John Ferguson] we learn that the mere dramatization of a communicator by tricks of intonation, peculiar and consistent style of address and the like, affords no guarantee that we are in touch with discarnate agency. The tendency to impersonate seems to be a native tendency of the unconscious mind. It is by the quality of the information they communicate and by that alone that we must test the claims of so-called "spirits".'

"SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS' FROM A MAN NOT ACTUALLY DEAD

Trance communications by 'Gordon Davis'

In his 1926 article, Dr. Soal presented a case which has been cited by Dodds in 1934, and by Murphy in 1945, and again in 1957, as evidence against the belief that spirits of the surviving dead take possession of or communicate directly through mediums. The crucial facts of the case may be summarized as follows:

At a direct-voice sitting which Soal had with Mrs. Cooper, in January, 1922, a "voice well articulated and extraordinarily clear and strong began to speak", and gave the name **Gordon Davis**.

Soal had indeed known a boy of that name who lived at Rocheford near Southend. He had been in the same class as Soal for geography and he sometimes brought poison spears and other savage weapons in order to illustrate the lessons. Soal lost sight of Davis after he left school and did not meet him again until the summer of 1916. One Sunday when Soal was returning from leave Davis recognized him on the platform of Shenfield railway station. Davis

and Soal, who were both cadets at that time, travelled together to Liverpool Street, and Davis told Soal that next day he had to give a lecture to his fellow cadets on the ceremony of mounting guard. He did not even mention that he was married. Shordy afterwards both went to France and one day in 1920 Soal heard from a man at Rocheford that Davis had been killed.

The 'spirit' of Davis who spoke through Mrs. Cooper mentioned a wife and child and also volunteered correctly several names of persons connected with Rocheford and known to Soal. He recalled bringing 'harpoons and things' to school and said he 'was for brighter geography'. Soal asked him 'where they had last met and 'Davis' answered at once, 'It was on the train. We talked about guards but not train guards.' The communicator spoke, in Dr. Soal's opinion, with a voice and accent closely resembling Davis's so closely that early in the first sittings Dr. Soal was impelled to cry out, 'By Jove, it's like Gordon Davis!'

But Davis was actually alive

Three years after the sitting described above, in April, 1925, Soal found that Davis was still alive and practising as an estate agent in Southend. When Davis was shown the record of the sitting he agreed that the communicator had reproduced so successfully a number of Davis's mannerisms that the record was indeed very like Gordon Davis. But, by means of a diary which he had kept in 1922, it was established that, at the very time when his 'spirit' was so realistically communicating through Mrs. Cooper in London, he himself was actually interviewing a client at Southend.

Did the 'spirit' of Gordon Davis show precognition?

At a second sitting in 1922, 'Davis' did not speak in person but 'Nada', Mrs. Cooper's 'control', gave a detailed account of Davis's house, which Soal noted down. This proved to be an accurate description of the environment and interior arrangements of a house which Davis himself did not occupy until a year later.

Soal's commentary on the above case

In his 1926 article, Dr. Soal offered the following observations:

'For mediums to obtain knowledge supernormally about a living person is not an infrequent occurrence. But cases in which the

living person appears to "control" the psychic and is dramatized and made to speak in the first person are, I believe, extremely rare, although not unknown.

In the case under consideration the supernormal knowledge shown is of a high order. Not only is there penetration into the past of the "communicator" but there are considerable indications that the future was also anticipated.

One very interesting point arises. This dramatized personality, so accurate in its other statements, apparently believes itself to be a deceased person.'

The Reallier case was similar

Gordon Davis was not the only man who, while still alive, appeared in a seance as if dead. The following case was reported by Henry Holt in 1919:

Canon Douglas had a French chauffeur named Reallier who, at the outbreak of the First World War, returned to France to enter the army. Canon Douglas heard from his chauffeur after this only at long intervals. During a sitting with Mrs. Effie Halsey in America, Reallier appeared as communicator. A deceased nephew of Canon Douglas's, whose name was correctly given, purported to be 'helping' the chauffeur to communicate. A profusion of good evidential material was given, some of which the sitter knew at the time to be true. Other details were unknown to him, but were corroborated later. In this category can be placed a description of a 'toolchest in disgraceful disorder, with several of the tools broken and useless', and a description of an expedition to Salonika.

But it was found later that the chauffeur actually was alive at the time when his 'spirit' seemed to be communicating through the medium. At no time was he near the point of death nor in a critical condition.

III. What about Telepathy from the Dead

Mrs. Sidgwick herself did not reject survival

While Dodds avowedly drew much of his evidence against the possession hypothesis from data provided by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, her own ultimate conclusions differed from his. In 1932, as a consummation of her long career in psychical research, she wrote a paper

on the activities of the society from the time of its inception. Lord Balfour, who read the paper for her, made this announcement:

'I have Mrs. Sidgwick's assurance that she herself holds a firm belief in survival, and in the reality of communication between the living and the dead.'

She allowed it to be known that she accepted the identity of communicators through Mrs. Willett. Even in connexion with what she regarded as the hypnotically constructed pseudo-personalities of the Piper trances, Mrs. Sidgwick said in 1915:

'If the whole dramatic form were play-acting, it might still be the framework in which veridical communications come to us. In fact, the question of what is the nature of the communicator as dramatically presented to us, is distinct from the question whether there is any real communicator in the background.'

Veridical communications [have been] received, some of which, there is good reason to believe, come from the dead and therefore imply genuine communication....'

Murphy reiterated the hypothesis of telepathy from the dead

While Gardner Murphy agreed with Professor Dodds and Mrs. Sidgwick at least to the extent of finding great difficulties in the possession hypothesis, he did present in a favourable light the hypothesis which Mrs. Sidgwick had offered as an alternative to possession—namely, telepathy from the dead. In 1957 he summarized this alternative hypothesis as follows:

'It was Mrs. Henry Sidgwick who over fifty years ago pointed to the most likely reality in the situation, a reality far indeed from both of the competing hypotheses. She pointed out that according to any psychological criteria the controls and communicators', for example, the Emperor Band, and the various individuals who communicated with the living through Mrs. Piper are all of them created by the anticipations, hopes, fears, and modes of inference which we can broadly subsume under the term "suggestion". As a matter of fact one can produce mediumistic phenomena in this way and get characteristic, mediumistic results. Yet, she continued, the evidential material produced in the communication can be derived telepathetically either from the deceased or from the living. The hypothesis would thus provide for real survival evidence. It would

also provide for the well-documented cases in which communicators appear, report themselves to be deceased, give authentic facts unknown to anyone present, and are accepted as deceased communicators—all this to be followed by the discovery that the persons involved were actually still alive. I am referring especially to S. G. Soal's Gordon Davis case and to Canon Douglas's Reallier case. Mrs. Sidgwick pointed out that the only reasonable means by which one could derive such information would be a telepathic interchange with some source possessing the facts. The dynamics, however, of such interchange would probably be the same whether the source of such information is incarnate or discarnate, alive or deceased. In other words, brilliant telepathic material appearing as evidence of individuality can be attributed either to the deceased or the living, depending upon internal evidence and circumstantial detail.'

Dodds has rejected both spirit possession and telepathy from the dead

Much of Dodds's article on 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival' is directed specifically against 'the theory of possession', along lines indicated in the earlier sections of this chapter. But he not only rejects possession: he rejects the entire spiritistic hypothesis, including the version which depends on telepathy from the dead. That hypothesis, he argues, involves a large number of assumptions which, in his view, the evidence does not require us to make.

IV. Summing up the Anti-possession Evidence

The hypothesis against which Dodds directed his main attack is that which attributes mediumistic communications 'to possession of the medium's organism by surviving spirits of the dead'. That phraseology describes quite accurately the central position taken by Drayton Thomas. As opposed to that hypothesis, Dodds assembled factual evidence, consisting largely of specific cases. Following him up, Murphy (as an agnostic rather than an aggressive disbeliever) extended further the list of cases which seemed to be basically inconsistent with Thomas's position. The major groups of such counter-cases are as follows:

Mrs. Piper's chief controls included Phinuit and the 'Imperator' group, all of whom gave considerable evidence of being fictitious. Even her most authentic communicators showed frequent confusion.

Carington demonstrated that Mrs. Leonard's control, Feda, and Mrs. Garrett's control, Uvani, were secondary personalities, organized around repressed material. Yet communicators through these mediums insisted that the controls were genuine, independent personalities.

Blanche Cooper's trances produced a wholly fictitious 'spirit' personality, and offered dramatic 'communications' from a drowned boy, which proved to contain no information not previously published in newspaper accounts.

In the Reallier and Gordon Davis cases, persons still alive 'came through' in mediumistic communications, presenting themselves as spirits of the dead.

Theories which have been developed in connexion with such cases need to be examined

Chapter 8 has been devoted to the presentation of the counterevidence which Dodds, Murphy and others have offered in refutation of the possession theory, as held by Drayton Thomas and others, and against the spirit-telepathy theory, as set forth by Sidgwick, Murphy, and others. But these cases have called forth certain anti-survivalist theories which must not be ignored—among them the theory of 'super-ESP'. To the exposition and discussion of such theories Chapter 9 will be devoted.

Chapter 9

SURVIVAL VERSUS SUPER-ESP

THE DEBATE COMES TO A CLIMAX

THAT at least a few unquestionably honest mediums have transmitted life-like and highly evidential communications which claim and seem to have come from personalities who have survived bodily death has been shown in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. But Chapter 8 has brought forth a seemingly cataclysmic rejoinder: mediums have also transmitted lifelike and highly evidential communications from alleged surviving spirits, some of whom, on investigation, have been shown to be imaginary, others to be still physically embodied, and still others mere secondary personalities of the medium.

Where does the evidential material come from, if not from surviving spirits? Some of the facts communicated had been known to no living person before the medium transmitted them. Can the anti-survivalists offer any explanation which will account for both the plausible messages and those from the pseudo-spirits?

A two-pronged answer has been provided by the sceptics: they claim that both kinds of communications might be accounted for by super-ESP and by unconscious dramatization. Let us examine more closely this two-pronged explanation.

CAN 'SUPER-ESP' EXPLAIN AWAY ALL 'SPIRIT MESSAGES'?

The hypothesis stated

Professor Dodds, Gardner Murphy, and other scientifically minded doubters of survival, have developed the theory that the dramatizing powers of the unconscious, making use of a comprehensive form of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and retrocognition (which I shall call *super-ESP*), may create pseudo spirit personalities, which convince wishful believers, but which give no genuine evidence of survival beyond bodily death. Dr. Murphy, Dr. Louisa Rhine, and

others have argued that a similar process creates (or might create) apparitions of the dead which (if this theory were pushed to its limit) would provide no evidence for survival. In recent decades they have come to believe that telepathy, clairvoyance, retrocognition and even precognition operate in ways which can gather pertinent information from anywhere in the world. And they have come to believe that the information thus comprehensively gathered is organized into plausible pseudo-communicator form by the dramatizing capacity of the medium's (and perhaps the sitter's) unconscious mind. Let us review the highlights of the discussion through which these ideas have become prominent.

Richet formulated super-ESP ponderously

As early as 1923 Charles Richet asserted that, rather than accept survival, 'I should prefer to suppose an extreme perfection of transcendental cognitions giving a multiplicity of notions grouping themselves round the imaginary centre of a fictitious personality....'

The above, somewhat ponderous, phraseology may be taken as an early definition of super-ESP.

Saltmarsh objected

This conception of a kind of omniscient telepathy seemed incredible to many Psychical researchers. For example, Saltmarsh, in 1931, after having referred to telepathy from the sitter, continued:

'Where the knowledge necessary for verification is not in the possession of the sitter but is acquired subsequently from other sources, the evidence for survival may be considerably stronger. It turns on the question of the probability of the necessary connecting links between the medium and the possessor of the knowledge....

Now unless we are prepared to credit the medium, the sitter, or the stranger or some person *en route* between them, with what amounts to potential omniscience, we have to postulate a very complex and unlikely series of links to account for the phenomenon.

If we hold that the mind of the medium goes out, as it were, in search of information, and invades the memories of living persons, we still have to explain the fact that he discovered this hidden source. He had the whole world in which to search and nothing to

guide him, or at least that is how it appears to us with our very limited, almost non-existent knowledge of the conditions.'

Dodds's 'guesses' about super-ESP

In his explanation of 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival', Professor Dodds (though confessing his lack of adequate supporting data) formulated the super-ESP idea more fully, yet more simply, than Richet had done:

'A further objection to the telepathic hypothesis is that it appears to involve an otherwise unexampled *selective* action of the medium's mind, in supernormally deriving from other human minds precisely those remembered facts which are required for the building up of a particular trance personality. This was the spearhead of Hyslop's argument for the Piper phenomena, and has often been urged since.

But I do not think that the available evidence in the least requires me to picture the subconscious mind of the medium hunting through the subconscious mind of the assumed agent, as through a lumber room, until it finds precisely the bit of information which it needs in order to give verisimilitude to the impersonation of some deceased friend of the agent. I am equally free to imagine that when *rapport* is established between the medium's subconscious mind and that of the assumed agent, the nature of the material transmitted is determined by the relative emotive force of the agent's various complexes, or by the fact that the material belonged to an associative complex, some elements of which are already in the medium's mind, or by any other cause that you like to suggest. Selection does undoubtedly operate at some stage before the material is presented in trance; but I see nothing to prevent its operating *after* the material has become part of the furniture of the medium's subconscious mind. I am free to imagine, in the first place, that the particular complex of feelings and images which underlies a particular trance personality attracts to itself only such elements of the newly acquired material as have some associative relevance to its existing content; and secondly, that the "control", who sits in the gateway of trance Feda or Topsy, Phinuit or Rector—operates on occasion, like the Freudian "censor", to prevent the emergence of irrelevant or disturbing matter which might interrupt the illusion and break the continuity of the medium's dream.

These are no more than guesses, although they derive a certain amount of support from the known mechanism of the normal dream. I claim no more for them than that they cover the observed facts as well as any other hypothesis, and better in one important respect than the hypothesis of possession. The degree of relevance and continuity to be observed in most trance communications is, to say the least, extremely limited. In Mr. Saltmarsh's words, "One of the most striking features of communications received through trance mediums is their disjointedness." This is what I should expect from the sort of psychological machinery I have suggested; it is not what I should expect if the communicators are what they say they are.'

Gardner Murphy's inductions about super-ESP

By 1945, in his 'Difficulties Confronting the Survival Hypothesis', Dr. Murphy formulated the super-ESP hypothesis in terms of a generalization emerging from case evidence:

'We should not be misled by our tendency to form an image of physical space in which the poor sensitive wanders, like Diogenes with his lantern, trying to find—among two billion human beings a mind possessing the necessary information. Rather, it appears that space is utterly irrelevant to the issue; the mind makes contact with that which is *relevant to its purpose*. If a cluster of ideas relevant to a given central theme exists, it appears reasonable to believe (in line with Carington's [1944] conception, for example) that ideas which are related tend to function as a unit.

It must again be stressed, lest the point be regarded as sheerly hypothetical, that we have *direct evidence* that this process of filching and sifting among the minds of the living does actually occur.'

Murphy then cited certain cases from which he argued the principle of super-ESP might be a legitimate deduction. He said:

'We have already seen that the capacity to pick up needed material is highly developed in good sensitives; in fact, we cited evidence that such appropriate material *can* be "filched" from the minds of both present and distant living people.... Whatever difficulties we may have with such an interpretation, the power is clearly there. The same sort of ability to go out and get specific needed material is witnessed in good psychometric ["object-reading"] studies; for example, in those reported by Pagenstecher

and Walter Franklin Prince, and those more recently given us by Hettinger in England.

Super-ESP as a 'searchlight' capacity

In his 1957 paper on mediumship, Murphy made use of a new term to refer to super-ESP:

'Information about either the deceased or the living can be obtained by a sort of searchlight process.... We are not manufacturing this searchlight out of wishful thinking; the character Phinuit to whom I earlier referred, who appears never to have existed, gave, through the Piper trance, a good many of these rather striking searchlight effects, and the Blanche Cooper of the Gordon Davis case and the Mrs. Halsey of the Reallier case were apparently operating exactly in the manner of searchlights for the sweeping in of paranormal information. It seems to me that we have to know considerably more about the operation of these searchlights before we can say that mediumistic phenomena are in themselves cogent evidence of survival and communication.'

J. B. Rhine on super-ESP

Dr. J. B. Rhine himself, in 1949, summed up this argument as follows:

'There is nothing as yet on record from the studies of mediumship that cannot be explained by the sort of "omnibus hypothesis" into which we have expanded the old counter-hypothesis of telepathy.'

That the views which Dr. Rhine expressed in 1949 had not changed fundamentally during the next eight years is indicated by an Associated Press dispatch from Boston, dated 13 October, 1957. That dispatch quoted him as having said that he and his scientist wife had worked on the survival problem for thirty-five years without reaching a scientific solution. The dispatch continued:

"It is quite plain," Prof. Rhine said, "that any theory of survival today would appear to have a fantastically greater set of odds against it than it had a hundred years ago".'

DETAILS PROVIDED BY SUPER-ESP ARE DRAMATIZED

In the present chapter we are concerned with understanding as clearly as we may the position of the disbelievers. Thus far, in

summarizing their points, we have been focusing attention on the evidence which they have put forth in support of their belief in super ESP. But they not merely present evidence of the reality of mediumistic power to assemble extra-sensory data—they also stress the fact that these data are organized into dramatic form.

Unconscious dramatizing power is obvious in dreams

Commenting on this issue, Professor H. H. Price wrote, in 1958:

'On this interpretation, mediumistic phenomena are very closely analogous to dreams. The medium is, as it were, dreaming aloud. Ordinary dreaming is the most obvious illustration of the dramatizing power of the human mind, and the most cogent evidence we have for the existence of such a power. If dreams were not such familiar phenomena, it would be quite incredible that even the most commonplace human mind has that astonishing dramatizing capacity. We know that telepathically-received material is often worked into the dream-drama (sometimes it gets distorted in the process).'

Dr. van Eeden believed that he had evidence of this

In 1901 Dr. F. van Eeden reported the results of sittings which he had had with Mrs. Thompson. Van Eeden had brought from Holland a necktie which had been worn by a friend of his who had committed suicide. Reporting on these sittings, he said:

'During the first period of experiments, in November and December, 1899, I felt a very strong conviction that the person whose relics I had brought with me and who had died 15 years ago, was living as a spirit and was in communication with me through Mrs. Thompson.... But when I came home, I found on further inquiry inexplicable faults and failures. If I had really spoken to the dead man he would never have made these mistakes.... I came to the conclusion that I had dealt only with Mrs. Thompson, who, possessing an unconscious power of information quite beyond our understanding, had acted the ghost, though in perfect good faith....

Up to the sitting of June 7th all the information came through Nellie, Mrs. Thompson's so-called spirit control. But on that date the deceased tried, as he had promised, to take control himself, as the technical term goes. The evidence then became very striking. During a few minutes—though a few minutes only—I felt absolutely

as if I were speaking to my friend myself. I spoke Dutch and got immediate and correct answers. The expression of satisfaction and gratification in face and gestures—when we seemed to understand each other—was too true and vivid to be acted. Quite unexpected Dutch words were pronounced. Details were given which were far from my mind, some of which, as that about my friend's uncle in a former sitting, I had never known, and found to be true only on inquiry afterwards.

But being now well on my guard, I could, exactly at this most interesting few minutes, detect, as it were, where the failures crept in. I could follow the process and perceive where the genuine phenomena stopped and the unconscious play-acting began. In hardly perceptible gradations the medium takes upon herself the role of the spirit, completes the information, gives the required finish, and fills in the gaps by emendation and arrangement....

At the present moment it is about eight months since I had my last sitting with Mrs. Thompson in Paris, and yet, 'when I read the notes again it is impossible for me to abstain from the conviction that I have really been a witness, were it only for a few minutes, of the voluntary manifestation of a deceased person.'

At the same time, I feel sure that genuine direct information is far rarer and scarcer than the medium believes, and in good faith would have us believe. I held that a certain amount of unconscious play-acting is *nearly always* going on at every sitting of every medium, and that even our most scrupulous and careful observers, such as Myers and Hodgson, have been misled by it. I doubt not only the veracity but the actual existence of the so-called control spirit. To me it seems not improbable that they are artificial creations of the medium's mind.'

Dr. van Eeden thus (as he himself noted) wavered between belief and disbelief in the existence of genuine communication with departed spirits.

Podmore had no such doubts

In 1911 Frank Podmore, having cited van Eeden's experiences and other evidence, wrote:

'The investigators themselves now recognize that the primitive theory of possession, the theory advocated in a modified form by Dr. Hodgson and still held by most spiritualists can no longer be

defended. They have substituted for it a theory of telepathic interaction between the mind of the automatist and other minds, of the living or of the dead. The result is a compound, in which the different elements can only be separated by patient analysis....

But the propounders of this theory do not seem to realize the full implications of their admission. We cannot simply drop the theory of possession as if the facts on which it was originally based had never existed, and then proceed to balance the successes against the failures, as in a telepathic experiment. If these impersonations, as is now admitted, are not what they pretend to be, they are shams, and we are faced with a gigantic system of make-believe.... I see no proof in these reports that there is any adequate recognition...of the extreme improbability involved in the assumption that one out of 10,000 lay figures, in outward appearance indistinguishable from all the other lay figures, should for a passing moment be endowed with life, and should then again sink back amongst the crowd of lifeless mockeries; for that, and nothing less, seems to be the implication in some of the arguments put forward.'

Lady Trowbridge raised doubts about Drayton Thomas's realistic theory

While Drayton Thomas spent more years in studying Mrs. Leonard's mediumship, and published more articles about it, than any other psychical researcher did, some highly important studies of the Leonard mediumship were made by Lady Una Trowbridge and by Mrs. W. H. Salter. These researchers were fully sympathetic with Mrs. Leonard and with Drayton Thomas's painstaking studies of her trance utterances; but they were less inclined to accept literally what Feda said about the ways in which she secured the unquestionably supernormal information which appeared so abundantly in the Leonard records. In an outstandingly important study which Lady Trowbridge published in 1922, two highly significant points stand out:

1. Though Feda talked as though she saw and heard the spirits who were giving her communications, Lady Trowbridge cited a number of incidents which made her doubtful as to whether these simple sensory terms conveyed any accurate analogy of the process really involved. She concluded that it was much more likely that Feda received a series of impressions telepathically, one at a time, and that she then put these impressions together into the form of visible and audible objects and people.
2. Absurd, irrelevant, and erroneous elements, which frequently

cropped up in the communications, appeared to Lady Trowbridge to be due to Feda's picking lip **some wandering thought in the mind of the communicator.** Lady Trowbridge wrote:

'I confess that I find it easier, at any rate in the case of the lengthy and detailed descriptions pertaining to one topic, **to conceive of them as emanating intentionally and consciously from some agent having the power to choose what impressions shall or shall not reach Feda.**

Upon this hypothesis it would appear that, **so long as the communicator can keep some given portion of his mind exclusively upon the one fact or event which he desires to give or to describe as evidence, Feda's descriptions will be relatively clear and accurate.** Should, however, the communicator's mind wander ever so little, **is irrelevant thought would be as likely to reach Feda** as any thought relative to the subject in hand, and when it does so will appear in some form in her narrative.'

Lady Trowbridge then cites evidence that when these errors due to mind-wandering appear in the script, **the communicator gives evidence of being excited and frustrated.** Apparently this emotional disturbance makes it still more difficult to correct the erroneous communications.

Gardner Murphy has stressed dramatized want-fulfilment

In the above account of Lady Trowbridge's findings, it will be noted that, while she finds reasons to doubt Drayton Thomas's realistic interpretation of Feda's statements, **she does accept the hypothesis that real communicators are involved. She thus is a believer in survival.**

Doubters of survival, however, have increasingly held the opinion that **the dramatic organization of super-ESP information need not indicate the presence or the purposive activity of surviving spirits.** Gardner Murphy, in 1945, summarized this position as follows:

'The deep-level wants of the sensitive [i.e., the medium], induced in response to the deep-level wants of the sitter, reach out into relevant psychological material, bringing it together in organized form, and presenting it in the form of a purporting communicator.... **The medium is completely devoted to the purpose in hand** (for normal personal consciousness is gone); the trance

personalities probably believe themselves at the little to be the entities desired, and respond with energy to the demand to make themselves known.'

In support of the above thesis, Murphy and other doubters of survival, cite the evidence summarized in Chapter 8, relating to pseudo-personalities communicating through mediums. But they offer also a further development of this argument:

The whole spiritistic conception has been dismissed as a cultural artifact

The fact that non-spiritualistic forms of mediumship have flourished at various times and places has been stressed by Dodds, in 1934, and by Flew, in 1953 (borrowing freely from Dodds). But the best statement of the point which I have found was made by Murphy in 1945:

'Paranormal phenomena have been reported for some thousands of years; people asleep or in trance, or under the influence of drugs or fumes, together with a smaller number of people in a state of apparently normal consciousness, have appeared to be invaded by intelligences which desire to communicate. The kinds of intelligence which appear to communicate seem to depend largely upon the expectations of the social group. Often the purporting communicators through special sensitives have been nature spirits, demons, devils, angels, gods, and goddesses. The vast array of psychical phenomena—telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psycho-kinesis, etc.—has been manifest through recorded history as an aspect of special mental conditions, which suggests to observers that forces beyond the individual are at work, but often with no thought of marshalling evidence for survival. Under the special cultural—especially the scientific—conditions of the last century, as expressed by the work of societies for psychical research, mediums have been constrained to use the paranormal gift primarily for securing messages from deceased human beings; their task is to give survival evidence....

Self-induced states of passivity, in which automatic writing, speaking, and posturing occur are more or less alike everywhere. One gives oneself the suggestion, throughout the training period, that one will serve as mediator for a given divinity or demon; and with few exceptions the primitive or the advanced practitioner receives in some measure the sort of unseen power upon which he

awaits. The manifestations carry to onlookers the sense of verisimilitude; one recognizes the characteristic earmarks of the divinity or demon, exactly as the sitter in a spiritualistic circle recognizes those earmarks which make a convincing demonstration of personal continuity.'

THE SURVIVALISTS RESPONDED TO THE SUPER-ESP CHALLENGE

Drayton Thomas offered counter-evidence

Faced with accumulating evidence and arguments as to the existence of super-ESP, researchers who believed in survival still protested that no such process could explain away the best communications received through the best mediums. In 1947, Drayton Thomas published this:

'Study of [previous publications about the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard] shows that telepathy from sitters can no longer be held to explain the results obtained.

Other suggestions have been put forward in the endeavour to provide an alternative to the idea that purported communicators are actually present at the sittings and giving the information which comes from the medium's lips. These suggestions include telepathic action of an almost unlimited character, whereby the information is supposed to be derived from any person, however unknown and distant, who might at any time have possessed the information; while other suggestions go to the extreme of positing universal consciousness, or unlimited community of mind, or a pooled memory of the human race from which the medium selects appropriate items!

The hypothesis we now put forward, together with an outline of the facts on which it is based, substitutes for these vague suggestions a claim for the accuracy of that which had been consistently stated by the Communicators; namely, that the messages are given by discarnate persons who come to the sitting for this purpose. It also supports the assertion of Communicators that they still have bodies—bodies of substance—although not formed of earthly matter.'

Mr. Thomas then proceeded to offer the direct-voice evidence from Mrs. Leonard's sittings, which has been summarized in Chapter 6.

Through Mrs. Willett the purported spirits themselves admitted the existence of super-ESP

Back in 1938 Tyrrell was using the term 'telaesthesia' to refer to what might have been called 'super-ESP.' He cited three cases from the A.V.B. sittings with Mrs. Leonard, and then he commented:

'These three last cases show that the theory that the information given by trance-personalities is necessarily obtained telepathically from the subconscious minds of the sitters, needs at least considerable expansion; for items of information appeared in these cases which were only known to complete strangers. This necessitates a much wider field of telepathic operation—a field not limited by the interest and affection of the supposed agents. In fact, one can scarcely suppose that the unconscious stranger from whom this wider information comes is playing the part of an active agent in the affair. It looks as if the telepathic theory would have to be augmented by what...we have defined as "Telaesthesia"—that is to say, by a reaching out on the part of the trance-personality to prehend the information it needs in whatever mind happens to contain it.... The faculty of telaesthesia, if it exists in this unrestricted form would seem to represent a range of extra-sensory power of quite extraordinary universality and extent, and evidently if mediums possess it, the theory that communications are due to telaesthesia among the living would be greatly strengthened. It is interesting therefore, to notice that Gurney, [Gurney, purportedly communicating through Mrs. Willett] enthusiastically endorses it. In a long Daylight Impression on 8 October, 1911, the following occurs:

"'Oh he says, telaesthesia is a bed-rock truth, a power of acquiring knowledge direct without the intervention of the discarnate mind.

Oh he says, telepathy's one thing—that's thought communication; telaesthesia is knowledge, not thought acquired by the subliminal when operating normally in the metethereal....

Oh he says, you, none of you, make enough allowance for what [telaesthesia] implies, and the results of that can be shepherded and guided up to the threshold of normal consciousness...

What I'm saying may be used to cut at the spiritualistic hypothesis, but it doesn't. Again, who selects what of the total telaesthetically acquired knowledge shall externalize itself—shall

blend itself with those elements received by direct telepathic impact!" '

From the above quotation it seems evident that Tyrrell had borrowed the term *telaesthesia* from the Willett communicators themselves—or, more probably, both he and they had taken over (with modifications) the term coined by F. W. H. Myers in 1903.

HERE, THEN, IS THE CRUX OF THE ANTI-SURVALIST ARGUMENT

As far as genuine mediumistic evidence is concerned, the position of the anti-survivalists stands out in the opinions cited in this chapter. The trance state, and the other forms of mental dissociation characteristic of mediumship, set free the dramatizing tendency of the unconscious mind. This tendency (according to the anti-survivalists) responds to the suggestions provided by the cultural setting in which the medium works and by the conscious and unconscious desires of the sitter. The fact that spiritualism and the earlier stages of psychical research were concerned with survival of personality beyond bodily death has provided the suggestions needed to bring about the dramatization of pseudo spirit communicators.

The evidential material embodied in mediumistic communications does not come from surviving spirits (according to the anti-survivalists). Rather, it is provided by super-ESP—a faculty which assembles the information and the personality patterns required for the production of both the demonstrably fictitious 'communicators,' and also of the ostensibly spirit-personalities which have convinced Drayton Thomas and other researchers of the reality of survival.

A constructive rejoinder will come later

When the seemingly powerful mediumistic case in favour of survival was being presented, the reader was advised to suspend judgment until the counter arguments had been examined. Now that the seemingly powerful case against survival has been presented, the reader is still advised to suspend judgment until later chapters have been examined. In particular, the evidence from apparitions (as presented in Chapters 10 to 12) must be taken into account. And the Persona Theory of Chapter 13 may be found to provide a key to constructive reconciliation of the arguments both for and against survival.

BOOK IV

THE DEBATE ABOUT APPARITIONS

Chapter 10

APPARITIONS AND SURVIVAL

THE case for survival rests on two main kinds of evidence. The first consists in communications received through mediums. Arguments both for and against survival, based on that type of evidence, have been summarized in Chapters 5 to 9.

The second kind of evidence consists in apparitions of the dead, the dying, and the living. Chapters 10, 11 and 12 will be devoted to the pros and cons of the apparitional evidence. Then Chapters 13 to 17 will seek to achieve a creative reconciliation of the case against with the case for survival, taking account of both the mediumistic and the apparitional evidence.

WHAT IS AN APPARITION?

If you were to see what appeared to be the living form of someone whom you had dearly loved, but who had recently died, you would be greatly moved. If you saw that form standing close to your bed, smiling at you with tender love, and speaking words of comfort and courage, that experience of yours might well make it easy for you to believe in life beyond death. In any case, what you had seen would be what psychical researchers call 'an apparition of the dead'.

But apparitions do not always represent persons who have died. Apparitions of those who are still alive physically are seen more frequently than of those whose physical bodies are dead. In between those of the living and those of the dead are apparitions seen at or very close to the time of death.

APPARITIONS ARE FACTS

For more than seventy years, psychical researchers have been collecting and studying case reports of apparitions. As far back as 1886, the SPR questioned over 5,700 persons about whether they had

ever perceived an apparition. The results were published in the classic work, *Phantasms of the Living*. Three years later, a committee of the SPR followed Lip this inquiry on a larger scale, in what was called 'The Census of Hallucinations.' Seventeen thousand persons were canvassed. They reported having seen 352 apparitions of living persons and 163 of dead persons.

From that time forward, study after study of apparitions has been published, in England, in France, in Italy, in Germany, in the United States and in other countries. Out of this long series of scientific studies there emerged, in 1956, a report entitled 'Six Theories About Apparitions.' It developed out of papers which I presented at international conferences at the University of Utrecht in 1913 and at Cambridge University in 1955. Between these conferences, this investigation was promoted by forty-eight collaborators from twelve countries. The 165 cases used in this study include reports of apparitions of persons who had been dead for days, weeks, or even years, apparitions of persons who were at or near the point of death, and apparitions of persons who were still living. Let us look briefly at some samples, taken from this collection.

SOME EXAMPLES

A collectively perceived apparition of a dead man

As a carefully verified case in which a number of people, at the same time, perceived the apparition of a man known to be dead, let us consider the following:

In June 1931, Samuel Bull, by occupation a chimney-sweep, died in his cottage in Ramsbury, Wilts., England. His aged widow continued to live in the same cottage with a grandson, James Bull, twenty-one years of age. In August 1931, a daughter, Mrs. Edwards, gave up her own home and came with her husband and five children to live with the widow for the purpose of looking after her.

Some time in or after February 1932, Mrs. Edwards saw the deceased man ascend the stairs and pass through a closed door into the room, then unused, in which he had died. Almost immediately after Mrs. Edwards saw the apparition, James Bull also saw it. Later all the members of the family together observed it. Even the five-year-old girl recognized it as 'Grandpa Bull.' The appearances

continued at frequent intervals until about 9 April. Whenever the apparition was seen, all the persons present were able to see it.

The Chaffin apparition gave information not known to any living person

The evidence in this famous case was tested in court, and the judge accepted it as the basis for his verdict:

James L. Chaffin, a farmer in North Carolina, had a wife and four sons. In 1905 he made a will leaving his property to his third son, Marshall, but leaving nothing to his widow and the three other sons. In September 1921, the old man died, and the will was probated. In 1925, the second son, James, made the following sworn statement:

'On a night during the latter part of June 1925, my father appeared at my bedside, dressed as I had often seen him in life, wearing a black overcoat which I knew to be his own.

My father's spirit took hold of his overcoat, pulled it back and said, "You will find my will in my overcoat pocket," and then disappeared.'

James made inquiries, and finally in July found his father's overcoat at the home of his brother John. He cut the stitches of the inner pocket, and found inside, not the will itself but a roll of paper with the words, 'Read the 27th Chapter of Genesis in my daddie's old Bible.' (This chapter tells how Esau was supplanted by his younger brother Jacob.)

Taking his daughter and two neighbours with him as witnesses, James Chaffin, Junior, then went to his mother's house, found the dilapidated Bible, and in the presence of the testator's widow and two other witnesses looked up the 27th Chapter of Genesis. Folded into the pages there they found a will dated 16 January, 1919, which had been made without witnesses, but which was valid by the laws of North Carolina as being in his own handwriting. This newer will divided the property equally among all the four sons, adding: 'You must all take care of your Mammy.'

At first the heirs under the old will contested the new one. But when they were shown the actual document at the trial they admitted it to be genuine, and they withdrew their opposition. Ten witnesses were prepared to swear it was in the testator's handwriting. In December, 1925, the second will was admitted to probate, and probate of the earlier will was cancelled.

So far as can be learned, James Chaffin, Senior, had never before his death spoken to anyone about his second will. His apparition, after death, would seem to have been the vehicle of his surviving personality, seeking to complete the righting of a wrong which he had done while still in his mortal body.

The authenticated apparition of a dying captain

The cases—which have just been cited—were apparitions of persons who had been dead for months or years. Let us now consider a representative case of an apparition at the moment of death:

On 3 January, 1856, Joseph Collyer was in command of the steamer *Alice*, which was moored alongside the levee on the Mississippi River just above New Orleans. Joseph had retired to his berth for the night. Another steamer bore down upon the moored ship, and Joseph was called. He ran on to the deck, clothed only in his nightgown. The other steamer collided with the *Alice*. The concussion caused the flagstaff to fall, striking Joseph's head and actually dividing the skull. This, of course, caused instant death.

On that same night, Joseph's mother, Anne E. Collyer, at her home in Camden, New Jersey, had a remarkable experience which she reported to another son in a letter dated 27 March, 1861.

'On the 3rd of January, 1856, I did not feel well, and retired to bed early. Some time after, I felt uneasy and sat up in bed; I looked around the room, and, to my utter amazement, saw Joseph standing at the door, looking at me with great earnestness, his head bandaged up, a dirty night-cap on, and a dirty-white garment on, something like a surplice. He was much disfigured about the eyes and face. It made me quite uncomfortable the rest of the night. The next morning, Mary came into my room early. I told her that I was sure I was going to have bad news from Joseph. I told all the family at the breakfast table; they replied: "It was only a dream, and all nonsense," but that did not change my opinion.'

Joseph's brother, Robert H. Collyer, M.D., who lived in London, reported in a letter dated 15 April, 1861, that he had obtained the details about Joseph's death from another brother, William, 'Who was on the spot at the time of the accident.' In October 1857, Robert visited the United States, and learned from his mother about her

experience. Her account was corroborated to him at that time by his father and his four sisters. On 12 May, 1884, one of the surviving sisters wrote a letter of corroboration.

Dr. Collyer stated that his father, who was a scientific man, calculated the difference of longitude between Camden and New Orleans, and found that the apparition occurred at the exact time of Joseph's death.

His mother had never seen Joseph attired as his apparition appeared to be. One curious fact is that the bandaging of the head did not take place until hours after the accident. William told Robert that Joseph's head was nearly cut in two by the blow, and that his face was dreadfully disfigured, and the nightdress much soiled.

A conscious apparition of a living person

For comparison with the samples given above, of apparitions of dead men, and an apparition of a man at the moment of death, consider the following example of an apparition of a man who was still very much alive. The experience was reported by a bachelor farmer named Walter E. McBride, who lived near Indian Springs, Indiana.

On 23 December, 1935, McBride had been concerned during the entire day about his father. He was under the impression that his father might be ill. Shortly after retiring, at about eight o'clock that evening, he felt himself to be floating in the room, in a whitish light which cast no shadows. He said that he was wide awake at the time. After moving upward to a certain height, he felt himself to be turning vertical, and looking downward he saw his physical body lying on the bed.

He then found that he was floating upward through the building. The ceiling and floor failed to stop him. Almost at once he realized that he was moving through the air towards the north, and he seemed to know he was going to his old home several miles away.

Passing through the walls of his father's house, he stood at the foot of the bed in which he saw his father reclining. His father's eyes were fixed upon him and he seemed to be surprised, but he did not seem to hear when McBride spoke to him. The knowledge came to McBride that his father was well, whereupon he found himself travelling back to his bedroom, he again saw his own body, still lying on the bed where he had left it. Re-entering his physical self, he was instantly alert, with no feeling of drowsiness. Throughout

this excursion, McBride was aware of a *presence*, which he was unable to identify, but which he subsequently came to regard as a guide.

Upon recovering possession of his physical body., McBride got up, made a light, and wrote down the time and the account of what he had experienced. Two days later, on Christmas Day, 1935, he visited his father, who verified his experience by saying: he had seen McBride, just as he had stood at the foot of the bed. The father, moreover, had written down the time of his vision, and it tallied with the time put down previously by the projectionist. Mrs. J. E. Wires and her son, Earl, of Shoals, Indiana, were also visiting the senior McBride at the time. On 25 February, 1938, they each signed the following statement: 'I can vouch that the above-described meeting and discussion did take place.'

DO THEY PROVE SURVIVAL?

If we believe what Walter McBride has told us, the apparition which his father saw was actually the psychic body which McBride was occupying at that time, and from which he saw his father looking at him from the bed. Now suppose that we can quote a whole series of such cases, would that not mean that apparitions of the living *can* be the active, purposeful vehicles of conscious, living selves?

Grant (for the moment) that this is true. Then how about apparitions of the dead? Suppose that these are found to be identical in character with the apparitions of the living, would it not then follow that apparitions of the dead can also be active, purposeful vehicles of conscious *surviving* selves?

Cases which support the above argument will be given in Chapter 12, after arguments on the other side have been outlined in Chapter 11. But first another kind of apparition needs to be considered.

DEATH-BED VISIONS

In addition to the types which are sampled above, there is a special type of apparitions of the dead, reports of which have roused controversy. A good many cases have been published in which persons, during the last stages of their fatal illness, have said that they were seeing and communicating with loved ones who had previously died. Among such cases a few stand out in which apparitions of persons

not known to have died have been recognized—with surprise—by the one who was dying.

Two examples

The following is taken from Sir William Barrett's book, *Death-Bed Visions.*,

On January 12, 1924, a Mrs. B. was dying in the Mother's Hospital, at Clapton, England. Her sister Vida had died on December 25, 1923, but her illness and death had been carefully kept from Mrs. B. because of her own serious illness. As Mrs. B. was sinking, she said: "It is all so dark; I cannot see." A moment later her face brightened, and she exclaimed: "Oh, it is lovely and bright; you cannot see as I can." A little later she said: "I can see Father; he wants me, he is so lonely." Then, with a rather puzzled expression: "He has Vida with him," turning to her mother—"Vida is with him!" A few moments later she died.

The case was first reported to Sir William Barrett by Lady Florence E. Barrett, who as obstetric surgeon of the Mother's Hospital, was summoned to attend Mrs. B. Independent signed statements were secured from Miriam Castle, Matron of the hospital, and from Mrs. B.'s mother, Mrs. Mary C. Clark, both of whom heard Mrs. B. make the statement about Vida.

James Hyslop obtained the following example from Dr. Minot J. Savage, who gave him confidentially the names and addresses of the persons on whose authority he told it:

Two little girls, Jennie and Edith, both aged about eight or ten years, were schoolmates and intimate friends. In June 1889, both were taken ill with diphtheria. On June 5, Jennie died. The parents of Edith succeeded in keeping this fact from her. On the afternoon of June 8, Edith realized that she was about to die. She selected two of her photographs to be sent to Jennie, and asked her attendants to bid her good-bye. She appeared to see various friends who she knew were dead. Then suddenly, and with every appearance of surprise, she turned to her father and exclaimed: 'Why, papa! You did not tell me that Jennie was here.' And she reached out her arms as if in welcome, saying, 'Oh, Jennie, I'm so glad you are here!'

The fact that only apparitions of the dead, not of living persons, are seen by the dying, at their bedsides, has been held, by Barrett and

others, to be consistent with the survival hypothesis but not with any other plausible interpretation. In addition to the case cited above, Barrett has presented accounts of six other more or less similar cases, in three of which the death of the person whose presence was seen by the dying was not known normally to anyone present.

It is worth remembering, as Barrett pointed out, that apparitions of the living occur usually when the thoughts of the one who appears are concentrated on the percipient who sees the apparition, rather than when the thoughts of the percipient are concentrated on the appearer. If this should be true in the present cases, it would indicate that the thoughts of the one who had gone before were directed towards his friend at the crisis of the latter's death.

THE NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS COME NEXT

In Chapter 10 some basic facts about apparitions have been stated and illustrated, and the bare outline of the argument for survival, as based on apparitions, has been sketched. Before developing the case more fully, a candid examination of the anti-survivalist position on this subject is needed. For that, we turn to Chapter 11.

Chapter 11

SCEPTICS HAVE CHALLENGED THE APPARITIONAL EVIDENCE

EVERY careful student of the literature will agree that large numbers of cases of apparitions of the living, the dying and the dead have been reported. It will probably be agreed also that many of these cases, if taken at face value, appear to provide evidence favourable to the survival hypothesis. But at this point, opinion divides sharply. While believers in survival accept and often proclaim such cases, the agnostics and disbelievers have raised a formidable series of objections. In this chapter, it is proposed to summarize such objections impartially, and as adequately as space permits.

ARE THE CASES GOOD EVIDENCE?

Dr. West raised doubts

Challenges raised by Dr. D. J. West, in connexion with cases of supposed precognition, have already been mentioned in Chapter 3 also raised doubts about reports of apparitions:

'When large numbers of these cases are studied, one notices that the most striking are usually the ones that are said to have happened long ago. The census investigators noticed that a disproportionate number of the apparitions which were supposed to coincide with some real event were old cases. Because of this they were prepared to discount half the reported coincidences as probably

spurious. With the passing of time, helped perhaps by frequent retelling, coincidences that were originally remarkable became exaggerated and elaborated out of all recognition. Indeed, it amounts to almost invariable law in spontaneous cases that the more remarkable the alleged coincidence the worse the supporting evidence, and conversely, the better the evidence the weaker is the coincidence. There can be only one conclusion. Whether one does or does not

accept that some cases are instances of genuine ESP, most cases are spurious....

'For every comparatively good case which comes to be published by the Society, there are a hundred cases of vague coincidences or distant recollections which can be disposed of by the plainest common sense. **The few exceptional examples do strongly suggest a psychic explanation.** The problem is whether they are due to an unusual extension of the normal factors so well-known in the poorer types of cases, or whether they are really supernormal....

More good modern cases are needed; cases in which the facts given could not have been guessed or inferred by a stretch of the imagination of the percipient; cases in which written note was made and witnessed at the time the impression was received; cases in which the circumstances preclude fraud; cases which are not just one lucky hit among many that never came true....'*

Saltmarsh raised doubts about death-bed visions

In his 1931 article on 'Is Proof of Survival Possible?' Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh said:

'It is sometimes claimed that death-bed visions form a peculiarly evidential type [of phantasm], but it seems *a priori* that **a dying person can hardly be considered as good a witness as one in good health.** There appears some ground for thinking that the dying are rather more than normally suggestible, and the unquestionable fact that **there is a widespread expectation of death-bed visions** renders it probable that such will frequently occur, though they may be entirely subjective in character....

It is sometimes stated that these death-bed visions consist only of persons already dead, and where there is included among those scenes someone of whose death the percipient is normally unaware, this is held to be evidence of the agency and hence survival of that person. But I suggest there is no evidence that death-bed visions consist solely of persons already dead. In fact there are cases of a dying mother apparently seeing her living children. That they should mainly so consist, I consider sufficiently explained by the strong pre-existing expectation.

Where information not normally known to the percipient is conveyed by the phantasm [such as the fact that the appearer is

* cf. West, D. J., *Psychical Research Today*. Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., London, 1954

dead], then the case becomes subject to the same criticisms and rules as where the information is communicated through a medium, and its evidential value must be assessed accordingly. The value is not affected by the fact that the percipient is dying.'

ARE APPARITIONS MERE HALLUCINATIONS?

Gurney regarded some hallucinations as evidential of survival

What was probably the largest collection of apparitional cases ever made was called 'The Census of Hallucinations.' My dictionary defines *hallucination* as: 'Perception of objects with no reality, or experience of sensations with no external cause....' Edmund Gurney (who was an outstanding leader in taking the earlier census of *Phantasms of the Living*) regarded apparitions as merely subjective illusions. But he offered the theory that such a hallucination is created by the unconscious mind of the one who sees it, on the basis of clues received telepathically, and is projected into space by imagination, in somewhat the same way that deeply hypnotized persons project the delusory images suggested to them by the hypnotist.

Tyrrell's 'unconscious dramatists' theory

More than a half-century after Gurney's hallucination theory was first published, G. N. M. Tyrrell delivered, in 1942, the Myers Memorial Lecture on *Apparitions*. He modified the Gurney theory by emphasizing the unconscious partnership of the one whose apparition is seen (the 'agent') and the one who sees it (the 'percipient'). Under Tyrrell's theory, an apparition was regarded as an 'idea-pattern'—a kind of mental moving picture in three dimensions, created by the dramatic co-operation of the unconscious minds of the appearer and of the percipient or percipients.

Louisa Rhine rejected apparitions as evidence of survival

Gurney and Tyrrell both regarded apparitions of the dead as providing evidences bearing on survival. Both of them believed that telepathy from the person represented by the apparition contributed to its creation—hence apparitions of the dead (at least in some cases) would reflect telepathy from the dead.

But Dr. Louisa E. (Mrs. J. B.) Rhine, in 1957, published a series of articles on 'Hallucinatory Psi Experiences! (Psi is the Greek letter which some researchers use in place of the word 'psychic'.) In those

articles she gave her reasons for finding inadequate the hypothesis that apparitions result from telepathy from the dead. She wrote:

'To what extent are such experiences [visual apparitions in which a deceased person is represented] started by action on the part of an agent?... The old idea of the nature of psi hallucinations was that they were essentially telepathic transfers. And the assumption in regard to telepathy was that the agent initiated the experience, whether or not he was living, dying, or already dead.

Today, however, with the occurrence of clairvoyance established and a broader view of ESP in mind, the concept of initiative in a telepathic transfer must be reconsidered....

The support once seen for survival in the "evidence" of psi hallucinations, especially those of the dying and the dead, can scarcely any longer be urged in view of the present parapsychological knowledge....

In both auditory and visual hallucinations [in cases in which the agent was living] numbers of instances are found in which the agent appeared to have no intent to communicate with the percipient.... In a number of auditory experiences the testimony of the agent was available to show that he sometimes did and sometimes did not actually have the intention of communicating. These variations in agents' intentions were not reflected in the percipients' impressions, for even when the agent was not motivated the percipient's hallucination still pictured him as being so....

The study of this group, then, showed the percipient, often if not always *producing his experience according to his own interpretation of what the agent might do*. The agent's actual intent or purpose seemed not at all to be determinative, nor even in any detectable way to have been of direct influence in shaping the hallucination....

The indications are, instead [of the apparition or auditory "hallucination" being evidential of survival] that the percipient generates the hallucination, agent and all, and the nature of his projection depends on his knowledge of the expectation of the agent at the time.'

GARDNER MURPHY HAS SUPPORTED THE THEORY THAT APPARITIONS MAY BE GENERATED BY THE PERCIPIENT

Although Mrs. Rhine made no reference to that fact in her series, a position quite similar to hers had already received eloquent support from Dr. Gardner Murphy in 1945.

Wishes of the percipient produce some apparitions

Murphy held that 'we have abundant evidence of the role of motivation on the part of the *percipient*'. As an illustration he cited the following:

'The often-quoted case of the commercial traveller who saw his sister's apparition with a red scratch on its cheek may be referred to here. When the young man mentioned his experience to his mother she explained that she had accidentally made just such a scratch on her daughter's cheek while preparing the body for burial, but that she had carefully obliterated it with powder and had never told a living soul of the incident. It is interesting to note that the girl had been dead for nine years when her apparition was perceived. The full case may be read in Myers' *Human Personality*.'

Murphy commented:

'Are we not dealing either with the mother's or with the brother's point of view—with their fears and hopes—or with some interaction of these two, rather than with any real spontaneous portrayal of herself on the part of the girl? Why not say in all such cases that the unconscious of the percipient actively searches through past, present, and future for material appropriate to its needs and when successful in making paranormal contact achieves the result in the form of an evidential hallucination?'

How about the Chaffin Will case?

That this line of argument might nullify the evidential value of even some of the most striking cases is intimated by Murphy's comment on this, which he had designated as one of the few well-authenticated cases in which 'promptings, or monitions are given by apparitions in a form appropriate to the presumed intention of the discarnate personalities involved'. He now queried: 'Is it accidental that the son who paranormally learned of his father's latest will was the [he should have said "a"] *beneficiary* of this will?'

Apparitions are NOT ALWAYS vehicles of conscious human personality

Murphy stated the point thus:

'Before we reach a conclusion regarding the strength of the evidence from apparitions, we should remember that there exist two classes of apparitions which make it very difficult to maintain

that the apparition must be a "representation" of a deceased personality: First, there are apparitions of the percipient's own self, experienced while wide awake and in good light. The percipient sees himself as an external entity, exactly as he would see another person. He is still in his own body; the world of space about him is unaltered; but there, some feet from him, is his double. If the apparition is in a sense a portrayal of personality, and if the percipient is *himself* a personality, can this double be regarded as another personality?

As an example of such an apparition, Murphy cited the following experience of Goethe's, as quoted from W. F. Prince (1928):

'I now rode on horseback over the footpath to Drussenheim, 'when one of the strangest experiences befell me. Not with the eyes of the body, but with those of the spirit, I saw myself on horseback coming toward me on the same path dressed in a suit such as I had never worn, pale grey with some gold. As soon as I had shaken myself out of this reverie the form vanished. It is strange, however, that I found myself returning on the same path eight years afterwards to visit Fredericka once more and that I then wore the suit I had dreamt of, and this was not by design but by chance.'

As his second type of 'apparitions which make it very difficult to maintain that the apparition must be a "representation" of a deceased personality', Murphy referred to apparitions of animals. The case Which he cited in this connexion was as follows:

'Marie C. Oemler, a well-known novelist...[wrote]:

"In my younger days I owned a very beautiful and intelligent dog,...'Mac.' I adored Mac, and he cherished a deep affection for me.... When my first baby was born, I came up to the Telfair Hospital, in Savannah, leaving my old dog in charge of a Negro foreman....

One morning, when my baby was some ten days old,...on a bright forenoon, while I was lying slightly dozing in my bed, I was awakened by a slight scuffling sound and, turning my head, I saw old Mac coming into the room. Then I noticed that he was dripping with water—it ran on the floor. Instinctively, without speaking, I dropped my hand over the side of the bed, palm open. The dog dropped his head, sniffed, then his' head went up, and he ran to the bedside, thrust his cold, wet nose into my palm—and was gone....

[When she asked the nurse and later her husband about the dog, they insisted that she had been dreaming.] Only I knew that I hadn't been—I was wide awake when Mac whined. I was even wider awake when his cold nose touched my palm, and I could never mistake his little, funny half whine, half grunt of satisfaction, when he found me, and knew me. I knew I had seen Mac, and I had touched him and heard him." '

It was not until a month later that she was told that Mac was drowned at about the hour she thought she saw him in the hospital room.

As to the reasons why apparitions of animals weaken (in Dr. Murphy's view) the pertinency of apparitions of dead persons as evidence of survival, he commented:

'It should at least be noted that our willingness to consider the possibility of human survival is rooted largely in our conception of the richness of the intellectual powers, and of the moral, social, and aesthetic gifts of mankind, or, on the other hand, in our belief in a spiritual principle or a soul; and that neither basis for a belief in animal survival rings true.'

Another example of apparent 'participation of animals in telepathy' was cited by Tyrrell in 1953:

'One night Rider Haggard had what at first he took to be a nightmare. "I was awakened," he said, "by my wife's voice calling to me from her own bed upon the other side of the room. As I awoke, the nightmare itself, which had been long and vivid, faded from my dream. All I could remember of it was a sense of awful oppression and of desperate and terrified struggling for life such as the act of drowning would probably involve. But between the time when I heard my wife's voice and the time that my consciousness answered to it, or so it seemed to me, I had another dream. I dreamed that a black retriever dog, a most amiable and intelligent beast named Bob...was lying on its side among brushwood or rough growth of some sort, by water. My own personality in some mysterious way seemed to me to be arising from the body of the dog, which I knew quite surely to be Bob and no other, so much so that my head was against his head, which was lifted up at an unnatural angle. In my vision the dog was trying to speak to me in words, and, failing, transmitted to my mind in an undefined fashion the knowledge that it was dying. Then everything vanished, and I woke to

hear my wife asking, me why on earth I was making those horrible and weird noises. I replied that I had had a nightmare about a fearful struggle, and that I had dreamed that old Bob was in a dreadful way, and was trying to talk to me and tell me about it."

Railroad men found the dog's collar on an open-work bridge over some water, and it appeared that the dog had been struck by a passing train in the night and thrown down into the water below. Its body was found three days later. The percipient said that he never remembers having had any other telepathic dream.

If the case be accepted as telepathic, it means that those midlevel elements of personality, which, on the present view, are responsible for telepathic contacts, exist in the case of dogs as well as in the case of human beings.'

What about the clothes which apparitions wear?

In connexion with the issues discussed in the preceding sections, many critics have raised a highly challenging question. Let us face briefly but candidly the facts involved. First, apparitions almost always are seen as being clothed in garments suitable to the occasion—clothing such as helps to convey the central idea which the apparition represents. Second, apparitions quite often are seen as carrying a handbag, walking-stick, or other appropriate object, and sometimes appear to be on horseback, in a carriage, or in an automobile. Third, the chief apparition is quite often accompanied by the apparition of another person, of a dog, or of some other apparently living animal. Fourth, when the chief apparition disappears, the clothing, accessories, and accompanying apparitions disappear.

How, then, do such facts fit in with the view that an apparition is a temporarily detached subtle part of the organism of the appearer? If apparitions consist in the etheric bodies of the appearers, do their clothes and walking-sticks also have etheric bodies?

ARE APPARITIONS MERE MARIONETTES?

Some eminent specialists in this field, even while agreeing that apparitions in general are objectively real, have held that they are mere marionettes, something like a three-dimensional motion-picture image.

One fact which (at first glance) appears to support the marionette interpretation of apparitions is that most of them seem to have been

tongue-tied. Of the 165 apparitions analysed in the collaborative study presented to the conference at Cambridge University in 1915, only about one in four is reported to have talked at all, though quite a few seemed to try, and to fail.

Now remember that most of these cases involve what are called 'crisis' apparitions. Many of these apparitions appeared to be concerned with matters of life and death. They usually expressed, in some way, deep love, or anguish, or some other intense interest. In such circumstances, would it not be expected that if these apparitions were embodiments of personal consciousness, they would take advantage of this contact to talk freely?

A distinguished believer in survival acknowledged the point

In this connexion a striking comment has been made by Dr. Raynor C. Johnson, Master of Queens College in the University of Melbourne, Australia. In his book, *The Imprisoned Splendor*, he said:

'The apparitional behaviour is usually confined to a semiautomatic type. Anything beyond this is generally of a single idea or purpose—e.g., to stroke hair, to wave the hand, to exhibit a wound, to frequent a neighbourhood, or to demonstrate continued existence; having done which the sustaining persistent thought (or object) has expended the impulse which gave it birth, and it fades away. Such mono-ideaism is far removed from the wealth and complexity of mental structure of the normal living person.'

It would seem, then, that apparitions which are seen recurrently in haunted houses, and even most crisis apparitions, tend to be limited in the range of activity of which they are capable.

SUMMARY OF THE NEGATIVE CASE

In the face of the masses of data referred to in Chapter 10, the critics cited in the present chapter have offered the following reasons for declining to accept apparitional cases as convincing evidence of survival:

1. All the evidential weaknesses of spontaneous cases are apparent in the reports of apparitions.
2. In addition to these, Saltmarsh found special weaknesses in the argument from death-bed visions.
3. Whereas Gurney and Tyrrell had regarded apparitions of the

dead as hallucinations engendered to a greater or less extent by telepathy from the deceased, Mrs. Rhine and Gardner Murphy have taken the position that apparitions of the dead are hallucinations engendered by the emotional needs of the percipient, and that what ever evidential features they possess may be explained by ESP not requiring co-operation from the dead. Murphy, however, emphasized that this action by the unconscious mind may very well involve ESP contact not only with other living persons, but also with the deceased

4. Dr. Murphy has argued also that self-seen apparitions and apparitions of animals 'make it very difficult to maintain that the apparition must be a "representation" of a deceased personality'.

5. If apparitions consist in the subtle, etheric bodies of the appearers, do their clothes and walking-sticks also have etheric bodies?

6. The fact that most apparitions have been largely or wholly tongue-tied, and that their behaviour is usually confined to a single idea or purpose seems inconsistent with the hypothesis that apparitions are vehicles for the full surviving consciousness of the deceased.

Chapter 12

THESE COUNTER-ARGUMENTS FAVOUR SURVIVAL

IN THE debate on the question: 'Do apparitions provide evidence favourable to survival?' the negative team has just had its innings in Chapter 11. What the present chapter proposes to do is to indicate briefly some of the **major counter-considerations which have been published in rejoinder to the negative arguments.**

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF MANY APPARITIONAL CASES HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED

A statistical check of Dr. West's doubts has been made

In his article of 1948, Dr. D. J. West pointed out certain characteristics which trustworthy spontaneous cases should have. For decades the SPR has been endeavouring to test, by such principles, apparitional cases which have been submitted. **Finally a reliable rating scale for measuring evidentiality was developed.**

The method is described in some detail in the **international team report on 'Six Theories About Apparitions'.** Among the 165 case records, some were found to rate relatively high in evidentiality, while others rated rather low on the scale—though still above the minimum requirements which had been set. These evidentiality ratings made it possible to apply statistical tests to the debate which had been taking place among psychical researchers themselves as to the trustworthiness of such case reports.

Do apparitional cases become exaggerated?

That is one of the questions which had been debated in qualitative terms. For example, **Walter Franklin Prince** had said, in **1931:**

'The too general assumption is that a second-hand story, if it distorts any details, is found to do so by their improvement, their exaggeration, in the direction of supernormality. But long experience in testing such matters shows that an authentic incident of this

character is Much inure often than not improved after one has found the original percipient or a witness who was actually present. The second-hand narrator is very apt to have forgotten, or at least to have omitted, some of the chief evidential details.'

Gardner Murphy, in a letter dated 3 August, 1954, commented as follows:

'I think there may be some confusion about what happens to apparition stories as they are retold. Surely they may lose authenticating detail, and yet at the same time grow more marvellous and impressive. I think that you and to some extent Prince imply that convincingness and impressiveness are the same thing. What is terribly impressive may owe its quality to the very elaborations which make it unconvincing to the careful critic.'

Statistical tests refute the charge

In order to test whether such objections are sound, the case reports of apparitions were sorted into two groups—83 cases which are above the mid-point on the evidentiality scale, and 82 cases which are below the mid-point. When modern statistical checks were applied to determine whether the low-evidentiality cases show any tendency whatever to report more of the marvellous, the striking, and the impressive traits than did the high-evidentiality cases, the conclusion was clear-cut. No evidence appeared that cases low in authentication (above the minimum threshold set in that investigation) differ significantly in reported characteristics from the cases in the upper half of the authentication range. The differences in characteristics between the two groups are practically negligible.

SALTMARSH'S ATTACKS ON DEATH-BED VISIONS WERE INVALID

Collins replied

Saltmarsh's challenges to this type of case, as published in 1931, have been summarized in Chapter 11. Ten years later, in 1941, Mr. B. Abdy Collins published a comprehensive rebuttal. Without repeating the details of that reply, let us consider here, in terms of an actual case, the unsoundness of one of Saltmarsh's chief objections.

The dying mother who saw her living children

Saltmarsh referred to 'cases of a dying mother apparently seeing

her living children', with the implication that this refutes the generalization 'that death-bed visions consist solely, of persons already dead'. One famous case of this type (which was excellently attested, even though recorded more than 200 years ago) was reported by Robt: Dale Owen in 1860:

On June 4, 1691, Mrs. John Goffe died in tier father's house in West Mailing, England, nine miles away from her home, which was in Rochester. On the day before her death she was terribly eager to see her two children. But they had been left behind, at tier home, in the charge of a nurse.

Mrs. Goffe insisted that even though she was too ill to sit up in a saddle she would lie on the horse's back if only they would take her home, **so keen was her longing to see her children before she died.**

Between **one and two the next morning** she fell into a trance. Then, as dawn came **she told her mother that she had been at home with tier children during her sleep.**

The nurse at Rochester, a Mrs. Alexander, said that she would take her oath on't before a magistrate, and receive the Sacrament upon it' **that a little before two that morning she saw the likeness of Mrs. Goffe come out of the room where the elder of the two children was sleeping, and stand by the side of the bed where the younger child was sleeping with the nurse.**

The eyes and mouth of the apparition moved, but no words were heard. The nurse was wide awake. She sat up in bed and spoke to the apparition, whereupon it went away. She slipped on her clothes and followed but she could not tell what became of the mother's form. She then became so frightened that she walked up and down until she Was able to rouse some of the neighbours at six. **She told them that if ever she had seen Mrs. Goffe she saw her on this night.**

It will be noted that the Goffe case (as was true in some other similar ones) was not a death-bed vision at all in the usual sense. In such visions, the dying person, or others present, perceive apparitions of dead friends gathered near the death-bed. **But in these dying-mother cases, Mrs. Goffe and the other mothers experienced ESP projections, and were seen as apparitions at the distant places where their children were located, giving evidence before dying that these 'astral' visits had been made.**

ANIMALS ALSO MAY SURVIVE

Man is an animal

Gardner Murphy was quoted, in Chapter 11 as holding that our willingness to consider the possibility of human survival is rooted largely in our conception of certain intellectual and spiritual traits in which man is considered to be different in kind from animals. But my view would be, first that continuity between human beings and the rest of the animal world is basic to modern scientific thinking, and second that anthropocentric presuppositions are irrelevant to our problem. We are concerned with bodies of evidence. Apparitions of animals are part of that evidence. What we seek is the simplest and most rational way to account for the data.

Professor Price's view

Some stimulating ideas in connexion with the problem raised by Dr. Murphy are contained in the following comments by Professor H. H. Price:

'In the very few cases of animal apparitions I have read of (excluding the horses etc. which occur in some of the old SPR cases, where the horse just has the status of an "appurtenance" to the central figure, comparable to a hat or a walking stick)—in the few cases, that is, where the animal is itself the "central figure"—I think it is always a *domestic* animal; and moreover a domestic animal which the percipient *loved* very much and finally one on which the percipient at least would claim that this intense love was reciprocated. (Behaviourists may smile at this. But people who have kept pets will not.) This link of affection—and to all appearances, mutual affection—must surely be relevant somehow.

Now if human beings survive death, it would seem *a priori* possible that animals survive death too. The difficulty is to show that *any* living and conscious creature survives death. The most natural view would surely be that either *all* conscious living creatures survive, or *none* do. (In the Eastern religions, though not perhaps in Christianity, Judaism and Islam, it is taken for granted that animals do survive, as well as men.)

I think then that if anyone believes that human beings survive death, he ought at least to give serious thought to the probability that animals survive it as well, and consider what kind of postmortem existence an animal might conceivably be supposed to have.

I should suppose that the answer to that (highly speculative!) question would depend somehow on the degree of *individuality* which the animal had in its life in this world. And perhaps it might be argued that a domestic pet (e.g., a cat or dog) was a "more individual" creature in its earthly life than a wild animal. The fact that people love it, and treat it—so to speak—as "a member of the family", might have this effect. In its case, then, there might be something approximating the *personal* survival which survivalists attribute to discarnate human beings; whereas with wild animals, we might have to conceive of a sort of "group survival".'

SOME APPARITIONS ARE SELF-EXISTENT STRUCTURES

What is an hallucination?

Two very eminent psychical researchers—Dr. Gardner Murphy and Dr. Louisa E. Rhine—have set forth the position that apparitions are hallucinations, generated by the unconscious minds of the percipients in response to the percipients' emotional needs. The debate on this particular issue can be understood clearly only in relation to the actually observed facts. As examples, let us take two outstanding apparitional cases:

A COLLECTIVELY PERCEIVED APPARITION OF A WOMAN TEN YEARS DEAD

In March, 1846, three women, a mother and two daughters, were sitting in the dining room of a dwelling in West Philadelphia. It was between one and two o'clock in the afternoon. They were doing needlework and were talking quietly on ordinary topics.

All three women saw the apparition

Suddenly, the mother and the older daughter, both at the same moment, perceived a woman's figure advancing silently from a door which they were both facing. It appeared in a black satin dress, over which a white muslin handkerchief was crossed on the breast. The figure wore a white bonnet. In its hand was carried a white silk bag, the string of which was wrapped several times around the wrist. The younger sister, noting the expressions on the faces of her mother and older sister, turned around and saw the apparition also.

They independently agreed about its appearance, movements, and action

The figure advanced slowly into the room until it came within

two or three feet of the front wall. There it stopped opposite a portrait of the older woman's husband, father of the two girls, Dr. R——. After gazing at the portrait for perhaps half a minute, the figure turned and moved slowly to the door where it had first been seen. The door did not open, but the figure, coming close up to it, disappeared suddenly while the woman and her two daughters were looking at it.

In moving through the room and returning, the figure passed so close to the elder daughter that its dress almost touched hers. Yet there was no echo of a footstep, nor the least rustle of the dress, nor any other sound whatever while the figure moved. Only this silence, and the disappearance of the apparition without opening the door, caused the appearance to seem other than an ordinary and material one. To the sight it was as distinct and palpable as any human visitor; and though the observers afterwards recollected that its motions were more like gliding than walking, yet this was an afterthought only.

'It was Grandmamma!' the elder daughter exclaimed, as soon as she was able to find her voice.

The facts were sifted

Thereupon the house was searched from garret to cellar, but not a trace was found of anyone except its usual inmates. A slight, recent fall of snow covered the path to the doorsteps, and the steps themselves; this snow showed no trace of any human foot. Also, at the time, two children were playing on the front veranda, but they saw no one enter or leave.

On comparing notes afterwards, the women found that the impressions left on each of them by this appearance were the same. To both the mother and the elder daughter the figure seemed a real person. Both recollected the precise dress, and their recollections matched exactly. To the eyes of both the figure had crossed the room, approached the front wall, lingered there to look at the portrait, recrossed to the door, and there vanished. Neither heard any sound. Neither of them had been talking or thinking of the old lady whose image thus suddenly appeared before them.

Mrs. R——, as well as her daughter, reported that they had instantly recognized the figure as that of Dr. R——'s mother, who had died about ten years before. Not only the face and form, but

every minor detail of the dress as above described, were exactly like that lady and like what her usual walking attire had been in life.

The doctor's mother had promised

Later investigation showed that, shortly before her death, Dr. R——'s mother had strongly advised her son to buy a house in the neighbourhood in which he at last purchased it. She had also, about the same time, told a friend of hers that if her son did well she would, if permitted, return from the other world, to witness his prosperity. On the very day, and at the very hour when his wife and daughters witnessed the apparition of his mother, the deeds by which Dr. R—— became the legal proprietor of the house in which she appeared were delivered to him by its former owner. On his return in the evening, to their surprise, he threw down on the table the deeds which completed the purchase.

AN APPARITION CORRECTLY REFLECTED IN A MIRROR

The fact that some apparitions are independent structures has just been illustrated by the case of the collectively perceived apparition of a woman ten years dead. A further reason for recognizing the objective independence of at least some types of apparitions is to be found in the facts about the perspective in which apparitions are perceived. An illustration of this point is to be found in the following 'Case of Verified Dual Perspective':

In or about 1892, Lady B and her daughter were sleeping in the same room in London. In the middle of the night both ladies suddenly started up wide awake, and saw a female figure in a white garment with dark curly hair hanging down the back. The figure was standing in front of the fireplace, over which was a mirror. Lady B saw the face in quarter profile, the head intercepting its own reflection in the mirror. Miss B saw the back of the figure with its long dark hair; the face was not directly visible to her, but she saw it clearly reflected in the mirror. Both percipients immediately sprang out of bed to the doors, which were found locked. When they turned round again, the figure had disappeared.

The way in which the two percipients viewed this apparition from different angles (and thus verified the fact that their two observations

corresponded with what would have been observed if a physically embodied person had been occupying the position in which the apparition stood) can be made clearer by a diagram:

From the account of the above case, and the relationships summarized by the diagram, it seems clear that both percipients saw this apparition in the perspectives which were proper to their respective viewpoints, both directly and as reflected in the mirror.

WHAT ABOUT COLLECTIVELY PERCEIVED APPARITIONS?

One of the most basic difficulties about the hallucination interpretation is the question of how collectively perceived apparitions (such as the two cited in the preceding section) can be explained under that hypothesis. Murphy, in his 'Outline of Survival Evidence', did not mention such cases. Mrs. Rhine did mention the problem, but brushed it aside.

Tyrrell demolished Gurney's theory about collective cases

Gurney, in 1886, had propounded a theory to account for collectively perceived apparitions as hallucinations, produced by telepathy. Some of the difficulties of that theory were pointed out by Professor Broad in 1953. In the same year Tyrrell even more devastatingly demolished Gurney's explanation. In addition to other obstacles to its acceptance, Tyrrell summarized as follows what appears to be a fatal objection:

'The real crux of the difficulty is not merely that each of the percipients sees at the same time an apparition *more or less* similar to that which the others see; it is that all the percipients see the *same* thing, each from his own point of view in space, just as though it were a material figure. Gurney, apparently, half doubted whether this were so; but I do not think that the evidence, carefully looked into, leaves any reasonable doubt that the sensory image of one percipient is correlated with the sensory image of another just as it would be if the two percipients were seeing the same material figure in normal perception....

If it be granted, as I think it reasonably must be, that perception of apparitions is full-blown perception, identical in its features with normal perception, and that in collective cases the various percipients see the *same* figure, each appropriately according to his position and distance from the figure; and that, as the figure moves, the sensory images of the percipients change exactly as they would if the figure were a material one, then Gurney's theory of collective perception breaks down. For it might be conceived that one percipient should telepathically affect another so as to cause him to see a figure more or less like the one he was seeing himself, but it is inconceivable that the figures should be exactly correlated to one another as in normal perception. Indeed, experimental telepathy suggests the figures seen by the different percipients would be likely to differ a good deal from one another....

It is not merely a fact of multiple *perception* which is performed in such cases; it is a feat of *correlation* in which each percipient sees exactly the aspect of the moving apparition which he would see from his particular standpoint if the apparition were material.'

The above analysis of collective cases is confirmed by detailed case studies in the collaborative report on 'Six Theories About Apparitions'. The facts brought out by Tyrrell, and confirmed by the 'Six Theories' study, raise the question: How can a private hallucination, 'generated, agent and all, by a single percipient' (as Mrs. Rhine phrased it), be perceived consistently and simultaneously by two or more different people?

There are plenty of cases

It may be pointed out that Tyrrell, in 1953, said that he had counted 130 collective cases, and that he had no doubt that this list was

not exhaustive. Of the 165 apparitional cases analysed in the 'Six Theories' study, 46 reported other persons so situated that they would have perceived the apparition if it had been a normal person. Of these, 26 (56 per cent) were reported as having been collectively perceived.

APPARITIONS OF THE LIVING PROVIDE VITAL CLUES

Those who deny survival are prone to ignore various types of verified data which fail to fit their theories. Among the crucial phenomena which Saltmarsh and Mrs. Rhine appear not to have taken into account are ESP projections.

Spontaneous and experimental 'out-of-the-body' experiences

The 'conscious apparition of a living person' which is cited in Chapter 10 is an example of what has been called an 'out-of-the-body' experience. Popularly, such cases are often referred to as 'I astral excursions'. A more technical name which has been given to them is 'ESP projections'. Among the data dealt with in the 'Six Theories' study, there are forty-one evidential cases of ESP projection.

Most of the conscious apparitions of living persons have occurred spontaneously—without warning and without being planned. But ESP projection has also been produced experimentally by three broad types of methods. The first type of experimental ESP projection consists in hypnotizing a suitable subject, and then directing him or her to go out from the physical body and, at a distance, make observations which can later be verified. At least twenty evidential cases of this type have been published. The second type includes cases in which people, by means of concentration, have sent out their own apparitions, without advance warning, to be seen by some loved person or friend. At least fifteen evidential cases of this type have been published. The primary evidence of success in such experiments consists in a report that the apparition was seen by the person towards whom the appearer was directing his attention. Third, in at least twelve cases, persons have succeeded in consciously and deliberately leaving their physical bodies, and in bringing back evidential accounts of what they observed at the places to which they projected themselves. The primary evidence in this third type of case comes from the one who does the projecting, rather than from persons who see

the projected apparition. I published examples of these three types in 1954.

The purposefulness of the Wilmot apparition

The fact that at least some apparitions of the living, far from being mere puppets, are actually vehicles for the purposefully acting and observing consciousness of the appearer is illustrated by the following oft-cited case:

On October 3, 1863, Mr. S. R. Wilmot, sailed from Liverpool for New York, on the steamer *City of Limerick*. His wife and children were in Waterton, Connecticut.

Towards morning on the night of Tuesday, October 13, while far out at sea, he saw his wife come to the door of his stateroom wearing her nightdress. At the door she hesitated. Above her husband's bed was an upper berth, set farther back, in which another man was lying. Mrs. Wilmot's apparition looked for a moment at this strange man. Then she advanced to her husband's side, stooped down, kissed him, and after caressing him for a few moments, quietly withdrew.

In the morning it developed that Wilmot's fellow passenger in the upper berth, while awake, had seen a figure enter and act in a manner corresponding exactly to Wilmot's 'dream' of his wife's visit.

The wife did not meet the steamer at New York. Almost he; first question, when they were alone together in Waterton, was: 'Did you receive a visit from me a week ago Tuesday?'

'A visit from you?' Wilmot parried. 'We were more than a thousand miles at sea.'

His wife then told him that she had been worried about him on account of the going ashore of another ship, the *Africa*. On Tuesday night she had lain awake thinking of him, and about four a.m. it seemed to her that she went out to seek him. Crossing the stormy sea she came to a steamship. Descending into the cabin, she passed through it to the stern until she came to his stateroom. (Although she had never seen the ship, she described it correctly in every particular.) She noted the upper berth which was set back farther than the lower. In it she saw a man looking at her, and for a moment was afraid. But soon she went up to the side of her husband's berth, bent down and kissed him, embraced him and then went away.

Such Purposefulness is typical

The Wilmot case does not stand alone. It is one of twenty-five cases reported in the 'Six Theories' study in which an apparition of a living person was seen and the appearer later remembered having used the apparition as a vehicle for observation and action. Of such apparitions, 92 per cent appeared to some person with whom the appearer had some strong emotional bond—such as husband, wife, betrothed, parent, child, close friend, or beloved relative. More than half of these apparitions were observed to be showing special concern for these loved ones.

Conscious apparitions are not unusual

H. F. Saltmarsh remarked, in 1931, that 'as a general rule, in cases of phantasms of the living, the part played by the agent is a quite unconscious one as far as we know'. That statement was made before the statistics published in 'Six Theories About Apparitions' had become available. Of the 61 cases of apparitions of living persons there analysed, 25, or 41 per cent were classified as cases 'with fairly full memory afterward.' Of the remaining 36, 25 were cases in which the appearer was reported to have been directing special attention towards the percipient. Thus in 50 out of the 61 cases, or 82 per cent, it is evidently incorrect to say that the part played by the agent was completely unconscious. On the contrary, evidence of purposive consciousness is reported in a large majority of cases of apparitions of the living, and it may have played an unrecorded part in the remainder.

The 'marionette' effect is understandable

One of the reasons which seem to lend support to regarding apparitions as puppets is the fact that 'apparitional behaviour is usually confined to a semi-automatic type'. A reconciliation of that fact with the survival hypothesis emerges if we suppose that success in becoming visible in the material world as an apparition requires concentration. In the score or more of published cases where living people have succeeded in making their own apparitions visible to friends at a distance, intense concentration appears to have been essential. Crisis apparitions represent persons whose minds are intensely focused on the crisis event. Haunts often if not always represent persons in connexion with past crises. But to concentrate means to limit one's attention to a fairly simple set of ideas. Hence,

the resulting apparition tends to confine its activities to the pre-set pattern which gave it birth.

SO WHAT ABOUT APPARITIONS OF THE DEAD?

Here the great controversy comes to a head

Credulous spiritualists and credulous materialists both provide examples of how one may become victimized by dogmatic beliefs. If one adopts survival as a dogma, it becomes easy and natural to accept and believe any alleged data which fit in with that hypothesis, and to reject or ignore any purported evidence which seems inconsistent with it. On the other hand, the dogmatic materialist may be so carried away with his tentative conclusions that he may even go as far as Professor Edwin G. Boring, of Harvard University, went when he claimed, in 1937, that he had succeeded 'in explaining consciousness out of existence', and that he had proved that 'private experience does not exist...'. If eminent psychologists can claim to prove that there is no such thing as consciousness, how much easier for materialists to prove to their own satisfaction that there is no such thing as conscious existence beyond the grave! But for anyone who is genuinely loyal to the scientific method, the appeal must be to a dispassionate analysis of the available facts.

Apparitions of the dead and the dying are essentially similar to conscious apparitions of the living

With respect to the 45 traits most frequently mentioned in 165 evidential apparitional cases, apparitions of the dead and the dying are so closely similar to the 25 conscious apparitions of living persons that the two types must be regarded as belonging to the same basic kind of phenomena. This point has been demonstrated by rigorous statistical methods in 'Six Theories About Apparitions'. A similarity as close as that thus demonstrated between apparitions of the living and apparitions of the dead would not occur by mere chance once in ten to the 150th power.

One crucial similarity is PURPOSEFULNESS

In the Wilmot case, the behaviour of the apparition of the still incarnate wife expressed her anxiety for her husband. Very similarly, the behaviour of the apparition of Dr. R——'s mother is explicable as expressing her continuing interest in his success. But this pair of cases

is merely one illustration of a basic similarity between the conscious apparitions of the living and the apparitions of the dead.

'Haunts' are different from crisis apparitions

Professor H. H. Price, who has made a special study of the haunting type of apparitions, has written me that he does not regard such ghosts as being, at all commonly, vehicles of consciousness. He said that if haunting apparitions are at least sometimes caused by a surviving deceased personality, this personality is probably quite unconscious of 'What is happening.

Some statistical facts bearing on that question were brought out by the 'Six Theories' study. It was found that apparitions of persons dead twelve hours or longer differ significantly from other apparitions in that they much oftener are reported as having an emotional bond with the location, and as being seen repeatedly, and that they are reported much less frequently as having an emotional bond with the percipient or as being recognized.

The significance of the above facts

Pause for a moment to realize the momentous meaning of the similarities between the apparitions of the living and the crisis apparitions of the dead. In our analysis of the evidence we were driven to the conclusion that apparitions of the living often serve as vehicles for the consciousness of the persons represented—that they can be active, purposeful instruments of conscious, living selves. If this is true also of apparitions of the dead, then survival beyond the grave has been demonstrated.

SOME OF THE DATA MUST BE DEALT WITH LATER

The major objections to accepting apparitions as evidence of survival have been stated in Chapter 11 and have been replied to in the present chapter. But three sub-types of apparitions mentioned by the anti-survivalists remain as sources of difficulty. These are (1) apparitions of oneself; (2) apparitions typified by that of the corpse 'with the scratch on the face; (3) apparitions which have been seen when the appearer was later proven to have had his attention fully occupied with other matters. The question of how to account for the clothing and appurtenances which accompany apparitions also remains to be dealt with. The difficulties raised by these four problems will be discussed in Chapter 13

[2 intervening chapters skipped]

Chapter 15

WHAT IS IT THAT SURVIVES?

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY IS CRUCIAL

IF I ask: 'Will I survive bodily death?' I find myself facing an even deeper question: 'Who or what is this "I"? How can it be identified?'

The 'I'-thinker is an inescapable reality

That one cannot deny the existence of one's own essential selfhood without thereby reasserting it has been pointed out in Chapter 14. My essential selfhood consists in whatever it is that is referred to by the subject of the verbs 'I observe', and 'I act'.

The 'I'-thinker observes and acts in dreams

Now this conscious observer-operator who is referred to by the pronoun 'I' is active not only in the outer world of the senses, but also in my imagination, my rememberings, and my dreams. It observes and acts in those exceedingly vivid and clear dreams in which I become aware that I am dreaming and still go on with the dream. It has been the observer-operator in certain telepathically shared dreams which I have experienced and recorded. I assume that a similar 'I'-thinker has observed and acted in the shared dreams which others have recorded.

Identity, and the 'I'-thinker's memories

One of the characteristics of all normal I-thinkers is the sense of personal identity. Vital to this self-identification is the recognition of the chain of one's own memories as being one's own. 'My past' is essential to my own sense of identity. When a person loses his memory (as in amnesia) he has to ask: 'Who am I?'

Professor C. D. Broad, in his lecture in 1958 on 'Personal Identity and Survival', took the following position:

'The disembodied personality might remember experiences had by the deceased human being, just as a human being in his waking

state at one time remembers experiences had by him in his earlier waking states. In that case, and in that alone, could we say that the personality of the deceased human being had survived the death of his body in the full sense in which one's waking personality is reinstated after each period of normal sleep.'

The 'I'-thinker's values are also part of his identity

My identity projects itself, not only into the past, but also into the future. 'My purposes, my plans, my goals, my values' are vital to my selfhood. If a young man goes to college or enters military service with one set of values and purposes (such as to marry a certain girl, to be a doctor, and to serve humanity) and then later comes back 'With wholly different purposes (such as to marry a different girl, to get rich fast and unscrupulously, and to enjoy the thrills of high-stake gambling) his former friends are apt to say: 'He is so changed that he is a different person!'

My body is part of my earth-life identity

When questions of identity arise in courts of law they practically always hinge on the identification of the physical body. Recognition of the face, the bodily appearance, the scars, the distinctive gestures and the like is often crucial. Identification of finger-prints is still more' conclusive.

THE AFTER-LIFE AS AN EMBODIED EXISTENCE

During earth-life, 'my memories', 'my values', and 'my purposes' are vitally related to 'my physical body'. Murphy pointed out in 1945: 'The biological point of view makes it difficult to think of *any aspect of awareness as continuing independently of the very substratum which has given it its place in nature*'—namely, the physical body.' Flew asked in 1953: 'How can such objects as people survive physical dissolution? This is a massive difficulty....

But need survival be disembodied?

Professor Broad pointed out:

'Of all the hundreds of millions of men in every age and clime who have believed...in human survival, hardly any have believed in survival without a body.... It seems to me rather futile for a modern philosopher to discuss the possibility of human survival on an

assumption which would have been unhesitatingly rejected by almost everyone) lay or learned, who ever claimed seriously to believe in it.'

The dream body is an objective reality

The question of having a body after death may well be approached by way of intermediate psychological and psychic phenomena. Take first those rare but unquestionable experiences in which a dreamer becomes fully aware that he is occupying a body which is visible, tangible, solid, and capable of voluntary movement.

One is aware that this is not one's physical body—that body is back in the bedroom, lying in the bed. Moreover, *this dream-world body can rise into the air, untrammelled by gravity.*

This dream body is the vehicle of consciousness. One seems to be located in it just as, in waking life, one is located in one's physical body. One's sense of personal identity is vivid. Memory is available. Values are keen.

Now take the case of the shared dream. In such an experience each of the participants has a dream body which seems real. Moreover, one dreamer may recognize the other participant as having much the same facial and bodily appearance as in physical life.

One has a body when 'out of the body'

The fact that various individuals have found themselves observing and acting—and at the same time have been observed as apparitions—at distances away from their physical bodies, has been brought out in Chapters 10 and 12. Evidence that such experiences have occurred in scores of cases was published in 1954 in my article on 'ESP Projection: Spontaneous Cases and the Experimental Method'. Details of experiences reported in forty-one such cases have been tabulated, in 1956, in 'Six Theories About Apparitions'.

In all these cases the person who experienced ESP projection was aware of having a body other than his physical one. *Moreover, in all these cases this projected body was seen by those who perceived the apparition.* The apparitional body was both a vehicle for observing and acting by the appearer and also an object observed by the outside percipient.

But *were these apparitional bodies dependent on the appearers' physical bodies?* The anti-survivalist (if he accepted the above statements) would probably take the position that, since the physical body was still

living in these cases, the seat of memory and of values and purposes was actually the physical brain. The present chapter is not the place to argue the question of survival—that has been done in previous chapters. What we are concerned with here is to **get as reasonable an idea as we can of what is the nature of that which survives.** But it is worth noting at this point that the extremely close parallelism between the characteristics of apparitions of the living and of the dead, together with the mediumistic evidence as to surviving purposive personalities, and Drayton Thomas's conclusions about the etheric bodies of his communicators, all fit into one rational picture.

If out-of-the-body experiences do represent the same basic kind of phenomenon as the experience of leaving one's physical body permanently, may we not gain some insight into the nature of that after-death adventure by looking at some non-evidential—and still respectably reported—experiences?

SOME EXPERIENCES OF CAROLINE LARSEN

Mrs. **Caroline D. Larsen** was the wife of Professor Alfred Larsen, who taught violin at Middlebury, College, in Vermont. He was sufficiently distinguished to be listed in *Who's Who in America*. In her own right, Mrs. Larsen had previously published a book of stories in the Danish language. In 1927 she brought out a book which she called *My Travels in the Spirit World*. In that book she told the following experiences.

Her first experience out of her body

One evening, in the autumn of 1918, she had retired rather early. The next thing she knew, **she found herself standing on the floor, looking down at her own physical body lying in her bed.** She recognized every line in her own familiar face, but saw it pale and still, as if in death. Then she looked around the room. Everything looked as natural as ever. There was the little table with books and trinkets on it; there was the bureau, the dresser, the big armchair, the smaller chairs, the green carpet on the floor, the red wall paper with its pattern of urns and flowers.

She glanced once more at the body which to all appearances seemed dead. Then she turned and walked to the bathroom. As she passed the stairway she heard the music coming up from below, where her husband was rehearsing a string quartet. She recognized with

delight the lovely Adagio from Beethoven's Opus 127 Quartet. She then approached a large mirror hanging above the wash-bowl. Through force of habit she went through the motions of turning on the electric light but found that her fingers did not move the switch. However, there was no need for illumination.

Looking into the mirror she became aware for the first time that she had undergone an astonishing transformation. Instead, of seeing a middle-aged woman, she beheld the figure of a girl about eighteen years of age. She recognized the form and features of her own girlhood, but more beautiful. She raised her hand before her face, and closed and opened her fingers. They seemed airy and delicate. Yet she felt no lack of strength in them, and no change of sensation in moving them. She felt unbounded joy and enthusiasm.

She reflected: 'I will go down and present myself to my husband and to the other members of the quartet.' No sooner had she thought of this idea than she started to carry it out. Instead of having to operate her legs with conscious effort, as we do in the physical body, she found that she moved with the freedom of thought.

But she was ordered back

Just as she came to the little platform which divided the stairway into two flights she saw, standing before her, a woman's spirit in shining clothes with arm outstretched and with forefinger pointed upwards. There was a look of strong determination in the spirit's face, and she said sternly: 'Where are you going? Go back to your body!' Mrs. Larsen knew instinctively that from this command and authority there was no appeal. Reluctantly she turned, reascended the stairs, walked through the hall into her bedroom and up to her bed. Her physical body lay there as still and lifeless as when she left it. She viewed it with feelings of loathing and disappointment, but in another instant she had again rejoined her physical form.

How a disembodied spirit feels

On the basis of this and later experiences, Mrs. Larsen reported that a disembodied spirit appears, feels, thinks and acts very much as she did in her first experience 'out of the body'. She stated:

'The mind undergoes no transmutation except to take on the added facility of being capable of reading others' thoughts. One wakes in the astral as one left the material.... Nor does memory

suffer in the passing over. In the astral, I could remember every detail of my past material life. I was perfectly aware of my own identity. I knew exactly what had transpired up to the time when I assumed the astral.'

She continued:

'Some of the departed spirits are at once fully...able to reflect on their conditions, just as I was able to reflect on mine. Other spirits suspect dimly that something strange has overtaken them but they refuse absolutely to accept the realization, and in order to shut it more completely out of their minds they deliberately continue their familiar activities of the world.... The majority of spirits are in so confused a state of mind that they do not suspect at all the great change they have undergone....

Everywhere in my journeys I found these new citizens of Spirit Land thronging the streets of cities, passing in and out of houses, travelling on trains and voyaging on steamers. In fact, wherever mortals habitate there are to be found also denizens of the spirit world.'

The transition to the 'astral world' is not incomprehensible

The out-of-the-body experiences reported in evidential cases of ESP projection have fundamental likenesses to shared-dream experiences. The experiences of Caroline Larsen, while not adequately evidential, are basically similar. These, in turn, are essentially similar to experiences reported in mediumistic communications purportedly coming from the deceased.

The objection is frequently raised that dream experiences are not real in the sense that physically embodied experiences are. But 'reality' consists essentially in two sets of factors: (1) shareability of the experience with other observer-operators; and (2) logical consistency, predictability and usability. It will be seen that the 'astral world' can and does have these characteristics.

DOES THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND BECOME CONSCIOUS IN THE AFTER-LIFE?

Testimony by Drayton Thomas's father

The ostensible communicators through Mrs. Leonard stated that the division of the mind into a conscious and a subconscious part, which is characteristic of all human minds during incarnate life,

ceases with the death of the physical body. Drayton Thomas reported in 1928 that his father had said (through Mrs. Leonard):

'On our own sphere...I seem to have but one memory. I have the ordinary memory of physical things that I had on earth, and this is merged into the subliminal memory which operates consciously here. When one passes over, one's subliminal memory operates consciously....'

[Here] we do not recall memory, because it is present. All is upon the one page. Past is present in that sense with us. It is impossible to forget anything; not that we are always looking at the past, but it is there for us to read in OUT memory. It is there without any striving for it.'

While such statements are not evidential, the indicated conception of personality has three important corollaries:

(1) It helps to explain the difficulties in mediumistic communication

Professor Broad said, in his 1955 discussion of Mrs. Leonard's mediumship, that the ostensible communicators allege that something analogous to the division between the conscious and unconscious mind recurs whenever they take possession of the medium:

'Only that part which corresponds to the *conscious* part in us is in control of the medium's body. This remains in some kind of connection with the rest of the communicator's mind, but the connection is tenuous and liable to be interrupted so, long as he is possessing the medium's body. The ostensible communicators say that, when in possession of the medium, they sometimes forget altogether about the part of their mind which is not in control of her body. They say that, even when this does not happen, it is harder for them to get in touch with the contents of this part of their minds than it is for us to avail ourselves of the contents of our own subconscious selves.'

(2) It meets the objection about senility

Professor Dodds, in 1934, raised the following as a major argument against belief in survival:

'I find it hard to believe that growing old is really a reversible process—that mental changes so far-reaching as those associated with old age can be undone even when the supposed originating cause is removed by death.'

But if the unconscious mind, with all the memories of the personality's whole earth life, becomes fully accessible to consciousness after the physical body dies, then old age becomes only an episode in that full history. During our earthly existence we are far more restricted to the narrow time-slice of the specious present. But life after death would seem to be much broader and richer in its grasp of the time dimension.

Upon reading a preliminary draft of this chapter, Professor Dodds jotted this question in the margin. 'Would this not result in chaos?' It seems clear that if a person lost the power to concentrate on a reasonably restricted time interval, his experiences might well be so inclusive as to be chaotic. But note the last sentences of the statement by Thomas's father: 'Not that we are always looking at the past, but it is there for us to read in our memory. It is there without striving for it. Thomas then asked: 'You would not experience that memory as vividly as when the event had just happened?' His father replied: 'I could do so if I wished, by an act of will.'

Compare this with the phenomenon discovered by Penfield, when he touched with an electrode certain points in the brain. The patient thereupon relived a certain past experience as though it were actually present. If a capacity to do this, more or less at will, were characteristic of the after-life, the conclusions of the present section would seem to follow.

(3) It suggests enriched experience

Many of the sceptics about survival have shown a disposition to reject the sometimes naïve spiritualistic conception of life after death as being a mere continuation of life on earth, in much the same sort of four-dimensional world as on earth. But if we accept the hypothesis that, after the death of the body, the unconscious mind of the survivor is merged with the conscious part, so that the entire personality becomes fully accessible to the 'I'-thinker, a new scope of postmortem experience becomes conceivable—even though we must admit our present incapacity to grasp it with any close approach to full clarity.

SUGGESTED CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT DOES SURVIVE

A basic characteristic of the inescapable 'I'-thinker is the sense of personal identity, based on recognition of the chain of his own memories as being his own.

That the after-life (at least in its early stages) is an embodied existence, is the conclusion which emerges from the study of ESP projection and of apparitions, as related to shared dreams.

The full accessibility of subliminal memories to the 'I'-thinker, after death, helps explain difficulties in mediumistic communication, meets the objection about senility being irreversible, and suggests a new scope of post-mortem experience. We can begin to conceive of the wider life which becomes possible when consciousness transcends what, on earth, has been its time dimension.

Chapter 16

WHAT COULD LIFE BEYOND DEATH BE LIKE?

I. WHAT LIGHT ON THE FUTURE LIFE IS AVAILABLE?

SOME anti-survivalists have given the impression that no significant information about the life beyond death has been given through mediums, and that this alleged failure is one more argument against survival. Let us examine three examples:

Leuba's denials

James H. Leuba, who for many years was Professor of Psychology at Bryn Mawr College, was an active crusader against beliefs in a future life. He complained, in 1916, about 'the vacuous nature of the communications made by the alleged spirits regarding their states and the circumstances of their existence'. He continued:

'They have been fairly loquacious; yet not any of them, not even those from whom much could have been expected, have revealed anything at all. More significant still than the insignificance of the remarks of these alleged spirits concerning the other life, is their pertinacious effort to avoid answering the many and pointed questions addressed to them on that subject....

Whether the results of the SPR are regarded as proving survival or not, it must be admitted that no amount of ingenuity in explanation and no optimism can hide the unattractiveness of the glimpses that may have been caught of the other life; there is no hint in these glimpses of any glorification; nor, for that matter, of any retribution.'

Dodds's denials

In his 1934 essay on 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival', Professor E. R. Dodds wrote:

'It is, I think, fair to say that the "spirits" have so far failed to convey to us any distinctive impression of their present mode of

life, their occupations, or their state of mind; and that they have never explained this failure.'

Flew's denials

In his 1953 chapter on 'The Question of Survival', Antony Flew wrote:

'No Control or Communicator—however great was the literary ability possessed by his earthly namesake—ever seems able to give a plausible and distinctive account of his present mode of existence.'

But the literature is voluminous

S. Rowland Morgan published in 1950 an *Index to Psychic Science*. From this, and from other sources, I have compiled a list of 63 books, each of which deals with psychic communications about the nature of life beyond death. Of these books, 25 were published before Leuba issued his denial, while 25 more (making a total of 50) had been published before Dodds issued his. Thus, plenty of literature is available, claiming to give information about the nature of life beyond death.

Does it give real facts

Critics like Leuba and Dodds may quite possibly seek to excuse themselves from looking at any of these books, on the ground that these supposed accounts of the after-life offer no proofs that what they say is true. This (it will be noted) is a different objection from the one with which they started. But let us examine the point with some care.

Most of the 63 books in my list do present their accounts of the life beyond death in association with evidential messages relating to life here on earth. Swedenborg, for example, was one of the most famous pioneers in this field. His accounts of the future life are elaborately detailed. And these descriptions gain some force from the fact that Swedenborg gave evidences of extrasensory powers which have impressed many investigators—from Immanuel Kant on down to contemporary psychical researchers.

One of the most outstanding instances of tying in verified psychic evidence with descriptions of the life after death is to be found in the writings of Drayton Thomas. This close association of verified

psychic phenomena with messages about the after life reached its climax in the book which he published in 1928—*Life Beyond Death with Evidence*. In it, chapters on evidence alternate with chapters on the nature of life beyond death.

Drayton Thomas dealt with the topics which Leuba and Dodds missed

Dodds objected that the spirits had failed to convey any distinctive impression of their after-death occupations. But Chapter 14 in Thomas's book devotes eight pages to 'Occupations in the Life Beyond Death'. That chapter explains that occupations in the world beyond are sufficiently related to occupations during earth life so that continuity and natural development can be achieved, and yet the after-death occupations involve new problems, capacities and opportunities which certainly do distinguish them significantly from the occupations of earth-dwellers.

Leuba objected that in 'the glimpses that may have been caught of the other life there is no hint...of any glorification; nor, for that matter, of any retribution'. But Drayton Thomas's father, communicating through Mrs. Leonard, is reported to have said:

'Were I about to engage in difficult work—say a mission of help to those on a lower sphere—I should first visualize Our Lord and draw to myself actual power through consciousness of Him....

And that which I have alluded to as a light comes to me whenever I visualize Our Lord's face, or call to mind His voice or touch. Whenever we do this we seem to attract the light which illuminates every difficulty and everything we have to do....

Try to recall those brief flashes, coming at rare intervals on earth, of complete consciousness of good, of everything being just as it should be. Well, I now had that complete realization of a goodness, therefore of God, in everything....I felt during those moments as if I understood everything; as if a spirit of life, flowing through Jesus to me, explained even ugliness and sin, as well as beauty and goodness. I felt only hope and ultimate good for everything.... Even now, under these very different conditions, I can feel the glow of that wonderful presence, that revelation.'

Quite apart from sharing or failing to share the distinctively Christian devotion expressed in the above passage, it would seem that an objective psychologist should be able to detect in it some 'hint of glorification'.

As to retribution, Mr. Thomas's book devotes Chapter 26 to 'The Place and Condition of the Unprogressed'. In it appears this passage:

'Take an extreme case, one upon the lowest sphere to which human life can go, say a man who has been very cruel, thoughtless and selfish...say a wealthy man who, by his vices, brought suffering and even sin into the lives of others.... On coming here he passes to that plane and place to which he belongs because of what he really is.... That means that he will find himself surrounded entirely by those who have the same sins, vices, and limitations as himself.... The whole atmosphere and the very scenery of the place are tinted with the hopeless drabs and greys of their mental and spiritual outlook...the darkness of evil, the greyness of misery...surpassing that known on earth....

The wakening comes slowly, very slowly to such people; and, therefore, that which I shall term Judgment comes slowly. At first there is felt a resentment at being in such a condition; this is followed by bitter disappointment at being unable to buy, or to enforce, better conditions. Then, when they realize that they cannot command different surroundings, they begin to wonder why....

When that seed commences to germinate it brings the realization, "I am with these miserable people because I am of them, in fact, because I am like them." When that happens there comes the desire to be different. Then follows the awakening of *which I* have spoken. It brings that bitterness and remorse *which is* the greatest and most terrible punishment man can have. No torture which another can inflict is so terrible as the remorse which one's own best self inflicts when enlightenment comes.'

Thus, reports about the future life ARE available

In view of the kind of communications just cited (which could readily be quoted in vastly greater volume) it seems evident that the criticisms of Leuba and Dodds must have been based upon unfamiliarity with available reports rather than upon actual lack of such reports.

Yet how can anyone tell whether these supposed accounts of the life beyond death give real facts or are mere fantasy? While the reports are usually associated with verifiable materials, they are not in themselves evidential. In seeking enlightenment about the nature of life after death we must apply tests of rationality rather than the kinds of

verification which apply to earthly psychic phenomena. Let us test the logical rationality of believing in the kind of after life which most of the purported communications describe.

II. THE 'ASTRAL WORLD' IS A LOGICAL NECESSITY

Vivid dreams, shared by telepathy

That a world exists which is invisible to our physical senses, and which yet is a realm of objective experience and of social contacts between conscious personalities, is a conclusion which emerges out of two well-established facts.

Take, first, the fact of telepathy. Practically all intelligent and open-minded people who have studied the available facts on the subject with any thoroughness, accept telepathy as an established fact.

Add one further and fairly obvious fact: many people, at times, have extremely vivid dreams, in which they feel wide awake, keenly alert and alive, and surrounded by objects, people, and scenes which seem to them to be even more detailed and full of meaning than are the scenes of waking life. If these two facts are granted—telepathy and vivid dreams—it would seem evident that two or more people might meet each other in their dreams, and might have shared experiences which both might remember afterwards. Let us look at some actual cases.

THREE ACTUAL CASES OF SHARED DREAMS

1. He rescued this woman doctor from dream dangers

The first of these three cases is an experience of a woman physician who was rescued in a dream of terror by a man friend who remembered independently having dreamed his part in their shared adventure:

In Elmira, New York, on January 26, 1892, between two and three a.m., Dr. Adele Gleason dreamed that she stood in a lonesome place in dark woods, that great fear came over her, that the presence of her friend, J. R. Joslyn came to her, that he shook a tree by her, and that its leaves began to turn to flame. On the same night, at the same hour, in another house in Elmira, Joslyn dreamed that he found Dr. Gleason in a lonely wood after dark, apparently paralysed with fear, that he went to her side and shook a bush, when the falling leaves turned into flame. Both dreamers submitted written accounts within a month of the occurrence. The accounts agree that

when the two dreamers met, four days after the event, she mentioned having had a strange dream, but that he at once stopped her and related his own dream first, without suggestion from her. Dr. Hodgson made written inquiries and found that Dr. Gleason had made a notation of the dream in her notebook the morning after it occurred, and before she saw Joslyn.'

2. These two conversed in a dream park

Our second case is somewhat similar to the first. It occurred in England, and Was promptly documented:

'In July, 1887, a Mr. and Mrs. H., both on the same night, dreamed that they were walking in Richmond Park with their friend J. They were discussing an invitation to a party, to be given by Lady R. (In her dream the invitation was prospective, in his dream it had already been received.) They were talking of the difficulty of getting home, when J. remarked, "Oh, I will manage that for you". Mrs. H.'s dream, as presented, contained the additional details of seeing notices of the party posted up on trees, and of a carriage driving up when J. struck a blade of grass with his stick. An account written by Mrs. H. was signed by both dreamers and was submitted in the following month.'

3. Murder, in a triply shared dream

The third case involved three individual dreamers, each of whom remembered his own part in the shared dream. The experience is related in a letter dated 3 May, 1869, by Henry Armitt Brown, who subsequently became a brilliant lawyer:

'In the fall of 1865...while I was studying law in' the city of New York, I retired to my room about midnight of a cold and blustering evening. I remember distinctly hearing the clock strike twelve as...drowsiness crept upon me and I slept. I had hardly lost consciousness when I seemed to hear loud and confused noises and felt a choking sensation at my throat, as if it were grasped by a strong hand. I awoke (as it seemed) and found myself lying on my back on the cobblestones of a narrow street, writhing in the grip of a low-browed thick-set man with unkempt hair and grizzled beard, who with one hand at my throat and holding my wrists with the other threw his weight upon me and held me down.... Over and over we rolled upon the stones.... Presently I saw him reach forth

his hand and grasp a bright hatchet.... I made one more tremendous fight for life, for a second I held my enemy powerless and saw with such a thrill of delight as I cannot forget the horror-stricken faces of friends within a rod of us rushing to my rescue. As the foremost of them sprang upon the back of my antagonist he wrenched his wrist away from me. I saw the hatchet flash above my head and felt instantly a dull blow on the forehead. I fell back on the ground, a numbness spread from my head over my body, a warm liquid flowed down upon my face and into my mouth, and I remember the taste as of blood....

Then I thought I was suspended in the air a few feet above my body, I could see myself as if in a glass, lying on the back, the hatchet sticking in the head.... I heard the weeping of friends, at first loud, then growing fainter.... With a start, I awoke.... My watch told me I had not been more than half an hour asleep.

Early the next morning I joined an intimate friend with whom I spent much of my time.... Suddenly he interrupted me with the remark that he had dreamed strangely of me the night before I fell asleep," he said, "about twelve and immediately dreamed that I was passing through a narrow street when I heard noises and cries of murder. Hurrying in the direction of the noise, I saw you lying on your back, fighting a rough labouring man, who held you down. I rushed forward, but as I reached you he struck you on the head with a hatchet and killed you instantly. Many of our friends were there and we cried bitterly...."

"What sort of a man was he?" I asked. "A thick-set man, in a flannel shirt and rough trousers; his hair was uncombed and his beard was grizzly and of a few days' growth."

Within a week I was in Burlington, New Jersey. I called at a friend's house. "My husband," said his wife to me, "had such a horrid dream about you the other night. He dreamed that a man killed you in a street fight. He ran to help you, but before he reached the spot your enemy had killed you with a great club."

"Oh, no," cried the husband across the room, "he killed you with a hatchet."

AN OXFORD PHILOSOPHER VIEWS HEAVEN AND HELL

That something corresponding to 'the astral world' emerges logically from a combination of clear dreams and telepathy is recognized

in the writings of at least two distinguished philosophers—C. J. Ducasse, of Brown University, Providence, R.I., U.S.A. and H. H. Price, of Oxford University, England. Professor Price, in 1956, published two articles under the title 'Heaven and Hell from the Point of View of Psychical Research'. He suggested that there are two different ways of conceiving the next world: (1) first, as a kind of material environment in which embodied surviving spirits observe and act; or (2) as a purely mental world of dreamlike experiences in which personal identity continues.

Professor Price confessed that he found the second of these two conceptions more helpful and easier to handle. In developing that conception he suggested that 'the dreams we have in this present life would be a kind of foretaste of the experiences we might expect to have after death'. But this dreamlike world would not be a state of individual isolation. Professor Price pointed out:

'Telepathy must be taken into account. After all, there are telepathic dreams and telepathic visions even in this present life. Indeed, it is likely that telepathy would operate on a far larger scale in the next life than it does at present....

In the next life...it is to be expected that only like-minded personalities would share a common world—personalities whose memories and desires are sufficiently similar to allow of continuous telepathic interaction. If so, each group of like-minded persons would have a different next world, public to all the members of that particular group, but private to the group as a whole....'

Having developed in some detail this idea of a socially shared dreamlike world after death, Professor Price pointed out that the 'mental' and the 'material' conceptions of the life after death are complementary rather than opposed. He observed: 'Perhaps they reach the same conclusion, though they approach it from opposite ends and express it in very different words.' He observed:

'And now our dream-like Other World begins to look rather more like the physical world. At any rate it has an existence independent of any one percipient. It is the conjoint product of the memories and desires of many different percipients. In this way we come closer to the idea which we reached when we adopted the other starting point, and conceived of the next world on the analogy of the familiar physical world which we perceive by sight and touch.'

A REAL WORLD AFTER DEATH SEEMS REASONABLE

Let us recapitulate

Contrary to the denials of anti-survivalist sceptics, mediumistic and other psychic communications have given elaborate and voluminous descriptions of life after death, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter. In the communications received by Drayton Thomas through Mrs. Leonard, these descriptions were closely associated with evidential communications. But the descriptions themselves could not be evidential in the usual sense.

Shared dreams give the clue

Yet we do have good evidence of a type of phenomenon Which points inexorably towards the existence of something corresponding to what many people have called 'The Astral World'. This phenomenon consists in shared dreams.

III. REPORTS FROM EXPLORERS OF THE 'ASTRAL WORLD'

Both from the evidential cases of shared dreams, and from the logic of men like H. H. Price and C. J. Ducasse, we are led to the conclusion that a world exists which is invisible to our physical senses and which yet is a realm of objective experience and of social contacts between conscious personalities. But if such a world really exists, why have not explorers come back to tell us about it?

The answer is: they have. The explorers whose reports are about to be summarized were not primarily concerned with offering evidence acceptable to the SPR. Whatever weight is given to their statements must rest chiefly on the strong presumption that such a world does exist. When Columbus and the other early explorers of the New World came back to Europe, their records may not have been fully up to the standards required by the then-dominant organizations of geographers. But after all, the world is round. Why not listen to these chaps who say they have been over to the other side?

Levels of life in the after-world

Caroline Larsen, wife of a Vermont college professor, wrote a book, in 1927, entitled *My Travels in the Spirit World*. Her experiences have already been cited in Chapter 15 as illustrating how it feels to get outside of one's physical body. But her book also has notable interest because of her descriptions of life beyond death.

Like other writers on the subject, Mrs. Larsen found the afterworld divided into zones or 'planes'. The 'first spirit plane' is described as the one on which spirits arrive on leaving their physical bodies, and in which are all those whose emotional attachments still bind them to the physical world. On this plane also Mrs. Larsen found an army of dark spirits whose main interest was to sway mortals to low desires and to possess their minds for purposes of doing evil. These spirits keep endeavouring to win over mortals to a life of vice and cruelty, such as they themselves had indulged in when they were physically embodied. Mrs. Larsen summarized:

'I did not, of course, see all of this first plane, but I saw enough to know that every spirit is free to follow his own ideals and inclinations. His destiny is in his own hands, limited only by his past life' But since spiritual barriers are the strongest of all, class cannot mingle with class. Should an earth-bound spirit stray into the region of higher souls his darker aura would betray him, and the current, as of electric energy, proceeding from the first spirit he would meet would sweep him back to his own place. There is but one path upward—that of personal effort to become fit for a higher type of existence. To this the activities of the place are directed; and toward this end order and discipline prevail. No one is permitted to interfere with the efforts of others. On the whole, life is good and pleasant among those on the upward path, but words cannot express the dark hopelessness of the completely earthbound souls. I found no "heaven" or "hell"—except as it exists in the spirit.'

Mrs. Larsen then proceeded to tell about the second spirit plane, which she 'found to be merely a continuation of the first plane, except for the fact that there were there no earth-bound souls'. She also visited what she called the third and fourth planes. She described the third plane as 'a fair and glorious world, impossible of adequate description in the terms of our worldly speech'.

Sylvan Muldoon's explorations

Sylvan Muldoon has reported that he himself has had hundreds of conscious astral projections. He has gathered and published more reports of such projections by other people than has any other investigator. His reports about the astral world are of particular interest—both because of his outstanding leadership in exploring

these phenomena, and also because of their contrast with some of the statements made by Mrs. Larsen. Muldoon says:

'There are no words to express the feeling of "prodigiousness" 'which overwhelms the projector when he becomes perfectly conscious in the purgatory of the dead—sees earth-bound phantoms, rides upon the air, sustains himself by thought, passes through material beings and objects (which offer no more resistance than the air itself) and listens to the chatter of those [still physically embodied persons] who suspect not his presence....

And yet, for all the marvellous things upon the astral plane, it does feel good to get back into the physical body again and "touch"! If one could only "feel" things in purgatory! That is the "hell" of it, speaking seriously! It is a wonder to me that some of the case-hardened earth-bound phantoms, under a super-stress of habit or desire to make "touchable" contacts, do not go insane. There is but one cure for his condition, and that is to turn away from the earthly—to "will" to break the stress of habit and desire to make contact with the earthly.'

In some respects, Muldoon's comments on earth-bound spirits are in fairly sharp contrast with those of Mrs. Larsen:

'Earth-bound phantoms are not as numerous as one might suppose. One of the greatest possible mistakes is to believe that, the instant one is outside his body, he sees thousands of spirits all about him. This is not the case, for although there are some, they are not numerous. Usually, one never sees a spirit during projection. Usually he finds himself alone—a stranger in a strange and yet familiar land. It is said that, on the streets of large cities, hundreds of astral phantoms mingle with the flesh-and-blood beings.... This, like anything else, is not always true. In fact, one can scarcely answer one single question concerning the astral plane without saying: "Sometimes this is true and sometimes it is not true."

One might project and encounter one condition, interiorize again, and think he knew all about the astral; yet he would know only about that particular condition which he experienced. Because of these innumerable conditions, many stories concerning the astral world are contradictory; what one medium sees and hears and tells us, another will reject, because he has found a different condition. This

is true also of spirits. The mind of one spirit will be at variance with that of another.'

Where Muldoon and Larsen agree

The Larsen and Muldoon accounts are like each other in a number of respects:

1. Both tell of an astral body which resembles the physical body, but which can separate from it during projection.
2. Both state that the astral body is ordinarily unable to move physical objects, and is ordinarily invisible to physically embodied persons into whose presence it comes.
3. Both agree that the astral body is independent of gravitation, can penetrate physical obstacles, and can move swiftly to a distance, by shifts of attention.
4. Both agree that the clothing of the astral body is formed, by conscious or unconscious thought, out of the aura which surrounds that body.
5. Both agree that many phantoms of the dead remain on the earth plane, and that some of these are very undesirable as associates, and may attempt evil actions.

Where Muldoon and Larsen differ

In spite of the five agreements listed above, Mrs. Larsen and Sylvan Muldoon differ in a number of particulars, such as the following:

1. Muldoon lays great stress on the astral cable or cord which he says always connects the astral body with the physical body so long as the physical body is alive. Mrs. Larsen makes no mention of any such cord.
2. Mrs. Larsen says: 'Everywhere in my [astral] journeys I found these new citizens of Spirit Land roaming the streets of cities.... There are as many spirits inhabiting this earth as there are mortals.' Muldoon says: 'Earth-bound phantoms are not as numerous as one might suppose.... Usually, one never sees a spirit during projection.'
3. Mrs. Larsen tells of having visited four of the spirit planes. Muldoon asserts: 'I have never had a conscious projection when I was not upon earth—as much so as I am in the flesh, yet intangible to all earthly things.'
4. Mrs. Larsen told of having been conducted by a spirit guide. Muldoon asserts:

'These guides must have no liking for me—for I have never yet seen one of them! In every conscious out-of-the-body experience I have ever had I have never seen anyone but the earthly things I have always seen. I have seen astral phantoms among the earthly but none whom I would choose for a guide!'

Why accounts of the astral world vary

I once spent some months in attempting to collate various accounts given by communicators who had claimed to have visited the astral world. I found that, while these accounts seemed in general to be based on the same fundamental facts, they failed, in many details, to agree with each other. In some respects they seemed to contradict each other seriously. But these diversities among the different descriptions of the astral world, and of the after life in general, cannot be explained by claiming that all such accounts are mere fantasies. The verified evidences of the reality of astral projection seems quite conclusive, and the evidence that apparitions of the dead may often be and usually are vehicles of surviving conscious personalities, seems also to be convincing. Hence it seems evident that there is an objective reality to be described, and that the various accounts are not mere inventions. Moreover, the accounts do agree in many fundamentals, and they do fail to show anything like the amount of disagreement which would certainly be expected in pure inventions. Thus again, it seems evident that many and probably most of these accounts are dealing with genuine reality.

The theory which appears best to account for the differences is the one intimated by Muldoon. With some additions and developments it may be summarized as follows: What one sees in the astral world (if one actually does project into it) will depend upon what one pays attention to, and what one is prepared and able to receive. Muldoon says:

'Everything in the astral plane seems to be governed by thought—by the mind of the projector.... As one is in his mind he becomes in reality when he is in the astral body.... Most of the time, even before you can complete a thought, you have already attained what you are thinking about....

It seems that the mind *creates* its own environment—yet the environment is *real*! This condition could not possibly last indefinitely; it is a sort of purgatory wherein one must learn to think correctly.'

Muldoon also points out that ordinary dreams are quite different from astral projections, and yet that sometimes dreamers may confuse the two.

The above factors seem adequate to account for all of the major differences between all the more important descriptions of the astral world.

IV. HERE ARE THE PERTINENT FACTS IN BRIEF

Some anti-survivalists make sweeping denials about the content of mediumistic communications, without ever (apparently) having familiarized themselves with the materials which they are criticizing. Leuba and Dodds, for example, object that 'spirit communicators' never give definite information about such subjects as after-death occupations, beatific glorification, or retribution. Yet Leonard communications discuss these very topics specifically and meaningfully.

The existence of some sort of 'astral world' appears to be a logical necessity. Vivid dreams do, of course, occur, and telepathy is a scientifically established phenomenon. Hence there is no good reason to reject as inherently incredible the numerous accounts of shared dreams. Eminent philosophers, both in America and in England, have pointed out the rationality of conceiving of life beyond death in terms of telepathically shared experience.

As to the character of experience in the 'astral world', many explorers have reported. Two outstandingly interesting accounts are those of Mrs. Caroline D. Larsen and of Muldoon. Their accounts agree in five important particulars, but disagree in four others. Such disagreements appear to be explainable on the basis of the principle that what one sees in the astral world depends upon what one pays attention to, and what one is prepared and able to receive.

Chapter 17

THE OUTCOME OF THE DEBATE

BOTH sides in the debate about survival have now been presented. A summing up is in order.

I. THE BASIC CASE FOR SURVIVAL SUMS UP THIS

The evidence on which the survivalist case is most strongly supported is two-fold: namely, (1) that received through mediums; and (2) that provided by apparitions.

The mediumistic evidence has been summed up in Chapters 5, 6, and 7

1. Through a number of mediums who have been shown to be above any reasonable suspicion of fraud, information not known at the time by any living human being has been communicated. This information has been transmitted along with the kind of evidence of personal identity which we ordinarily accept in our interactions with our friends who are visibly embodied.
2. From his researches with Mrs. Leonard during a third of a century, Drayton Thomas produced systematic and verified evidence which is strikingly consistent with the spiritistic hypothesis, but which has never been adequately explained in any other terms.
3. The cross-correspondences have satisfied many critical investigators that purposeful action on the part of deceased scholars has been at work to produce convincing evidence of survival which cannot be explained away as due merely to telepathy from the living.

The apparitional evidence is summed up in Chapters 10, 11, and 12

From these chapters the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. ESP projection cases show that apparitions of the living have served as vehicles through which the consciousnesses of living persons have observed and acted verifiably in places more or less distant from the locations of the physical bodies of the appearers.

2. These conscious apparitions of the living have been proved to be essentially identical in character with apparitions of the dead.
3. Apparitions of the dead, like those of the living, frequently give evidence of active concern for their loved ones on earth.
4. Survivalists believe that the only rational and adequate interpretation of the above facts is that human personality does survive bodily death.

To grasp the full import of the above two types of evidence, it is necessary to study with some care the chapters in which they are summarized. Industrious scholars, eager to satisfy themselves as to the true facts, will want to go back of these chapters to the sources from which they were drawn.

But in this concluding chapter we are concerned to face—also, with the utmost frankness and thoroughness, the most effective objections and counter-evidence which have been advanced by those who do not accept the survivalist position.

II. THE ANTI-SURVIVAL CASE MAY BE SUMMED UP THUS AGAINST THE MEDIUMISTIC CASE, THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS ARE OUTSTANDING

1. *Most mediumistic 'messages' are valueless as evidence*

The crucial arguments on this point may be summed up thus:

Most mediumistic utterances are of such a feeble and confused character that no really intelligent and well-informed person would claim them as giving verifiable evidence of survival.

Many apparently evidential messages are produced by sheer fraud.

Many of the messages claimed as evidential are of the elastic type, applicable to so many different sitters that any claimed hits can readily be explained as being due to chance.

In various cases there have developed, in mediumistic seances, fictitious spirit personalities, having the same lifelike character, and the same ability to assemble highly evidential facts and realistic personality patterns such as believers in survival claim as evidence when supposed personalities of the dead communicate.

The 'spirit controls' of outstanding mediums have been shown to be secondary personalities, built up around ideas and tendencies

repressed by the medium. Yet the 'communicating spirits' claim such controls to be genuine, independent, surviving spirits. In various cultures other than ours, mediumistic communications have been reported, quite similar in character to those claimed in our culture as evidence of survival; yet these similar communications made no claim to have had spiritistic sources.

2. Veridical messages can be explained away by super-ESP

J. B. Rhine put this argument in a nutshell when he said (as quoted in our Chapter 9):

'There is nothing as yet on record from the studies of mediumship that cannot be explained by the sort of "omnibus hypothesis" into which we have expanded the old counter-hypothesis of telepathy.'

AGAINST THE APPARITIONAL CASE THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS ARE OUTSTANDING

1. West and Flew challenge spontaneous cases in general

While a few apparitions have been produced by semi-experimental methods, the great bulk of the evidence consists in spontaneous instances. Dr. D. J. West in 1948, and Professor Antony Flew in 1953, have been outstanding among those who challenge the validity of such cases.

Four broad kinds of spontaneous cases have a bearing on the survival debate:

- (1) Apparitions of the living, the dying, and the dead, including bedside apparitions seen by the dying, and apparitional forms perceived as leaving the bodies of dying persons;
- (2) ESP-projection cases;
- (3) Precognitive dreams and other types of precognitive spontaneous phenomena; and
- (4) Other types of spontaneous cases having a bearing on survival (such as monitions, clairaudient experiences, spontaneous physical phenomena coinciding with deaths, and the like).

Some of these categories will be dealt with in more detail below. But West, Flew and others have pointed out that *all types of spontaneous cases have certain major weaknesses*.

Because of the very fact that such cases are spontaneous, trained

observers are rarely present, and if by any chance they should be present, the), are not often prepared to make accurate observations. Most persons who report having had Psychical experiences have little knowledge of the steps which need to be taken to record the facts accurately and to avoid mis-statements. Even when such observers are competent to make proper records, they are usually so startled or emotionally upset that they fail to record the experience properly.

Psychoanalysis, and other forms of modern psychotherapy have brought to light the previously unrealized extent to which the behaviour of all human beings, most of the time, is influenced by their unconscious emotional needs. Sceptics about survival argue that most if not all Psychical phenomena may be produced by the unconscious of the percipient in response to the percipient's craving for comfort in bereavement, for having marvellous experiences, for attracting attention by telling astonishing stories, for rationalizations of religious beliefs, to show superiority by deceiving or misleading other persons, to punish oneself in one way or another—or the like. Psychotherapists generally interpret all dreams as having emotional roots of this sort. This would apply therefore to so-called veridical dreams. But it applies also to apparitions and to the other forms of spontaneous phenomena.

Not only the spontaneous experience itself (such as seeing an apparition or having a 'precognitive' dream) but also the recollection of the experience, the alleged observation of verifying phenomena, and the writing or telling of the experience, all are subject to distortions by these unconscious emotional tensions.

2. Super-ESP applies also to spontaneous cases

The preceding explanations would nullify many spontaneous cases. But wherever extrasensory information is actually conveyed by well-authenticated spontaneous experiences, the disbeliever explains all such by super-ESP.

3. Mrs. Rhine and others challenge apparitional evidence in particular

That all apparitions are hallucinations, produced by the unconscious minds of the percipients in response to emotional needs, is the anti-survivalist position. The unconscious minds of living persons may participate in the creation of those hallucinations, but why assume participation by the dead? As an explanation of veridical details of apparitions, super-ESP may be used.

Of major importance to the survivalist argument are collectively perceived veridical cases. But the reports of such cases are subject to the weaknesses of spontaneous cases which have been pointed out in a previous section. Where collective perception has been alleged, the case records rarely, if ever, contain any evidence that the various witnesses have been carefully cross-examined as to whether they did actually perceive the apparition, and, if so, whether their perception of it corresponded in detail with what other percipients thought they perceived. Much less do these accounts go into detail as to whether the apparition is seen in correct perspective by the various percipients. In the rare cases where such details are given, the accounts are likely to be written up long after the event.

Even supposing that all the above difficulties have been excluded in connexion with a given case of an apparition collectively perceived, it is well known that collective hallucinations are produced frequently by suggestion from one percipient to another. Unless this possibility is ruled out, no collective case has a claim for psychical researchers.

Furthermore, even if the record of the case appears to exclude all the above difficulties, we still have no adequate protection against the tendency of many people to make their own account of such an experience agree with what is stated or demanded by the main percipient and by the investigator, if those persons happen to be aggressive and powerful in their suggestions.

PRECOGNITION DOES NOT SUPPORT SURVIVAL

All the defects pointed out with respect to spontaneous cases in general, apply to alleged precognitive dreams and to other spontaneous precognitive phenomena. 'Precognitive' cases, filed in advance with the SPR, failed completely to be confirmed by subsequent actual events. This illustrates how unreliable such cases are apt to be.

The very best experimental evidence for precognition which has been presented by Soal, Rhine, and other parapsychologists can all be explained if one is sufficiently ingenious in pointing out the ways in which telepathy and clairvoyance could produce the allegedly precognitive results.

Granted the weaknesses of the spontaneous and experimental evidence for precognition, it must be conceded that since telepathy and clairvoyance have admittedly been demonstrated by comparable techniques, precognition also may be a genuine fact. But if a broad and

powerful type of precognition is recognized as an actual aspect of super-ESP, a counter hypothesis is thereby provided which would be exceedingly difficult if not impossible to eliminate. The reason is this: to become a veridical case in support of survival, any apparitional, mediumistic or other evidence must be verified after the occurrences of the apparition or of the mediumistic message. But if the medium, or the unconscious mind of the percipient, were assumed to have super-precognition as well as other forms of ESP, this verifying evidence could be known in detail in advance, and the apparition or message could be explained away as having been constructed to fit the precognitively known confirmation.

Even without precognition, super-ESP reminds one a little of the universal solvent. Chemists have often raised the intriguing question of what kind of a container could be provided for a universal solvent—since the solvent would of course dissolve any container. But how about super-ESP if super-precognition is added to super-telepathy and super-clairvoyance?

CONSCIOUSNESS DEPENDS UPON THE PHYSICAL BRAIN

Modern psychology tends to regard the conscious aspect of personality as simply one phase of an indissoluble complex of mind and body. Before the medullary sheaths of the cortical neurones are formed, the consciousness is of necessity babyish, when the cortical circuits become clogged with the products of the aging process the consciousness becomes senile, incoherent, and in more extreme cases psychotic. Decrease the sugar content of the blood in the brain, and panic ensues. Increase it beyond the danger point, and consciousness temporarily or permanently shocks out of existence. Let a little alcohol get into the brain or bloodstream, and the personality loses self-discipline, babbles, becomes irrationally aggressive, and ends in stupor. Stimulate suitably selected neurones in the brain with an electric current, and suddenly long-past events become realistically present once more. If a tumour or an injury destroys the functioning of certain parts of the brain, memory, or the power of speech, or the power to reason clearly, disappears. Cut a certain nerve connexion in the brain by slipping a long knife in through a hole in the skull, and the raving maniac becomes a mild and pliant creature.

What, then, happens when the brain is destroyed by physical death? The anti-survivalist holds that the answer is obvious:

destroy the brain and the personality is destroyed. Physical death is the end.

THE ANTI-SURVIVALIST MIGHT SUM UP THUS:

1. The bulk of mediumistic messages are bunk.
2. Any veridical mediumistic messages can be explained by super-ESP.
3. Spontaneous cases have major weaknesses which destroy their cogency as evidence for survival.
4. All apparitions are hallucinations, produced by the unconscious minds of the percipients, with the aid of super-ESP, in response to emotional needs.
5. If precognition is real (which the sceptic is likely to hold doubtful) it provides an anti-survivalist argument.
6. The intimate dependence of consciousness on brain structures, brain activities, and brain chemistry makes survival incredible.

III. THE WILL TO BELIEVE (OR TO DISBELIEVE) IS USUALLY DECISIVE

in the preceding section, I have tried to state the anti-survivalist position as effectively and convincingly as the available evidence and the thinking of the leading anti-survivalists permit.

The anti-survivalist case has, however, major weaknesses. In a concluding section I shall endeavour to present the rebuttal arguments as clearly, dispassionately, and fairly as possible.

But, before taking up the detailed rebuttal, let us examine one fundamental fact, as a background for the entire discussion.

We must deal with probabilities, not certainties

Outside of pure mathematics and pure logic, no absolute and conclusive proof of anything is possible. Science can reach increasingly strong probabilities. But even in dealing with material objects in the laboratory we can achieve only probabilities, not certainties. That this is true in psychical research is agreed by all who are competent and well-informed in the field.

An aggressive sceptic can destroy his own faith in anything or anybody

If a sceptic resolutely examines any account of any human experience with a determination to find it false, it would seem to be always

possible to develop some sort of theory—however far-fetched—under which the account in question might prove to be spurious. Let us see what would happen (for example) if the average contented husband were to take with regard to his wife's character the attitude which aggressive sceptics take towards the question of survival.

Let us suppose that this imaginary husband demanded overwhelming proof with regard to the honesty, integrity, and sincerity of every item of his wife's behaviour. Suppose that he required her to provide conclusive proof that she had not flirted with the milkman, that her visit to help a neighbour had not actually been an illicit liaison with the neighbour's husband, that she actually had spent the amount for groceries which she asked him to reimburse her for, and had not actually used part of the money for secret purposes of her own. Suppose that she is required to prove that her smile when she encountered her former college boy friend was merely friendly interest, not ardent devotion. Suppose that she had to prove that none of her letters contained malicious gossip against her husband.

And so we might go on supposing with regard to her treatment of the children, her overdraft at the bank, her conversation with the minister—and so on and so on. Now if the husband insists in each of these items upon taking the most unfavourable interpretation of his wife's behaviour—if he insists upon believing everything unfavourable which his wife cannot disprove—then **that marriage is, to a high degree of probability, destined for the divorce court.**

If one insists on applying this same sort of aggressive scepticism to everything which anyone tells him, and if he insists that everything which is conceivably false must be necessarily false, he can succeed in destroying his own faith in his spouse, in his closest friends, and in any fellow human being whomsoever.

Let me state the general principle of which the above imaginary case is a mere illustration: **anyone who allows the will to believe, or to disbelieve, to dominate his decisions destroys thereby his capacity to arrive at what is actually the most probable truth on the question at hand.** The extent to which the critic will resort to such methods will depend upon how important it may be to him to escape from the acceptance of Psychical phenomena and from the arduous reorganization of his own philosophy of life which should logically be called for if such evidence is accepted.

The true scientist seeks to free himself from this sort of wishful distortion. Indeed, much of our scientific technique consists in devices

whereby the scientist may guard himself against his own prejudices and biases. Only by really open-minded searching of the probabilities in the light of all the available facts can we reach the conclusion which is most likely to be true.

To refuse to consider significant evidence is a form of self-deception

One of the weaknesses of Psychical research has been the tendency of even the most careful students to select certain types of evidence, and to generalize on the basis of these without taking into account various other kinds of facts which have decisive bearings on the question at hand. The general public, for example, is prone to concentrate its attention on the fraud and self-deception which most students find to be more or less prevalent in spiritualism, and to focus attention also on the credulous and superstitious character of many ghost stories and accounts of other alleged Psychical phenomena. People who accept these fraudulent and superstitious features as characteristic of all psychical research, refusing to admit—or even failing to realize—the existence of genuine psychical phenomena, develop a repugnance for the entire subject, and thereby debar themselves from a realistic and promising search for the truth about survival.

But you are prepared to look at both sides fairly and honestly—otherwise you would not have read far in *The Enigma*. Here, then, are:

IV. THE SURVIVAL REBUTTALS

THE BEST MEDIUMISTIC EVIDENCE CONFIRMS SURVIVAL

One of the strongest arguments of the anti-survivalists is the fact that pseudo spirit-personalities have appeared in the trances of such mediums as Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Cooper, and that they have been strikingly similar to the trance personalities which believers have accepted as authentic survivors beyond bodily death. In Chapter 13 a theory has been presented which, it is believed, meets this objection in full. A brief resume of that theory is as follows:

The persona theory meets the basic objection

What happens in a mediumistic seance is the development of a persona—a personality structure created dramatically out of available

material. The unconscious mind of the medium readily dramatizes such personas under the suggestive guidance of the sitter's unconscious mind—or of the communicating spirit. The truthful details of the persona may be provided by super-ESP from earth sources—or they may be provided by communication with the surviving spirit represented by the persona.

The occasional emergence of pseudo spirit-personalities through certain mediums no more disproves the reality of conscious spirit communication through genuine personas than does the appearance of purely fictional characters in some books disprove the reality of actual historical characters in other books. The test of the genuineness of a given spirit persona must be the quality of the communications which that persona transmits.

Not long ago newspapers carried the story of a man who for years had posed as a doctor and surgeon. He had treated hundreds of patients and had performed scores of operations. Innumerable people had been deceived by his impersonation. If we follow the logic of the antisurvivalists we should deduce from this case of a pseudo doctor that all doctors are frauds. But that would be a highly irrational conclusion. The test of the genuineness of a professed doctor consists in his ability to present verifiable evidence of his having had the required training, and having passed the required examinations. He should also be tested in terms of the quality of the service which he renders to his patients.

Similarly, personas presenting themselves through mediumistic seances are to be tested for their genuineness in terms of the extent and degree to which they convey memories, qualities and purposes known to be genuinely characteristic of the deceased persons whose spirits are claimed to be communicating through them. These are the kinds of tests which psychical researchers have been applying.

Drayton Thomas's study of direct-voice phenomena in the Leonard sittings is fairly conclusive

Here is an inductive study based upon years of careful recording, analysis, and classification of data. Mr. Thomas showed that the occurrence of these words, phrases and sentences, which at least seemed to the sitters to be whispered in direct-voice from points out in front of the medium, is consistent with the spiritistic hypothesis and with no other. The details have been presented in Chapter 6. The

sceptic should go back to Mr. Thomas's original study, and should examine it with searching criticism—but also with open-minded scientific curiosity.

Drayton Thomas's other studies give evidence of creative purposiveness on the part of his communicators

The details of the evidence which he presented have already been summarized in earlier chapters of this book. His original studies deserve to be examined searchingly by open-minded seekers of the truth about survival. His word-association tests, book tests, and newspaper tests all point to the purposiveness of his communicators. His brilliant analysis of predictive communications points to the same conclusion.

The cross-correspondences give evidence of survival

Only with extreme difficulty can the cross-correspondences be explained away as having resulted from the fabrications of physically embodied minds. In the light of other data, the cross-correspondences provide persuasive evidence, not only of the survival of the personalities represented, but of their continuing alert intelligence, and of their persistent purposiveness in demonstrating their continued existence in ways not explicable by even super-ESP.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM SPIRITS ARE NOT PECULIAR TO OUR CULTURE

Seeking contacts with the dead through mediums has been a world-wide, age-old phenomenon

Gardner Murphy and others have suggested that the giving of 'spirit messages' by mediums is a peculiar phenomenon which has grown up in our culture. But James Thayer Addison, in his comprehensive study of *Life Beyond Death in the Beliefs of Mankind*, reported in 1933 that spirit-message seeking has been well-nigh universal among the peoples of the earth. He wrote:

'In records of ancient Babylonia which cite the various orders of priests are listed "the inquirer of the dead" and "he who raises the spirits of the dead". In Gabun today the fetish doctor calls up the spirits by the sound of his little bell, interprets to them the requests of the living, and returns with the revelation of their consent or

refusal. A similar type of medicine-man now serves among the Maoris of New Zealand and the Pelew Islanders, for when he goes into a trance the ghosts can speak through him with a low whistling sound. Wang Ch'ung, the clever sceptic of first-century China, had been watching just such a ceremony when he wrote: "Among men the dead speak through living persons whom they throw into a trance, and the wizards thrumming their black chords, call down souls of the dead, who can then speak through the mouths of the wizards." In China the medium is usually an old woman who covers her face with a cloth, calls up the soul desired, and mutters in an inarticulate tone. And the relatives will try to learn from her some answer to their eager questions.... With a like purpose the peasants of Brittany and of Pomerania will cluster about their aged mediums, no different in their hopes and fears from the ancient Romans or the modern spiritualists of London and New York.

But most famous of all the characters who have talked with the dead are King Saul and Odysseus....'*

Spiritistic phenomena also have been paralleled in other cultures and other ages

Apparitions, veridical dreams, and various other types of psychic phenomena, as well as purported mediumistic communications with the dead, have been reported independently from various diverse cultures from all major epochs of history, and from various parts of the world. In reply to Dodds's query as to 'why during two and a half millenia...have spirits failed to produce satisfactory evidence of their identity', Abdy Collins said in 1940:

'The early Christian church more closely resembled what would now be called spiritualistic groups rather than the present organization and form of worship.... Mr. Arthur Findlay's *Psychic Stream* seems conclusive on this point. Anyhow, chapters XII and XIV of the first Epistle to the Corinthians bear out what I say....

In the Chinese records from well over 2,000 years ago, the most abundant evidence will be found.... *Psychic Phenomena in China...* by Prof. H. A. Giles (1908) gives an idea of the mass of information about the practice of spiritualism and its ritual in the various Chinese encyclopedias. Confucius was asked questions about spirits by his disciples....

* From Addison, James Thayer, *Life Beyond Death in the Beliefs of Mankind*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958.

[Such works] show that throughout the historical period and even earlier, seekers devoted their attention to spirits and their activities, and believed that they were able to communicate their desires to the living....

Cicero tells us the story of the discovery of a murderer, as the result of the murdered man appearing to his friend in a dream. He himself might well be described as a spiritualist, if we are to judge from his treatise *De Devinatione*....

Shakespeare has several ghosts in his plays, e.g., that of Banquo in *Macbeth*; of Caesar, who appeared to Brutus before Philippi, and of Hamlet's father, to name three only. All of them are clearly recognized and two of them speak. Hamlet, at any rate, was convinced of his father's identity....

Professor Dodds does not deny that in the Middle Ages the belief in the power of the dead to return in certain circumstances was general. Surely this is remarkable in view of the all-powerful churches' belief in a sleep till the Resurrection....

The idea that dead persons did appear and held conversations after death seems always to have been prevalent.'

The above section has summarized the major rebuttals which meet the anti-survivalists' and sceptics' arguments against the mediumistic evidence. We now turn to the arguments relating to apparitions. First to be considered here are the objections which have been raised relative to reports of spontaneous cases.

VALIDATED APPARITIONAL CASES SUPPORT SURVIVAL

The objections raised by sceptics relative to the acceptance of apparitional cases as evidence of survival have been met squarely and conclusively. The following evidence was published in 1956, in the collaborative study on 'Six Theories About Apparitions', and (as far as I have been able to discover) no published refutation of this evidence has even been attempted.

A validated rating scale has been established

The best techniques for insuring the evidentiality of spontaneous cases were reviewed, and reduced to quantitative terms. In order to rate high on this scale a case must have been recorded before the verifying evidence was obtained; competent witnesses must have been

cross-examined by competent investigators, and a complete report must have been filed promptly. The resulting rating process was applied to 288 published cases of purported ESP projection. The reliability of these ratings was tested by the standard techniques employed in the use of psychological test measurements, and was found to be very high. Later, the rating process thus developed was applied to each of 165 apparitional cases.

Many spontaneous cases have practically perfect authentication

When the above tests are applied rigorously, a good many cases approach very closely—and even reach—the highest level of evidence. This small group of splendidly evidential cases might, in themselves, be sufficient to give strong support to the survival hypothesis. But what about the cases which lack full evidence?

Inadequacy of evidence does not prove a case to be spurious

Scientific psychical researchers are certainly justified in demanding the best available verification for alleged cases of psychical phenomena. The very essence of the scientific method requires that offered evidence be examined with strenuous criticism. But a good deal of the anti-survivalist discussion of recent years appears to assume that if detailed verification is lacking, the case must necessarily be spurious. Such an assumption is obviously fallacious. The capacity and the opportunity to make satisfactory records and to obtain adequate supporting testimony with regard to specific psychical occurrences is relatively rare. The well-evidenced cases point towards the reality of such phenomena. But if they *are* real, then they must be occurring to a great many individuals and under a great many circumstances where satisfactory evidence cannot be prepared and published. Once the persuasiveness of the well-evidenced cases is conceded, the argument for the reality of psychic phenomena becomes very much more powerful in the light of the immense body of inadequately evidenced but apparently sincere reports.

These cases are not vitiated by poor evidentiality

The theory of the critics has been that cases which are not recorded with the full evidential safeguards set up by the Society for Psychical Research, and embodied in the rating scale of our study, are bound to be distorted, exaggerated, sensationalized, and otherwise made quite untrustworthy. A rigorous statistical procedure for testing that

theory was applied to these 165 cases. It was found that no significant relationship appeared between the level of evidential recording and the traits of the apparitional cases in this collection. The objections of the sceptics in this area have thus been met by scientific techniques, and their failure to reply would seem to imply that they have no convincing refutation to offer.

The ESP projection cases show that apparitions can be vehicles of conscious personalities

The fact that various individuals who were perceived as apparitions at long distances from their physical bodies remembered the experience afterwards and were able to provide corroborative evidence which fitted in with and verified the experiences reported by those who perceived the apparitions, shows that (at least in such cases) an apparition *can* be a vehicle in and through which a conscious personality observes, and through which it acts.

Apparitions of the dead can also be vehicles of surviving personalities

The question of whether apparitions of the dead, apparitions of the dying, and apparitions of the living are radically different types of phenomena was first studied in qualitative terms. The three types were found to be similar in their essential characteristics. When this conclusion was challenged by the sceptics, the comparison was made in the most rigorous terms, and was tested by standard statistical techniques. The results confirmed and greatly strengthened the previous conclusions as to the similarity between conscious apparitions of the living and apparitions of the dead and the dying. Thus, the study of apparitional cases by itself established, to a highly satisfactory degree of probability, the conclusion that human personalities do survive bodily death. The anti-survivalists have not accepted these conclusions—but they have offered no significant refutation of them.

CONSCIOUSNESS CAN FUNCTION APART FROM THE BRAIN

The brain is a transmitting instrument

Anti-survivalists and doubters who point out the close parallels between mental states and brain conditions present an argument which is quite persuasive so long as attention is confined to the parallels between brain and consciousness. But those who seek to push this argument keep ignoring the large and growing body of evidence

which shows that the brain is an instrument through which consciousness operates rather than a generator which produces consciousness, or an inseparable aspect of a psychosomatic unity. Details about this fallacy on the part of the anti-survivalists have been developed in Chapter 14.

ESP projection nullifies the objection

The theory that consciousness is inseparable from brain structure, and from the electrochemical bodily processes, is inconsistent with the facts of ESP projection. The well-authenticated cases of this sort which have been referred to in Chapters 10, and 12 of this book, and in the sources cited there, demonstrate the fact that the essential core of personal consciousness can observe and act at long distances away from the brain. The fact that the essential observer-operator can function through an apparition observed verifiably at a distance, combined with the fact that such conscious apparitions of the living are essentially identical in character with apparitions of the dead, shows that the dependence of consciousness on brain structure is merely a theoretical difficulty which fails to be substantiated when checked against actually observed data.

THE CUMULATIVE EVIDENCE BECOMES HIGHLY PERSUASIVE

The mediumistic and apparitional evidences confirm one another

The evidence of survival which can be derived from the study of apparitions seems to the present writer to be highly persuasive. Reasons for that conclusion are set forth in detail in 'Six Theories About Apparitions'. Even if the apparitional evidence stood alone, the case for survival would be strong.

But when apparitional evidence is studied in relation to the best mediumistic evidences, the result is to produce a highly consistent and reinforcing demonstration of the reality of life beyond death.

The evidence must be considered as a whole

To attack a strong case, the skilled sceptic breaks it up into fragments, concentrates on raising doubts about isolated aspects of it, and ignores or seeks to deflect attention from the cumulative effect of the evidence as a whole. But the open-minded seeker of truth needs to examine the total picture. He needs to study the ways in which the various types of evidence fit together. Granting the difficulties, and the

possible doubts about individual items, the sincere truth-seeker endeavours to appraise the case as a whole. When that is done, the probability of survival is powerfully supported.

SUMMARY OF REBUTTALS

Five major points have been offered in rebuttal to the anti-survivalist case. These points may be summed up briefly as follows:

1. **The best mediumistic evidence supports survival.** The persona theory meets the objections about pseudo spirit personalities. The direct-voice phenomena in the Leonard sittings provide fairly conclusive evidence. Both Drayton Thomas's various studies and the cross-correspondence cases give evidence of creative purposiveness on the part of the communicators.
2. **Many spontaneous cases have practically perfect authentication,** and statistical analysis shows that even those less perfectly documented carry powerful evidential weight.
3. Validated apparitional cases confirm survival. ESP projection cases show that apparitions can be vehicles of conscious personalities, and the similarities between the various types show that apparitions of the dead can be vehicles of surviving personalities.
4. That **the brain is a transmitting instrument rather than the generator of personal consciousness** is becoming clearer from recent evidence, and the facts of ESP projection nullify the psychosomatic objection.
5. The cumulative evidence becomes highly persuasive. The mediumistic and apparitional evidences confirm one another, and the evidence must be considered as a whole.

V. CONCLUSION

The strongest case against survival which can be derived from presently published sources has been set forth throughout this book, and has been summarized earlier in this chapter. The author has endeavoured strenuously to make corrections for his own attitude, by inviting the most outstanding anti-survivalists to suggest ways in which their case might be stated most effectively and adequately. Every usable suggestion to that end has been incorporated.

The strongest rebuttals available in refutation of the anti-survivalist case have also been assembled. These have been submitted to persons

favouring that point of view with a request for their assistance in strengthening that side of the argument.

We have here, therefore, the strongest available statements of both sides of the argument.

My own conclusion is this:

Human personality *does* survive bodily death. That is the outcome which I find emerging when the strongest anti-survivalist arguments and the strongest rebuttals are considered thoroughly, with dispassionate open-mindedness. But—

Your own conclusions will be the crucially important harvest

No matter how deeply convinced I, as the author of this book, may feel, after my search for the full evidence on both sides of the survival question, my own conclusions are not the really significant outcome. Quite sincerely, I am *not* primarily concerned with winning you over to my own personal decision. Far more important, as an ultimate product of this study, should be the stimulation of innumerable readers to weigh the evidence, to seek with all sincerity to free themselves from preliminary prejudices, and to reach their own conclusions in the light of the evidence. You are the jury. **Having formed your own honest and adequately informed judgment, you will thereafter be in a position to proceed with fuller knowledge and with well-earned assurance.**

LIST OF SOURCES

Abbreviations

ASPR: American Society for Psychical Research BSPR: Boston Society for Psychical Research

BUL BSPR: Bulletin of the Boston Society for Psychical Research J ANIM BEHAV: Journal of Animal Behaviour

JASPR: Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research J CONSUL PSYCH: Journal of Consulting Psychology

JSPR: Journal of the Society for Psychical Research n.d.: No date Q J SCI: Quarterly Journal of Science

PROC ARISTO: Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society PSYCH BUL: Psychological Bulletin PSYCH REV: Psychological Review PSPR: Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research tr.: Translated

The city of publication and the name of the publisher are given only for books published since 1950. Persons desiring to locate books are advised to consult the libraries of the American and London societies for psychical research, the library of the Parapsychology Foundation, or that of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. The John William Graham collection in the Brown University Library in Providence, R.I., contains over 500 books on psychic subjects. The First Spiritual Temple of Boston also has an extensive library of Psychical books. The Library of Congress, the British Museum, and other large libraries may be useful.

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