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Founded by Leslie Price

Edited by  
Paul J. Gaunt

Archived by  
Garth Willey



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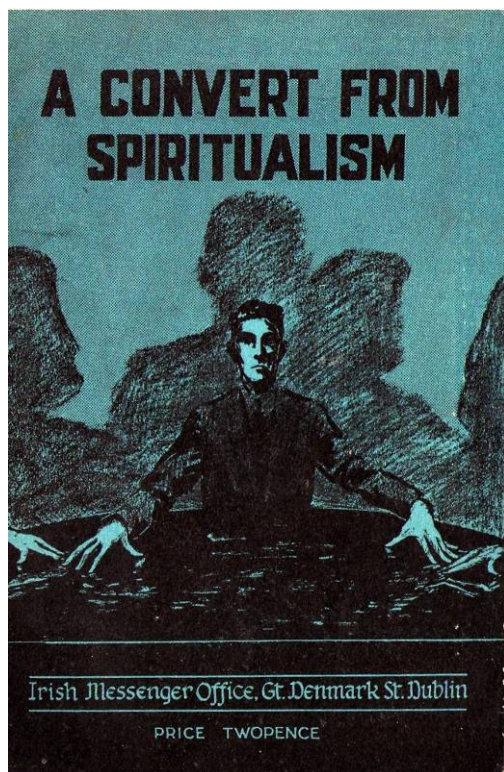
# A Convert from Spiritualism

J. GODFREY RAUPERT, K.S.G.

BY REV. GREGORY RAUPERT, O.P.<sup>1</sup>

**Note by LP:**—When Conan Doyle wrote a book expounding Spiritualism, Godfrey Raupert wrote a reply; and sometimes when ACD lectured for Spiritualism in the States, Raupert lectured against. As information about Raupert is not easily found, we are reprinting a booklet written by his son and published by the Irish Messenger Office in Dublin, 1932.

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SO MANY ACCOUNTS have been written of Convert Clergymen that it might seem a little presumptuous to expect people to read yet another. Nor would the writer have dreamt of producing this short account but for the fact that its subject is one, who, though unknown to many of the present generation of Catholics is, nevertheless, affectionately remembered by a very great number of friends and admirers. One feature, however, does mark him out as a convert in a very special sense, namely, his having severed his connection with all those Spiritualistic practices in which he was at one time of his life so keenly interested.

## Boyhood.

The son of a family of six, four boys and two girls, my father, Godfrey Raupert, K.S.G., was born in Stettin, a town in the North of Germany, on the 29th of September, 1859. His childhood and boyhood were very much the same as are those of any ordinary German boy. He received the discipline and home training customary in Germany at the time, viz., strict yet tempered with kindness and consideration and deep-seated affection. As an instance of this union of strictness and kindness he never forgot how evening by evening his mother would insist on his preparing very carefully his tedious home lessons set by the schoolmaster, and yet how every now and again, when she saw that the work was a little more than she considered good for his health, she would quietly take away his books and send him to bed not forgetting next morning to give him a note of “explanation” to be conveyed to the teacher. One of the many *real* “home” lessons he learnt in his boyhood was that of being accurate in

<sup>1</sup> Taken from;—*A Convert from Spiritualism*, Irish Messenger Office, Gt. Demark St, Dublin. Price Twopence, 1932. All references are taken from the booklet, unless initialed by LP.

his speech. None, perhaps, know better than parents, teachers, and priests how apt children are to mutter meaningless sentences, and to ask questions in the worst possible grammar. This sort of thing my father was never allowed to do. "Hans,"<sup>2</sup> his mother would say to him, "repeat that sentence over again, slowly and distinctly." And Hans would have to obey. Another "home" lesson was that of not jumping to conclusions. "Look before you leap" (an expression for which there is no German equivalent) was another principle ever inculcated by a wise father and mother. Thus, it chanced that on one particular Christmas Day when the presents seemed few and cheap the four boys were about to withdraw, disappointed. "Wait a bit," said the father, "look on the *top* of the Christmas tree." They looked—only to see four silver watches hanging upon it! Last but not least my father learnt more by his mother's example than by her admonitions, to be methodical. As a result, throughout his life he disliked untidiness in any shape or form, a characteristic which may well account for this very logical mind with which he has always been credited.

### **Anglican Clergyman.**

After leaving College my father went for a course of studies to the University of Leipsig. There he remained until he was 19 years of age, then feeling a taste for journalism he came to London in order to be in close touch with the British Museum Library. A staunch Anglican of the Evangelical type he devoted his leisure time to the work of Lay Helper at the church which he regularly attended. But the Rector, perceiving his abilities, urged him to take Anglican Orders, which he did in 1887. It is somewhat significant that he had not been ordained five years before he began to feel unsettled in his mind as to the doctrines he was supposed to believe and teach. This will be evident to anyone who cares to read what might well be called his "Apologia," viz., *Ten Years in Anglican Orders*.<sup>3</sup> Happily for him he did not allow this state of uncertainty to go on indefinitely. The time came when, like so many others before and after him, he could no longer continue to teach doctrines and administer Sacraments in which he had ceased to believe, when his mind could no longer be satisfied with ambiguity and contradictions. To make the sacrifice, however, was, as every convert clergyman knows but too well, no easy task. The consequence was that for some time he shelved the matter.

### **Spiritism.**

Meanwhile, he became deeply interested in the subject which was later on to become his life long study, viz., Spiritism (or Spiritualism). Far from being a mere amateur at this he became a member of Psychical Research Society, a circumstance which enabled him to be present at a number of séances held by notable and well-credited mediums. Though never himself a medium he also took part in experiments made by his own personal friends, whose integrity he had proved to be above suspicion. Consequently, he had exceptional opportunities of making a careful study of the subject, which, of course, he would not have

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<sup>2</sup> Hans, the short for Johannes or John was the name by which my father was known in the family circle.

<sup>3</sup> This book is out of print; but it can be borrowed by subscribers to the C.T.S. Library. It bears the *nom de plume* "Victor," and on account of its extreme lucidity and style has not infrequently been attributed to Cardinal Newman himself. [Published by Catholic Truth Society, 1897—the pseudonym is actually Viator. LP]

met with had he been a Catholic at the time. Curiously enough his experimenting in Spiritism had one good effect, viz., that of hastening his taking the final step into the Church, a proof of what we know so well, viz. that though it is never lawful to do evil (or what one even suspects to be evil) that good may come, God can and often does bring much good out of much evil.

For imagining as he did, that he was really in communication with the Dead, and having received messages which purported to come from souls in need of prayers, he was led to believe in the extreme likelihood of a Purgatory. The upshot of it all was, that after a course of instructions he was received into the Church by the late Cardinal Vaughan in the year 1894. Conversion from Anglicanism meant, of course, the total renunciation of Spiritistic practices in every shape and form. But the total renunciation of Spiritism did not mean that he was to take no further interest in the subject. On the contrary, his continual investigations of the phenomena having led him to see the pernicious character of Spiritism and the appalling dangers resulting from it, he was determined to fight with voice and pen this monster of iniquity.

### **Catholicism.**

He would issue a warning to unwary souls to refrain from opening a door which is not so easily closed by tampering with the Unseen through unlawful means. This warning began with a book, which, thanks be to God has, through the sheer terror it has inspired, been the means of turning away from their folly many experimentalists in Spiritism who otherwise might have continued with it to their own physical and moral ruin. It is called *The Dangers of Spiritualism*, and is a book which, besides relating many terrific experiences, all of a personal nature, contains several interesting and well authenticated "Spirit photographs." The "Dangers" was soon followed up by *Modern Spiritism*, a more scientific than popular treatise on the subject in question. It was about this time, too, that my father became acquainted with the Rev. Father Lépiciér, now Cardinal Lépiciér, a Religious of the Servite Order. This Priest wrote a book called *The Unseen World*,<sup>4</sup> which he handed over to him with a request to revise it. His Eminence has since brought out a new and up-to-date edition of this very excellent work. But it will be seen from a mere perusal of this book that my father's authority is several times quoted in support of various statements by the eminent author.

In about the year 1895, soon after the reception into the Church, my father had the privilege of a private audience with Pope Leo XIII, to whom he presented a handsomely bound copy of his book *Ten Years in Anglican Orders*, above referred to.

For the next few years my father set himself to work still harder with "voice and pen," against this fast prevailing evil of Spiritism. He worked with *voice* giving lectures in some of the Catholic colleges of England, such as Ushaw, Oscott and St. Edmund's; private lectures in the houses of notable Catholic families, and one public lecture in the Bechstein Hall, London, with Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J., in the Chair. He worked with his *pen*: for

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<sup>4</sup> Alexis Henry Mary Lépiciér "*The Unseen World, an exposition of Catholic theology in its relation to modern spiritism*" Kegan Paul, 1906. Revised edition, Sheed & Ward, 1929. LP

seeing the need of a short, compendious and inexpensive treatise of the whole subject he produced a pamphlet called *Spiritistic Phenomena and Its interpretation*. This booklet is practically a summary of *The Dangers of Spiritualism, Modern Spiritism*, and of all his lectures.

In 1897 he was admitted to another private Papal Audience, this time with the saintly Pius X. The Pope gave him an autograph letter, authorizing him to continue his work of lecturing against Spiritism, and of warning people against the dangers connected with its practices.

### **A Lecturing Tour.**

Soon after this interview he made a tour through Australia, New Zealand, and North and South America, for the purpose of lecturing on Spiritism. In 1911 he paid another visit to Pius X who on this occasion created him a Knight of St. Gregory in recognition of the services rendered by him to the Church. In 1911 he again left England for the "States," this time to give a course of lectures at all the Catholic seminaries, monasteries and convents. It is worthy of notice that so keen was the interest felt by the various educational institutions in America that on one occasion he was invited to lecture to a thousand nuns of a teaching Order.

It was about this time that he brought out what many of his friends have considered his best book: *The Supreme Problem*.<sup>5</sup> It saw both an American and an English edition.

The year 1914 found him in England again, there to remain this time, as he hoped, for good. But alas! the outbreak of the "Great War" made life in England impossible for him, as it did for so many of his nationality. Further, there seemed no hope of his being able to wield either the "voice or the pen," excellent as was his cause. No books would sell except "War books," and people were far too concerned with that terrible upheaval to listen to lectures on Spiritism. There seemed no alternative but to return to America.

Before leaving England however, he was able to produce a small pamphlet under a *nom de plume*<sup>6</sup> called *Why Germany will be Defeated*. This little work caused quite a sensation in some quarters, a circumstance which was doubtless due to the fact that instead of treating of the War from the only aspect which some thought worth considering, viz., the political and social, it dealt with it from the spiritual and psychological standpoint. Its object was to show (1) that a very large part of Germany had become greatly imbued with materialistic principles; and (2) that it was the upholding of these principles which for the most part accounted for Prussian Militarism and all its attendant evils.

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<sup>5</sup> "*Spiritistic Phenomena and their interpretation*" London, St. Anselm's Society, 1913(?). "*The Supreme Problem, an examination of historical Christianity from the standpoint of human life and experience and in the light of psychical phenomena.*" London, 1910. LP

<sup>6</sup> "A Prussian" – LP

## America.

Once in America he was able to find a footing again for the continuance of his anti-spiritistic campaign. He was welcomed with open arms by all his American friends who at once, employed him to lecture again. The publishers, too, were willing to give him sufficient guarantees for the sale of new books. The result was that he was able to bring out the following works: (1) *Hell and Its Problems*, often described as one of the most popular treatises on that very frightening subject; (2) *Jesus of Nazareth: Who was He?* (3) *Human Destiny and the New Psychology*; (4) *The New Black Magic*, a book which made a considerable stir as it was a direct refutation of Sir Conan Doyle's *New Revelation*, which had just then been published. For five years he toured practically the whole country, championing the good cause with "voice and pen," and by the year 1919 he was generally recognised as the best authority on the subject of Spiritism.

Spiritism has, alas, a strange fascination, especially for the curious; and so it can hardly be a matter of surprise that the many experiences my father had in the days when he himself tampered with the Unseen should have aroused such interest and enthusiasm. Many there are to-day who still remember the almost breathless excitement with which he would be listened to as he related some hair raising experience that had taken place in or out of the séance room. A few such incidents may be mentioned by way of illustration. But they will be better appreciated if I first set down briefly what were my father's views in regard to Spiritism as a whole.

## Views Regarding Spiritism.

He strongly held to the preternatural and objective character of the phenomena. By this I do not mean that he was not prepared to admit that a large percentage of them were due to fraud and trickery; nor again did he deny that *some* of them might be explained on natural grounds. But he did hold fast and maintain and never cease to proclaim that it was impossible to account for all the phenomena on such grounds, that some were unquestionably due to some agency wholly outside the medium, and indeed an evil agency. Needless to say he had no patience with those sceptics who believe in no phenomena for which they have not the evidence of their senses.

2. He persistently maintained that the evil agencies were not what they claimed to be, viz., the spirits of the departed; but on the contrary, that they were Fallen Spirits or Demons cleverly impersonating the Dead. This theory he based on the well-known axiom or dictum of St. Thomas Aquinas that the *anima separata* (the disembodied soul) has no power to move matter and, therefore, could not, devoid of its body, produce any of the phenomena of the seance room.

3. He stoutly adhered to the theory of the "Subconscious Mind" or "Subliminal self," namely, that the human mind is like a camera in which everything we see or hear is carefully stored up, and what is more to the point that this "thought box" is a door, in any case partially open to the spirit world, but which, unfortunately, can be completely opened,, thus allowing the spirits free entry; that the spirits then work upon the materials they find

therein, thus setting up maybe, a whole train of evil thoughts or scruples, that once this door has been flung open it is only with the greatest difficulty closed again. He also held that this “spirit invasion” (for that is what it amounts to) often resulted in nothing less than spirit obsession or even possession. I should also mention that while most of the experience I am about to relate occurred during the years in which he was actually experimenting in these occult practices, others belong to the period of his anti-spiritualistic campaign.

### **Some Experiences.**

1. *A case of the simple movement of an article of furniture without any natural aid.* At a private seance, a young man who had never been present at such a meeting before, and who had expressed himself sceptical, suddenly saw a table rise up from the floor, untouched by human hands, and advance towards him. The next moment it was pinning him fast against the wall! Needless to say he was no longer a sceptic!

2. *An incident to illustrate what is known to spiritists as the “Compenetration of bodies.”* (NOTE.—To understand in what sense this is possible to the Spirits see the very lucid explanation in *The Unseen World* by Cardinal Lépiciér, above referred to, page 84. Would that this otherwise learned and interesting book had been properly indexed!) A spirit control was requested to convey a meerschaum pipe, not alight, but still quite hot, through the wall into the next room. To the utter amazement of the sitters the pipe disappeared and was found lying on a table in the same condition, namely, quite hot.

3. *A case of testing whether the phenomena were due to independent spirit agencies.* On this occasion my father thought he would “try the spirits” by means of a little ruse. Dressing himself in muffler (for he was then still a Church of England clergyman) he went to a spiritualistic meeting, where he was certain he was totally unknown to any of the sitters, except the medium who was a personal friend of our family. I may mention by the way, that this medium was very reluctant to hold a séance at all. Very soon communication was established between the disguised clergyman and a “control.” The latter claimed to have been a lawyer in his “earth-bound” existence. A lengthy and somewhat vigorous discussion ensued on some Biblical matter of a controversial nature, the spirit proving himself to be fully competent to speak on such matters. As the argument proceeded my father found himself in (what we should call in modern slang) a “tight corner.” The spirit had *caught* him and he was obliged to say: “I really don’t know.” To the latter’s utter amazement the control said “Well *you* ought to know, being a clergyman!” Remember, kind reader, that no one present except the medium knew by any natural knowledge who the disguised clergyman was, much less that he was a clergyman at all.

But to this you will perhaps object: if the medium knew, that is enough to prove that it *could* have been a case of fraud! I reply: no, it could not. It could not in fact be explained in any way except one, viz., the presence of an independent spirit intelligence, and for these reasons: (1) It was a case of what is known as “Direct Voice” communication, that is, when the voice is quite distinct from those of the medium or of any of the experimenters. Hence, the voice was not made through the mouth of the medium who was not even in a trance, but was talking to one of the sitters the whole time. (2) It was a man’s voice that spoke, whereas the medium was a woman. (3) The voice was heard in different parts of the room

as though its owner were traversing the room. (4) The seance was conducted in broad daylight—not in darkness, so that if any extra party had been concerned with the phenomena he (or she) would soon have been detected. Now, surely, this incident scatters to the winds all possibility of fraud or at least of duplex personality being, as some will have it, a sufficient explanation to cover **all** the phenomena!

4. *Another case of proving the presence of an independent intelligence, viz. (other than that of the medium).* One day my father called on a well-known medium bringing with him three questions enclosed inside three sealed envelopes, each question concerning the respective “after condition” of three departed persons, all of whom he had known in the flesh, one being a near relative. It must be noted that he had taken the precaution of fastening the envelopes between two slates. The result was that he himself did not know which question was contained in a particular envelope, all three being exactly alike. Outside one of them was written “J. Godfrey,” the rest of his name being purposely omitted. The answer was to be given by what is known as “direct automatic writing.” To his astonishment the first words that appeared on the slate were “You have not given your full name.” To this he replied: “Then *you* give it.” At once the pencil wrote “J. Godfrey Raupert.” There next followed three short communications on the slate, each stating one of the three names submitted and doing so correctly, the envelope all the while remaining unsealed in the hands of the medium. So far so good. Enough here, surely, to remove all possibility of doubt as to the existence of an external spirit agency at work. The same incident, however, served to establish something ever more important. One of the three names was that of the late Cardinal Vaughan. And the question my father had put to His Eminence was: “Are my views on Spiritism correct and do you approve of the work in which I am engaged?” The answer was: “I do not know just what your views embodied, and cannot intelligently reply.” Now, if this spirit was really the spirit of Cardinal Vaughan he would not have made that statement, because the Cardinal knew very well what my father’s views embodied, and could have given a very intelligent reply as to his approval or non-approval of his work.

5. *A case of what is known to spiritists as Psychometry, viz., the power to describe from the touch of some article the place and mode of its manufacture, its age and general history, the persons and their chief characteristics to whom it has successively belonged, and the nature of its past environment.* My father had written a letter to a certain Dr. X. Dr. X filed the letter and placed the empty envelope in his paper basket. A short time after this a clairvoyant happened to call on the doctor. The latter gave her the envelope to look at, doubtless to see merely if she could say from whom it came. She asked for paper and pencil, and to the latter’s utter amazement she commenced to write down at top speed what appeared to be a detailed account of my father’s past life. When she had finished she gave it to the doctor and went home. It now remained to discover how far these statements were correct. The doctor accordingly invited my father to his house, and on his arrival bade him sit down while he commenced to read out the contents of the clairvoyant’s manuscript. “Well,” said he, when he had finished?” “It is all true,” said my father. “Every word of it.”

6. *A case of private correspondence of a very important nature being intercepted by a spirit control.*

A certain gentleman had been undergoing a course of instructions in the Catholic Faith by a priest now dead since many years. Unfortunately, the man had, in his former life been holding communications with the “Unseen” by unlawful methods, such as above described. But although he had finished with the Spirits they had not finished with him. The day and hour of his reception into the Church had been arranged by a letter from the priest in question. This letter, though it had only to travel across London, *failed* to reach its destination—a thing of rare occurrence—as every one knows. Unfortunately, the consequences of this proved serious. Before the priest could discover why his would-be convert had not replied the man had changed his mind about becoming a Catholic. He had, instead, gone back to his former friends the “Spirits.” Shortly afterwards it came out at some séance or other that, on the spirits’ own admission, *they had actually tampered with the letter box, obtained possession of the letter and destroyed it!*

### **Spirit Photographs.**

My father held very firmly to the belief that such things as real spirit photographs could be obtained under strict test conditions. For the benefit of the sceptic let me add that the evidence on which his belief rested was not merely the result of his own personal experience but of experiments made by any number of brilliant scientists, also of photographers, some of whom had certainly no interest in trying to impose upon the credulous by “faking” their photographs. So far as my father’s own experience in the matter was concerned here are facts which speak for themselves.

7. A certain photographer discovered quite by accident that he possessed mediumistic powers. He had never attempted to develop them and, needless to say, it was not likely to enlarge his clientele of sitters had he introduced spirits into his profession! As it happened the unfortunate man was driven to distraction by the most unwonted intrusion on the part of the spirits. Hearing about this man, my father thought that calling on him for the purpose of being photographed might lead to some interesting disclosures in regard to psychic photography. He accordingly purchased a dozen or so of negatives, taking care to *mark them* all so as to be able to identify them on their being developed, as he hoped, in his presence. The photos were, of course, taken in broad daylight. They were developed at once, my father noting carefully that the plates put into the developer were unquestionably the ones marked. To the amazement of both men on each negative there appeared my father, but also *another figure besides.*

On another occasion a similar experiment was made. As my father had no marked plates with him this time, the photographer put two of his own plates into the dark shutter, left his client to arrange himself in front of the lens, and then made the exposure in the ordinary way. The result was again a *strange face*, entire but clothed in white drapery. Being very anxious to discover if it were true (as he had heard it to be) that these mysterious beings in all probability possessed the power of assuming any form they choose to adopt, he determined to put this also to the test. Addressing the Intelligence he said: “I cannot recognise you in the drapery which you have assumed in this picture; but I might do so if I

were to see you in the dress you wore in your earth life. I am told that it is merely a question of memory, and that you can change your appearance. Try and think of what you were before you passed out of this life, and we will make another exposure.” The photographer seemed amused at that venturesome request, but the experiment was repeated. The result was interesting to say the least. Was the face on this plate that of the first? (The identity of the person was not the question at issue, of course) The two of them examined the faces very closely even with the help of a magnifying glass. My father was quite prepared to admit that when one’s mind is predisposed to judge, one’s judgment is not very reliable, that one is apt to see what one would wish to see. But the conclusion was almost inevitable, so striking was the likeness. To remove all trace of doubt, however, the photographs were submitted to one of the greatest authorities on the subject the verdict being that the faces were *identical*. (NOTE.—These photographs will be found in *The Dangers of Spiritualism*.)<sup>7</sup>

### **A Terrifying Experience.**

9. At the beginning of this paper I referred to certain terrifying experiences, all of a personal nature, which are related in *The Dangers of Spiritualism*. I will, accordingly, set before the reader the one which may be regarded as so alarming as to be the climax in all my father’s experimenting with the Unseen. That the event, however, may be appreciated at its true worth it would be best to explain briefly the events which led up to the incident. Some years before my father’s reception into the Catholic Church he was staying with a family which he had known for very many years, and he was rather surprised to find that one of the sons not more than 26 at the time, possessed some peculiar psychic gifts. It was noticed, for instance, that the mere contact of his hands with any wooden object such as a box or table or chair would invariably, cause distinctly audible vibrations, clearly abnormal in character, which vibrations would gradually develop into persistent and unmistakable knocks. The whole family, my father included, being utterly ignorant of the cause and origin of these knocks, decided on a “Code,” the result being that some astonishing communications were received from these unseen mysterious intelligences. Interest, of course, increased. But one thing my father was determined to do was to submit his young friend to a stricter and lengthier test. A very experienced and scientific spiritist was consulted on the matter. To my father’s amazement he replied: “Hold a séance, and ask the Spirits, They know much more about these things than we do.”

This was suggested to the young psychic. It was agreed, however, and if you my reader are a sceptic—please note this—it was agreed that the experiments should be conducted *in broad daylight*, that there should be no “circle” or anything in the shape of “conditions.” “Indeed,” says my father (in *Dangers*, from which I may quoting freely) “on no occasion during my friend’s presence in my house was a séance proper held.” My father had invited him to stay at his house. All the important phenomena occurred in the light under normal circumstances, and the only persons present at them were my wife, my friend and myself.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The original booklet does not record a number/section 8.

<sup>8</sup> Please let it not be assumed for a moment that my father is trying to prove that the spirits who communicate through mediums are the souls of the dead. What he held on this point has already been sufficiently dealt with. His point of contention here is that under certain circumstances messages have been, and are still

Endless experiments were, accordingly, conducted, mostly with planchette and by spirit photography. And it must be confessed the results were such as to prove most entertaining. They also removed, by the way, all trace of doubt as to the presence of *external* agencies operating behind the scenes. “We came away strongly convinced (says the *Dangers*) that we had been in touch with a being or beings possessed of mind and intelligence like our own and (yet) wholly *independent* of our own (italics mine).”

Interesting though, the experiments were, my father was beginning to have serious misgivings as to the safety of proceeding with them any longer. One reason for these misgivings was because he felt that these beings were of a very low moral order and of a subtle and extraordinary cunning and malice.

Then as if to confirm this conviction there occurred the alarming psychic experience above referred to. Lest it should lose anything of its very sensational character I prefer to give it in, my father's own words: “I retired about an hour later (than my friend), perhaps at twelve o'clock, and I must have been asleep quite an hour and a half, when I was suddenly startled by a noise like that of hammering, and of occasional footsteps clearly emanating from the bedroom occupied by my friend. Slipping into my dressing-gown and hurrying upstairs I found him pacing up and down the room in a state of violent agitation. He was partially dressed, and the lamp was burning; but there was no need to offer any explanation as to the cause of the disturbance. The strange noises which appeared to have ceased at the moment of my entrance recommenced almost immediately with the utmost vigour, and I became the witness of a scene such as I have never witnessed before, and as will not be effaced from my memory for many a day. A hundred hands seemed to be hammering away on the walls and doors and table and bed, and every now and then there was the sound of tramping of feet along the floor. Nothing that we said or did seemed to have the slightest effect upon the authors or causes of the strange phenomenon, and both my friend and myself simply sat on the bed in a state of helplessness and bewilderment. For a time I had to keep my hand upon the lamp which was standing on a small table, fearing every moment that it might be seized, and that some calamity might ensue.

“When I had explained the matters to my wife, and had offered some sort of explanation to the female servants who were sleeping upon the same floor, and who had been startled by the noises, I returned to spend the rest of the night with my distracted friend. Here was an exhibition of the objectivity of the phenomena with a vengeance! To us two, sitting in that spirit-haunted room, and listening to the noises which were disturbing the household, and which we could not control there seemed at that moment nothing as ludicrous as the sceptical attitude of the conventional man of science, who denied the objectivity of the phenomenon; but who clearly did not know what he was talking about. Ten minutes in that little bedroom would infallibly have made a convert of him, and would have blown his scientific theories to the winds. It seemed as though the very rabble of the unseen world had been let loose in order to exhibit to us the power of its malice and of its impotent rage. I have since then, however, heard of other instances in which manifestations of this kind

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received, which plainly do not originate from the imagination or from any sort of double personality of the medium.

have occurred, in consequence of “the spirits” having been found out and of their designs being frustrated. As morning dawned the noises gradually ceased, the sounds becoming fainter and fainter; and with the advent of daylight my friend obtained some refreshing sleep. On the following night there was no further objective disturbance. P.F.<sup>9</sup> soon regained his good health and spirits, and now the memory only of these extraordinary occurrences has remained with us. P.F. has since gone abroad, and has not I am confident, felt tempted to renew his acquaintance with the “kind friends’ of the spirit world.”

### **Obsession.**

10. I said a while ago that my father held most firmly that spiritism often resulted in nothing less than in obsession and even diabolical possession. How true this is will be evident to anyone but the out-and-out sceptic after reading the extraordinary occurrence I am about to record. The incident has, it is true, already been published; but as one of the books in which it appeared is out of print, and the other one is scarce I may, no doubt, be permitted to give it again in full. The lady to whom the affair happened was, moreover, a personal friend of my father.

“You will, I know, be interested in the case I am about to lay before you. A short time ago, if anyone had told me that demoniac possession, such as is spoken of in the Scriptures, now existed, I should have laughed at him. I would do so no longer. I have gone through one of the most extraordinary and one of the most fearful calamities that it is possible for one to experience—at least not I but my wife. Let me tell you the story: ‘Some time ago she became interested in psychic investigation, and tried automatic writing for herself with the result that, after some patient waiting, she developed into a fluent writer. A ‘spirit’ claimed to communicate and give a whole life history of himself through the automatic writing. This naturally delighted and interested us immensely. At first, all the communications came through the planchette board, but later on my wife developed writing with a pencil held in the hand; and no sooner had she done so than she began to experience a pain at the back of the brain—at the top of the spine—which increased in intensity as the days went by until it became well nigh unbearable. Then sleep was interfered with, and her health affected. It was at this stage that the communicating intelligence asserted that he had full command of my wife’s body; that he had, in fact, ‘obsessed’ her, and that she was no longer a free agent, but subject to his will. We tried hypnotism and mental cures of various kinds without success. We tried all sorts of physical treatment, going on the supposition that we had ordinary insanity to deal with. We tried electricity, baths, diet, fasting massage, osteopathy, a change of air at the sea shore—all to no benefit. We tried all that the doctors could do for her—likewise a failure. She was pronounced perfectly healthy, physically; no organic or even functional disturbance could be found. More and more she passed under the control and influence of the invading intelligence, and less and less concern had she in the affairs of every day life., We now became seriously alarmed. I tried to expel the demon by will power and by commanding him to leave; but all such efforts simply made him worse, and his hold apparently stronger. And now a new and terrible feature developed. Hitherto the impulse had been to *write*—to write all the time and

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<sup>9</sup> The name my father gives him in the *Dangers*.

constantly with a pen, a pencil, with a finger in the air—anything, so long as writing was accomplished, But now *voices* resounded in her head—two, three, four voices—talking to one another, and freely conversing together about her. Some of these voices would praise my wife’s conduct, others would blame her. Some would swear and curse, and call her vile names—names she had never heard in her normal state—while others would try to defend her from these coarser and grosser ones. The voices told her all kinds of things. At first these things were harmless; but as time went by they told her to do things that were far from harmless—suicidal, in fact, which she attempted to accomplish. Once they told her to escape at all costs and she ran out of the house and down the street in her nightgown. Twice they told her to take her own life, and this she attempted to do. She tried to shoot herself: but fortunately, only inflicted a wound. In other ways they tried to injure her, and only the best of care prevented a fearful accident on several occasions. One curious feature of the case was the fact that my wife realised all the while that these voices were urging her to her own destruction, and yet she was unable to resist them. It was as if her own will was entirely in subjection to that of these infernal intelligences. She was quite rational at times, and denied that she was in any way insane; but would argue her case quite rationally, and show you just why it was obsession and not insanity—as, of course, it is universally conceived to be. You may think that this is an ordinary case of insanity, and that we have here no definite proof of obsession at all; but I can assure you otherwise. There is very good proof that the phenomena are objective and not subjective in their origin. My reason for thinking so is this. During the early stages of my wife’s illness, as I may call it, I went to three other well-known mediums in town, and got them to diagnose the case for me, without giving them any clue as to the real state of affairs that existed. They could not possibly have known of her case by hearsay as it was kept very secret. But each of these mediums agreed that my wife was obsessed and described in almost identical terms the kind of evil intelligence that was controlling her; and furthermore stated certain things that had happened in our home, which in reality *had* occurred. But better and more conclusive was this: On one occasion the intelligence that claimed to control my wife communicated through another medium, and there asserted that he had done and said certain things at our house which he had done and said as a fact. That is, we have here what the Psychical Research Society would call a ‘cross reference’ between these two cases—the same intelligence apparently communicating through both mediums, and stating the same facts through both; also making the claim that he had stated those facts through my wife. Here, then, we have clear evidence of external objective reality—of an intelligence active and separate from the organism through which it is manifesting. Apart from the internal evidence afforded by the case itself, we have this additional proof that a real intelligence was at work and controlling my wife to do and say the things that she did do and say—against her own will no less than ours. Let me say in conclusion that if ever it is proved by means of such cases as this, that real external intelligences are operative in other cases of what is usually classed as ordinary ‘insanity,’ it will surely revolutionise medical science and treatment of the insane. At the present time, the treatment of such cases is almost entirely physiological, and the utter inadequacy of any such treatment was never more clearly shown than in my wife’s own case. No! I am persuaded that we have a real case of obsession here one similar to many recorded in the Scriptures, and in modern literature, both religious, and secular.”

## Diabolical Possession.

11. And now I come to what was certainly the *chef d'oeuvre* (in a bad sense, I am afraid) of all my father's experiences. It happened years after his conversion from Spiritism—when he was already busy trying to counteract the harm being done through these pernicious practices. It also is a case of what was nothing less than diabolical possession of a very appalling kind, too.

Some years ago an Australian gentleman came to England to undergo a slight surgical operation. Though not a Catholic he received medical treatment at a Catholic Home. To this Home some charitable Catholic ladies used to pay periodical visits, cheering the patients and reading to them. This man was of middle life, kindly and courteous in his manner and seemed keenly to appreciate the care and attention bestowed upon him. The ladies, however, observed something very uncanny and abnormal in his behaviour. They noticed that he seldom answered any question without first addressing some unseen person who appeared to be giving him directions as to what to say. They accordingly asked him to tell them what it might mean. To their amazement—not to say horror—he told them that he had been consulting the spirits for years, and that the unseen being was a “control” from whom it was now impossible to get free, who had assumed entire charge of all his affairs, and without whose advice he did nothing. As the man in all other respects was quite ordinary and normal this strange phenomenon caused the nurses a great deal of anxiety. They asked him if he would be interviewed by a gentleman of considerable experience in psychical phenomena. He readily consented, and my father received a letter from one of the ladies explaining the whole case, and requesting him to visit the patient at his earliest convenience.

A lengthy interview took place in which one thing became very clear. *The unhappy man had surrendered his will to the “control.”* What was to be done? My father left the Home promising to call again. Meanwhile, he communicated with several priests in London, laying the facts before them. They all agreed that the evidence for possession was very clear; but at the same time they all declined to have anything to do with the matter. A learned Benedictine, however, had suggested that the case might be laid before His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, especially as the Cardinal had received my father into the Church, was intimately acquainted with his work, had in fact, sent him on his mission (as far as England was concerned) and was, moreover, a man of exalted fervent piety. The suggestion was accordingly followed. His Eminence listened to the story with keen interest and sympathy, and declared his willingness to see the man and do what he could for him. Happily the patient, consented to the interview, though not without protest from the “control,” who tried his best to dissuade his victim from what he declared would be a fruitless and vain undertaking. On their arrival the Cardinal was in his study, and asked to be told once more in detail the full circumstances of the case. Then took place a scene so terrible as to remain indelibly impressed upon my father's memory and imagination for the rest of his life. I prefer to describe it in his own words: “While my narrative was in progress the man was suddenly lifted out of his chair and thrown violently to the floor, his body twisting and shaking, a villainous expression distorting his face, and froth gathering round his lips. A harsh rasping voice, wholly unlike his own, issued from his mouth, uttering the most unheard of blasphemies, and declaring that no d—invocation of ours would be

successful in dislodging him (the spirit control). He had, he exclaimed, had possession of the d—carcass for years and meant to retain possession at all costs. We sat spellbound, wholly unable to do anything that could terminate the extraordinary and repulsive manifestation.”

After a while the man opened his eyes and sat up, his face though pale and haggard, presented its ordinary expression. On being informed what had occurred the unfortunate man begged the Cardinal to free him from this fearful tyranny, promising his sincere cooperation. For some reason which my father was at a loss to know<sup>10</sup> His Eminence did not exorcise the man. Instead of this he merely warned him of the serious danger he was in, bade him recite certain prayers which he prescribed, and to return to him in a week’s time. The man promised, and the spirit left him in peace for a whole week, But on the day fixed for his second visit to the Cardinal the spirit returned, informed him that his financial affairs in Australia were in a critical condition, and that he had better cancel his appointment and proceed to Australia by the first boat available. Unfortunately, the man obeyed and has never been heard of since. Thus was lost the grace which might have resulted in complete deliverance from the slavery into which he had fallen.

People who have read Mgr. Benson’s *Necromancers* would, doubtless, be interested to know if the esteemed author of that book ever came in contact with the subject of this little pamphlet. To this I reply that not only did he come in contact with him, but, on his own admission, he obtained from him all the information on Spiritism he ever possessed, incorporated it into that incomparable novel just mentioned, viz., the *Necromancers*, and made him the principal character, Mr. Cathcart.

### **Audiences with the Pope.**

It must have been in about the second or third year of the Great War that my father received a personal letter from His Holiness Pope Benedict XV through the agency of Cardinal Gasparri to the effect that, it had been brought to the notice of His Holiness by the Bishops of the Church in the United States that he [my father] was doing a splendid work in his campaign against Spiritism, and expressing a wish that his work should be continued. Needless to say he felt very much encouraged at receiving such a message, and as soon as the War was over he paid another visit to the Eternal City “to give an account to the Holy Father of his work in the ‘States,’ and its results.” Two weeks after this Pope Benedict died; but my father was fortunate enough to obtain an audience with his successor, the present Pope Pius XI, with whom he conversed in German, who also showed great interest in his work and also conferred upon it the Apostolic Blessing.

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<sup>10</sup> He suggests that the reason may have been that the Cardinal felt the need of due preparation, since no one knew better than he that “this kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting” (Mark ix. 28). [ This case is also described in the book by Montague Summers “Witchcraft and Black Magic” 1946 where Melbourne is said to be the man’s place of origin. LP.]

In 1921 owing to failing health he was obliged to set aside one of the two weapons with which he had so long been fighting Spiritism, namely, the voice. But the other he could still wield, namely, the pen. As a result he translated several of his books on Spiritism into German. After nearly two years of a long and painful illness, cheerfully and patiently borne, my father, at the age of 63 went to his well-earned reward, his death occurring on 4th January, 1929, at Wiesbaden on the Rhine.

### **Personality.**

A word must be said by way of conclusion on my father's personality. It is very difficult if not impossible to speak of the merits of one's own relatives without some sort of partiality. Hence, the reader must bear with me if I seem to exaggerate. But I think that all who knew my father will agree that he was a man who quickly endeared himself to those with whom he came in contact. He was one slow to take offence and slower still to give it. If he had any enemies they were not of *his* making. One very characteristic virtue of his was an almost excessive kindness to the poor. All who have been to Italy know but too well how extremely importunate and troublesome were the beggars there some years ago. Yet he could never resist their appeals, but always gave them something, however small.

Most characteristic of him, however, was his intense love of prayer, especially mental prayer. Indeed, he regarded the "Interior Life" quite as necessary for the layman as for the Clergy, and never ceased to inculcate it both in his writings (e.g., in the *Ave Maria*) and by his example. A daily communicant almost to the end of his life, he always made his preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion without a book, preferring, as he would often say, to speak to God in his own words rather than in the words of another. Not that he belittled vocal prayer. In fact for several years of his life he recited the whole of the "Divine Office," and only gave it up when he found that it conflicted with his work. One particular form of prayer of which he was especially fond was the *Memorare*. So great, moreover, was his faith in the power of that prayer that he attributed three remarkable favours received (all of a temporal nature) to the recital of it. Ejaculatory prayer, too, had a strange attraction for him. Linking it as he did to the "Practice of the Presence of God" of which it is the natural outcome, he composed several of his own; so beautiful that I can scarcely refrain from quoting one: "O my God, my soul longs and yearns for Thee. O do Thou still this burning, longing of my soul. Make me daily more pleasing to Thee until I attain at last to the most intimate union with Thee."

Devotion to the Saints, too, had its proper place in his spiritual outfit, among them being in particular St. Alphonsus, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Vincent Ferrer and the Saint on whose Feast Day he was born, St. Michael the Archangel. His devotion to St. Vincent was due to his having taken the name of that Saint as a Dominican Tertiary, his devotion to St. Alphonsus and St. Paul of the Cross arose from the great esteem he always felt for the two great Congregations of the Redemptorists and Passionists, in either of whose communities he had always been a most welcome guest; whereas his devotion to St. Michael sprang from the assurance that he had always felt that it was owing to the special Providence of God that he should have been born on the Feast Day of him who was the first to defend the rights of God against the attacks of Evil Spirits.

Another characteristic of my father's personality deserves mention. He possessed in a high degree the "saving sense of humour." To such an extent was this the case that all who nursed him in his illnesses (of which he had many) attested that even when he was suffering acute pain he would always see the funny side of things. Last but not least he was one of the comparatively few whom popularity (of which he had a fair share) never caused undue elation. But perhaps a brief incident will show better than anything how much he esteemed the virtue of Humility, I give the story in my father's own words: "During my stay in Rome I found myself on Good Friday morning at the foot of the Santa Scala—the staircase down which the Redeemer is believed to have come on the way to His death. Numerous pilgrims were devoutly ascending on their knees, some of them very old and infirm. My good angel urged me to imitate this example and to perform this act of humiliation. Another voice urged the contrary, speaking of folly and superstition, reminding me that there could not possibly be any certainty that it was the genuine staircase. Besides this, what good could there be in such a silly and humiliating act? What would my scientific friends say to it?"

A young priest standing near whom I had never seen in my life, seemed by some sort of intuition to discern the conflict going on within me. He came over to me and said very quietly "You had better go up. It will do you good on a day like this. It will humble your pride. And what matters it whether the staircase be the genuine one or not? God sees your heart and your intentions, and the merit of the act remains the same." I do not know to this day what made the young priest so suddenly clairvoyant. But I ascended the staircase on my knees. I came down it a humbler and I think a better man, and I have been sincerely glad of it ever since."

This then is in brief the history of a "Knight who fought with Voice and Pen."<sup>11</sup> That his many friends and admirers will not forget in their prayers one who fought that battle so well, wielding those weapons so skilfully is the earnest wish of the son who has paid to his father this small but well deserved tribute.

## Appendix by LP:

### **Raupert and the SPR:**

Godfrey Raupert joined the SPR in 1892, and remained a member until at least 1904. Press reports of his lectures some times played up his SPR connection later than that. Although the first edition of "Dangers of Spiritualism" was credited to "A Member of the Society for Psychical Research" it was not reviewed by the SPR. Raupert was not recorded as taking any part in SPR activities.

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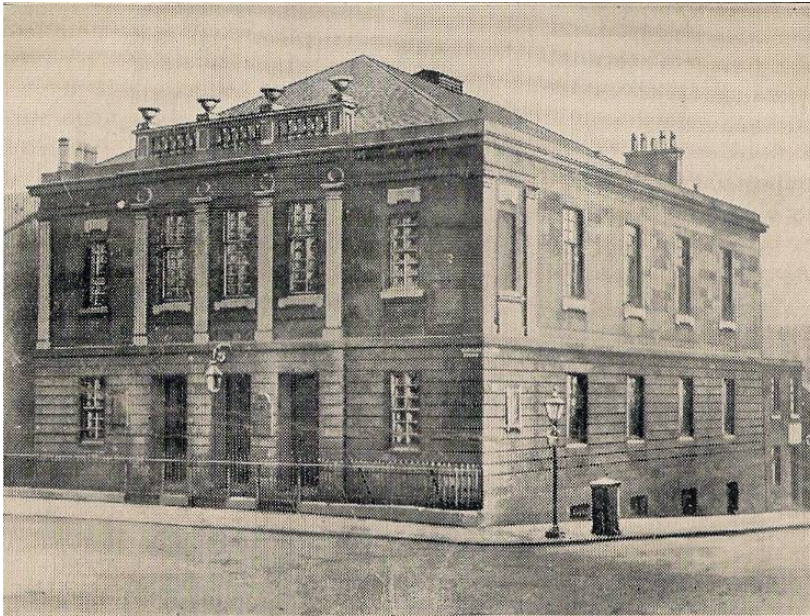
<sup>11</sup> The title kindly accorded to him by the *Catholic Times* in the obituary notices.

# THE GLASGOW ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS

1866 - Present

The Glasgow Association of Spiritualists is one of the oldest Spiritualist Associations in the U.K. It pre-dates the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (MSA) 1872,<sup>12</sup> which is still in existence today as The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB).<sup>13</sup> In 1873 a conference of Spiritualists was held in Liverpool; the outcome of this conference was the formation of a National Association situated in London. Later it was called the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) and was merged into a society called 'The Central Association of Spiritualists.' Shortly after the merge it was broken up at the suggestion of Stainton Moses, and in 1883/4 the 'The London Spiritualist Alliance' (L.S.A.) came into existence. Today we know it as the College of Psychic Studies (CPS).<sup>14</sup>

The Glasgow Association of Spiritualists (GAS), was founded in 1866 and today can be found at 6/7 Somerset Place, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, Scotland, (all details are on their very informative website).<sup>15</sup> The church has its own museum, shop etc. It holds a Lyceum service monthly, and is affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU).



In 1998 I wrote to the Association to ask if they could identify some photographs I had been given as a gift some years previously. At this time I did not have a computer, so information was not as accessible as it is today. I was interested in Ebenezer Church, and a Glasgow Conference for which I had no date.

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<sup>12</sup> See *Psyioneer* Volume 2, No.12:—*The story of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association 1872-1928* – Leigh Hunt, pages 260-276:— <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.12December06.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB):—<http://www.spiritualistassociation.org.uk/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> College of Psychic Studies (CPS):—<http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> Glasgow Association of Spiritualists (GAS):—<http://glasgowassociationofspiritualists.co.uk/>

I received an interesting informed reply from the former GAS president; a Minister of the SNU Mr. James Biggin which I quote in part below:

“I am the past President of the Association, having stood down this March at our A.G.M after serving six years at its head. I along with my brother are the longest serving members along with our wives, and am the only one who could throw any light on your query.

I have been associated with the Association since 1933, having joined the Lyceum then been its Lyceum Conductor, Church Committee member, Treasurer, Vice President, and in 1992 its President. I am also heavily involved in the Healing Group.

Now to your pictures;

The Association had many meeting places during its lifetime, I have enclosed a booklet about its History,<sup>16</sup> please do not throw it away after reading if of no further interest, I would appreciate its return.

You will see that the Ebenezer Church was located in Waterloo St,<sup>17</sup> I worked in Waterloo St in a warehouse from 1940 but do not remember seeing it, so it was probably demolished prior to that. You say the group photo is at the Glasgow Conference, well no doubt this is a photo of a group of delegates from all over the country and possibly some locals, but I do not recognise any, and by the looks of them, are in their 40/50s. However, your stating that it is the Glasgow Conference I can put a date to it as 1908.

I can firmly state that, as my father who had a small orchestra provided the music and was presented with a Presential Baton inscribed “*To Walter Biggin in Kindly Remembrance of Services at S.N.U. Conference Glasgow 1908*”<sup>18</sup>

What a coincidence.

The premises we owned before our present one, was a Greek type temple, and compulsory purchased by the City Fathers in 1964, and is now a World Listed Building compared recently to the Taj Mahal in importance. It seated 1500 and during the late 40/50’s was often filled to capacity.”

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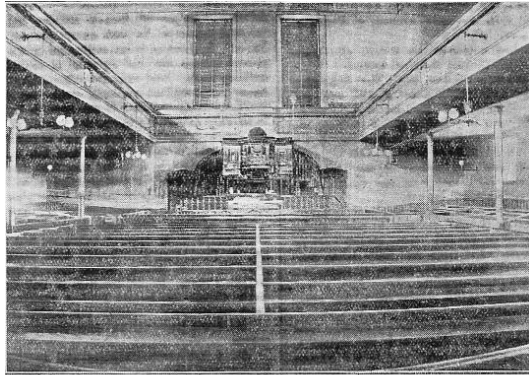
<sup>16</sup> *An Outline and History*, 22 pages published circa 1980. The history section of this booklet is now published on their website

<sup>17</sup> Glasgow; Demolished Places of Worship:—“Old Ebenezer Congregational Church, Waterloo Street, demolished 1966.” See:—  
[http://www.familytreeforum.com/wiki/index.php/Glasgow;\\_Demolished\\_Places\\_of\\_Worship](http://www.familytreeforum.com/wiki/index.php/Glasgow;_Demolished_Places_of_Worship)

<sup>18</sup> The presentation is recorded in the *Two Worlds* report, prior to the presentation the choir master:—*Mr. Walter Biggin gave a finished rendering of the solo, “Lord God of Israel,” from “Elijah,” followed by a selection by the quartette, “Cast Thy Burden,” from the same work.*

The Sixth Annual General meeting and Consultative Conference of the SNU referred to above, was held on July 4th and 5th, under the SNU presidency of George P. Young (1907-1909 and 1911-1912).<sup>19</sup> A full report was published in *The Two Worlds* for July 17th and 24th, 1908, below I quote the opening words:—<sup>20</sup>

## THE MEETING PLACE



Interior of the Ebenezer Spiritualist Church, Glasgow.

THE Sixth Annual Convention of the Spiritualists' National Union was held in the Ebenezer Church, Waterloo-street, Glasgow, on Saturday and Sunday, the 4th and 5th inst., and comprised two meetings on the first day and three on the second day.

The several gatherings were held in the body of the church, which is well lighted and commodious, having a seating capacity of a trifle over one thousand seats. The interior of the church has, on the ground floor, a central block of pews, and on each side and at the entrance end sets of closed pews three deep are ranged. An ample choir enclosure faces what was formerly the communion space, and against the wall is the high pulpit, as was customary in olden times. Upstairs a large gallery runs round the three sides of the interior; the lighting is ample, and in front of the sides of the gallery, and opposite to each other, are two clocks, which were not precisely unanimous as to the time of the day! The church is entered from three doors in the wide porchway, which lead into a commodious vestibule, at each end of which winding staircases afford access to the galleries.

At the rear of the church is the large library hall, a cosy retiring room for the speakers, and the usual retiring rooms for ladies and gentlemen. In the basement is a church hall the full width and length of the building, well seated, with a neat platform, and admirably suited for soirees, classes, concerts, and other meetings which the church proper would not be suitable to accommodate. There are other rooms suitable for storage, the preparation of teas, and other things connected with the work being carried on. An open-air side passage affords entrance to the front and rear of the building. The entire edifice is built of stone, and is

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<sup>19</sup> George P. Young was installed as President, to be followed in 1909 by Frank Hepworth, and A. W. Wilkinson in 1910. The next year George Young was re-elected, but did not complete his term of office, having gone to build a new home in British Columbia. Reference taken from *Light*, February 21st, 1935 page 122. George Young died suddenly of heart failure reported in *Light* January 21st, 1928 no information except he went to Canada some years ago.

<sup>20</sup> *The Two Worlds*, Friday July 17, 1908 front page and continued on pages 346-348. Continued in the next issue Friday July 24th front page and continuing pages 358-360.

constructed in that thoroughgoing fashion which is so distinctive of the Scottish mind and method.

Formerly occupied by the Congregationalists,<sup>21</sup> many good and liberal-minded men have preached within its walls. At one time a popular and well-attended church, it has of late years declined in public favour, and that in the main because the district in which it is situated has ceased to be residential. The demands of trade have proved too much for the house of the Lord, so the congregation has migrated elsewhere, and the trustees are now anxious to sell the edifice for some commercial purpose. The price asked is some £8,000, which, while not unfair, is nevertheless more than the Glasgow Association feel willing to consider, so they are only able to hold it on a tenancy from year to year. Without doubt it is the largest building now used by Spiritualists in Great Britain. It was admirably suited to the needs of the late gatherings.

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SNU president George P. Young was also at this time president of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists (1903-1911).<sup>22</sup> The Glasgow Association is rich in Spiritualist history, and closely associated with many of the early leading pioneers. The Association's long standing president James (Jas) Robertson was closely connected with the Spiritualists' National Union (became the SNU in 1902) from its start, and was National Federation president in 1893. We will be publishing more information on the GAS foundations in a later issue, "Mr. J. B. Conklin and the Founding of Glasgow Association of Spiritualists". In the Association booklet, it states their first president was Andrew Glendinning 1866-1869 and below, in the following article "Historical Notes" by the *Two Worlds*, the first president is again stated as Andrew Glendinning—however, other reports tell us Mr. James Marshall may have been the first; he was certainly president by 1867/8.

Below is the SNU AGM/Conference photograph that originally started this story, numerous delegates in the photo I can now identify to my own satisfaction. For the purpose of this article I shall only name the definite ones:

First row from the bottom Left to Right second person is John M. Stewart, Association president 1913-1916 (also acting president due to the death of Peter Galloway 1923-1924), Stewart was Spiritualist' National Union president for 1941-1943 .

Next to him is Lyceumist Alfred Kitson (1855-1934). Third row up third person is the veteran Spiritualist James Knight (1845-1924). Fourth row up fifth person, is James J. Morse (1848c-1919) who needs little introduction, and finally top row second person is Ernest Keeling died at 82 years old in October 1958 and was SNU president 1928-1930.

Paul J. Gaunt

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<sup>21</sup> See:—*Scottish Archive Network*:—<http://195.153.34.9/catalogue/person.aspx?code=NA18771&st=1&>

<sup>22</sup> This is according to the booklet I received from Mr. James Biggin:— *An Outline and History*



## HISTORICAL NOTES

*The Two Worlds:*—<sup>23</sup>

THE Glasgow Association of Spiritualists came into being on the 26th January, 1866. Chief among the events which preceded and gave rise to its formation was the publication in December, 1863, of a pamphlet entitled "Narrative of Facts Observed," which related experiences obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Marshall, of London, and vouched for the genuineness of the phenomena, if not for their spiritual source.

Although this pamphlet was issued privately its contents were largely quoted in the daily press, and created widespread interest, not only for the facts narrated, but on account of the public position of the writer, for it was generally known that the author was Councillor James Bain, who afterwards became Lord Provost of Glasgow.

While the discussion in the press proceeded many took up the investigation of the subject and obtained manifestations in their own homes. As the number of Spiritualists increased a desire sprang up for an Association, and ultimately a notice was issued dated 22nd January, 1866, calling a meeting in the Buchanan Temperance Hotel on the 26th January, 1866. The notice was signed by Mr. James Nicolson, a local writer and poet of

<sup>23</sup> *The Two Worlds*, June 29 1923 pages 340-341

some note, and Mr. Hay Nisbet, a well-known Glasgow printer. There was an attendance of 30 at the meeting, and the Association was formed.

The first President was Mr. Andrew Glendinning, who, from his earliest years, had been devoted to every good cause tending to the upliftment of humanity. His name was well known in all that related to temperance work. Wherever there was a noble cause or true men to be supported his wide sympathies were enlisted. He interested himself in the formation of penny savings banks, workmen's libraries, building societies, and the secular education on Sundays of children from the slums. Such was the man who, in the early days of Spiritualism, caught hold of its truth and witnessed the rise of the movement in Glasgow.

Of the original office bearers of the Association, the only surviving member on this side is Dr. Gavin B. Clark, M.D., F.R.C.S., ex-M.P. for Caithness. The first meetings were mostly confined to members, but a public meeting was held once a month in the Lesser Trades Hall. Regular weekly Sunday evening services were commenced in an upper room at 164, Trongate, and the Sunday morning service was instituted in 1879 at the instigation of Mr. James Coates, who was at that time an active member of the Association and Secretary for a season. Other prominent officials were Mr. James Bowman, a well-known Glasgow photographer, and Mr. James M'Dowall, who was for a time President.

Among the local mediums of those early days Mr. David Duguid and Mr. David Anderson were the most outstanding. The Association owes much to their self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause.

The year 1876 marked the entrance into the movement of Mr. James Robertson, who was destined to do so much for Spiritualism in Scotland. He became President of the Association in 1879 and held that office for over 20 years. Mr. Robertson was a business man of repute in Glasgow, and by his wide culture he raised the whole tone of the movement to a high level. At no season did his interest slacken in the cause or his convictions become dimmed.

The meeting place in the Trongate, which had housed the Association so long, was vacated in 1883, and the services were continued at Carlton Place. Mr. Robertson maintained a high standard of platform supply. Mr. J. J. Morse, Mr. Walter Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, and other well-known workers of the day were regular visitors. The public movement in Glasgow was largely built up by such workers, and later on by Mr. A. Vout Peters, Mr. E. W. Oaten, Mr. Aaron Wilkinson, Mr. Tom Tyrrell, Mr. Horace Leaf, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. H. Ernest Hunt, Mr. Percy Street, Mr. Frank T. Blake, and others.

In 1884, at the invitation of the Association, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis took up residence in Glasgow. The meetings thereafter became so crowded that a larger hall was necessary and the Association moved to a church in West Campbell-street. An atmosphere of old theology seemed to linger about the building, and after a few years the members were glad to return again to the south side. The meetings were held for a time in Kirk-street and Main-street, and then back once more to Carlton Place.

In 1898 the Association moved to the old Assembly Rooms, 136, Bath-street, where good work was carried on for a number of years. The first bazaar was held in that year, and a propaganda fund of about £250 was raised, which enabled the Association to extend its activities not only in Glasgow, but throughout Scotland.

Mr. Robertson retired from the Presidency in 1902, and was succeeded by Mr. John Sharpe, who held office for one year, and was in turn succeeded by Mr. George P. Young, a man of scholarly attainments, who later became President of the Spiritualist National Union.

In 1903 the Scottish Spiritualist Alliance was formed. The Association took the lead in the matter, drafted the constitution, and has been for many years the mainstay of the movement in Scotland. In 1919 the Scottish Alliance was merged into the Spiritualist National Union, and now operates as a District Council of that body.

Another bazaar was held in 1907, which realised the sum of £250 for the Building Fund. In 1908 the Assembly Rooms were taken over by a business firm and the Association removed to Ebenezer Church, Waterloo-street. In the same year the Association entertained the Annual Conference of the Spiritualist National Union. In 1911 the Ebenezer Church was also taken over for business purposes, and the Association was again compelled to seek new quarters. A temporary home was found at 26, Elmbank Crescent, but owing to the limited accommodation interest was at a low ebb. Mr. Young resigned to go abroad, and Mr. Robertson was induced to take over the Presidency again, which marked the turn of the tide. It was whilst in Ebenezer Church that Mr. Peter Galloway came into touch with the movement, and it was he who was the most assiduous in looking out for more suitable quarters. These were ultimately found in 1912 at the Masonic Hall, 75, Berkeley-street, where useful work was done and the Association built up again.

Mr. Robertson “passed over” on 9th October, 1913, at the age of 69, and Mr. John M. Stewart was called upon to fill the office of President. In 1914 the British Spiritualists Lyceum Union held its annual conference in Glasgow, and was entertained by the Lyceum.

In 1915 the Association removed to larger premises at the Central Hall, Bath-street. It was in this hall that the Jubilee celebrations took place on the 19th and 20th February, 1916. Mr. Peter Galloway was elected President in that year. At the Jubilee a presentation was made to Mr. John Sclater in recognition of many years’ faithful and devoted service as Financial Secretary to the Association.

In 1918 the Central Halls were taken over by the Government for military purposes, and the Association was obliged to remove to the Masonic Hall, 100, West Regent-street. It was while in this hall that Mr. J. B. M’Indoe was appointed Secretary, and the success which has attended the Association’s many activities since then has been largely due to his organising ability and unremitting attention to the work. Rooms were also taken at 98, West Regent-street on a three years’ lease for the weeknight meetings.

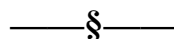
The year 1919 was an eventful one in the history of the Association. The interest in Spiritualism, which had become deep and widespread on account of so many “passing over” through the war was greatly stimulated by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s first visit to Glasgow on the 9th April, 1919, when, under the auspices of the Association, he addressed an overflowing audience at the St. Andrew’s Hall. Many inquirers attended the services thereafter, eager and anxious for light and knowledge upon after-death questions. Insufficient accommodation at the Masonic Halls led to a lease of the City Hall being taken for the winter. Two large and successful meetings were held there in August, but the re-advent of food control necessitated another move, this time to the M’Lellan Galleries. The change proved a wise one, for the Association gained in influence and prestige.

In 1919 the Association published its own hymn book, with the valuable assistance of Mr. D. M. Macintyre, a former vice-president. This step was rendered necessary on account of supplies of the National Union Hymnal not being available during the war.

Another important step was taken in 1919 towards providing the Association with a home of its own, a long cherished ideal. Two houses were acquired at Holland-street at a cost of £1,500. The building fund then stood at £450, and as a result of a special effort by means of donations from members and friends and collections, the necessary amount was raised within a year to pay for the houses. The Association owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. Alex. M’Cully for his untiring efforts on behalf of the building fund.

Mr. J. B. Bell, a member of long standing, retired at the end of 1922 to take up residence in the south. He was for many years the leader of the Sunday Public Circle, the Friday Healing Class, and also for some time a vice-president.

In 1920 Mr. Galloway’s health broke down, and he went abroad for a year to recuperate. On his return he initiated a scheme for the building of a hall on the ground behind the houses at Holland-street. The plans, which were ultimately accepted, were prepared by Mr. W. I. Inglis, I.A., and covered the erection of a building to seat about 600, provision being made for the addition of a gallery at a later date. The first sod was cut on the 3rd February, 1923, by Mrs. Lang, of Cowglen House. Mr. Galloway “passed away” peacefully on the 6th February, 1923, in the knowledge that the project was secure for which he had worked so hard and spent so much of the closing years of his earthly life. Recognising that Mr. Galloway’s transition would not affect his interest in the Association, the Executive made no change in the office of President, and Mr. John M. Stewart, who had been Acting President during Mr. Galloway’s illness, was re-appointed to that position.



Notes by the Way:

## SAVING PRIVATE ARCHIVES

At *Psypioneer*, it sometimes seems we and colleagues across the field are in a race to print material before it is lost from archives and libraries. Anxieties about the fate of the press cuttings from the weekly *Psychic News* were eased in October 2011 when the JV Trust finally acquired PN from the liquidator. PN's archives will be preserved at the new offices of the newspaper, and there are plans to eventually digitise them. But in September 2011, architect Max Eames completed his term as president of the College of Psychic Studies in London, not long after an upgrading of the South Kensington premises.

But in September 2011, architect Max Eames completed his term as president of the College of Psychic Studies in London, not long after an upgrading of the South Kensington premises. Fortunately the new CPS acting president, Stephen Chapman has assured *Psypioneer* he intends to preserve and develop its historical material.

Reorganisation and retirements are a great threat to archives. In any body, a new administrator may make their mark by weeding out papers not needed for current functioning. This summer Marc Demarest of [www.ehbritten.org](http://www.ehbritten.org) asked the Charity Commissioners about records of the now defunct Britten Memorial Trust, long registered with them. They no longer had any records. This was in accordance with their record retention policy!

Nature also threatens archives. On October 21 2007 a fire storm destroyed the records held by the Point Loma theosophists near San Diego; some of the material had fortunately been duplicated at Alexandria West.<sup>24</sup>

In October 2011, Marc Demarest called attention in his Curator's Blog<sup>25</sup> to the perilous position of another Theosophical archive, in Adyar, India. Though a map showed vulnerability to flood, which could be made worse by tsunami, the Theosophical Society archives, which include unpublished Blavatsky material, could equally fall victim to general neglect, the tropical climate or an occupation of the estate by the people.

At a more local level, ignorance remains a potent threat. The following story is apocryphal. A church decided the material in its library looked old. So they gathered together the less battered items and took them to the charity shop. The oldest items, which they presumed of no interest to anyone, they put in the recycling bin. Then they set out in the bookcase some nice new paperbacks.

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<sup>24</sup> See:—<http://www.wisdomtraditions.com/>

<sup>25</sup> See:— [www.ehbritten.org](http://www.ehbritten.org)

It's so much better to save the history (for example like Castleford Church, records of which were preserved by Judith Seaman, were used in last month's feature about Tom Brooks MP) or Blavatsky Lodge in London which can prove its connection with Gandhi by showing you his name in their old minute book for 1889.

The safest solution, as the Britten blog noted, is to be digitise the archive and make it freely available online. That word "freely" is important because learned publications are increasingly entering into contracts with international companies which make their articles only accessible for a high fee, including research originally financed by public money.

We are very pleased that all the material at Pyspioneer is made available free both to web surfers and subscribers. For some time now, subscribers have hovered around the 400 mark. In a busy life, the heavy detail of some of the classic cases is not for everyone, but for any leader a general awareness of some of the pitfalls in the stories of leading characters is desirable.\* And access to archives and libraries is indispensable for getting back to the real story.

LESLIE PRICE

\* In a related field, occasional books continue to appear of whose authors we can say it is as if none of the new material in *Theosophical History* published since 1985 has made any difference.<sup>26</sup> Biographies or general surveys from around 1980 are still cited as the last scholarly word about Madame Blavatsky and her colleagues..

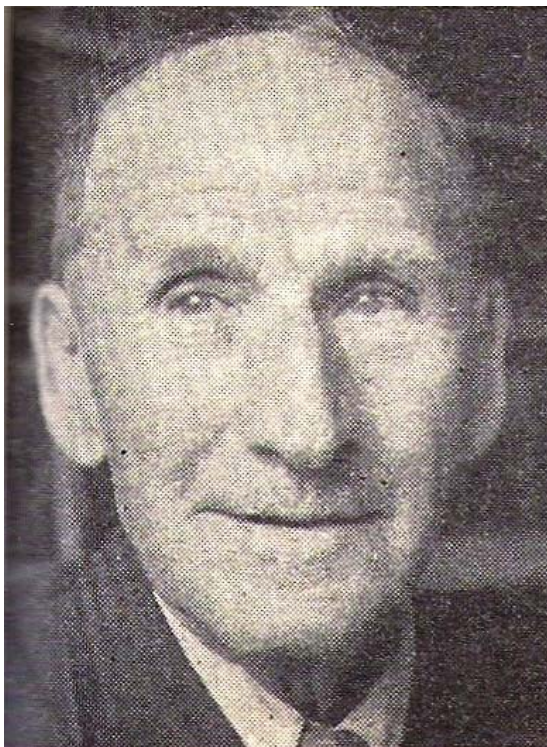
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<sup>26</sup> See:—[www.theohistory.org](http://www.theohistory.org)

# EVAN JOHN POWELL

1881-1958



In the August issue of *Psypioneer*,<sup>27</sup> we published *Evan Powell the Welsh Physical Medium*, covering his early life and séances at the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS), not to be confused with the present day College of Psychic Studies (CPS).

Prior to this in the July issue of *Psypioneer*,<sup>28</sup> we published *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Evan Powell*. This report brought to light numerous claims, for instance; “The Man (Powell) who killed Sherlock Holmes”<sup>29</sup> suggesting Doyle had killed off his master detective, Sherlock Holmes in favour of his Spiritualist pursuits as a direct result of Evan Powell’s mediumship. The validity of this claim is brought into question by the facts that:

- 1.—Doyle had ‘killed off’ Sherlock Holmes in *The Adventure of the Final Problem* in 1893.
- 2.—Powell himself had not then started his mediumistic development which we are told by numerous reports began in or around 1896!

It is without doubt that Doyle held Powell and his mediumship in great esteem and trust as this account shows:—<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Volume 7, No.8:—*Evan Powell the Welsh Physical Medium - Psychic Science*, pages 235-242:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.8August2011.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Volume 7, No.7:—*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Evan Powell – Paul J. Gaunt, and Evan Powell’s Mediumship – Leslie Curnow*, pages 219-227 inc:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.7July2011.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Incidentally, ACD was accused, in the 1890s, of murdering Holmes - to which he good humouredly responded that he killed Holmes in justifiable self defence: if he hadn’t killed Holmes, then Holmes would have killed him! (Garth Willey)

<sup>30</sup> *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, by William Crookes, F.R.S., reprint: *The Two Worlds*, Publishing Company Ltd and, *The Psychic Bookshop*, London 1926 (originally published in 1874). Quote is taken from the Appendix, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle pages 143-144.

*“The writer (Doyle) can well remember having a sitting with the famous medium, Evan Powell, in the privacy of his own bedroom. Powell insisted upon being tied up, and on the writer remarking that such a precaution was unnecessary, since long experiment had quite convinced him of his honesty, he answered: “I must insist upon it as a protection for myself. How can I answer for what I may do when I am unconscious in a trance? I might unconsciously wander round the room, and you, finding me doing so, would lose confidence in me for ever.”*

But where did the Sherlock Holmes story originate we asked?

I received an e-mail from one of our subscribers Sean Taylor, who very kindly supplied me with various reports on Evan Powell which have substantially helped to move the story on. We stated in the July issue that Doyle first met Powell at Portsmouth in 1919. But Powell claimed in a lecture given in 1955 to the Penarth Summer School that he and Doyle had met earlier than 1919. Within this lecture Powell gives the origin of the Holmes story. Below is the introduction to the lecture report in *Psychic News*,<sup>31</sup> 1955 “The Man Who Killed Sherlock Holmes.”

Evan Powell has at last revealed himself in his true colours—as the man behind Moriarty, arch-criminal whose last meeting with Sherlock Holmes ended with their plunging to death in the Reichenbach Falls.\*

For it was after a seance with Powell that Conan Doyle made the decision that Sherlock Holmes must die and that he must devote himself to propagating the knowledge of survival of which he had been convinced.

This may make Powell’s name anathema to thousands of Sherlock Holmes’s devotees, but will be blessed by millions who have found new hope in Doyle’s championship of Spiritualism.

This story was among the highlights, when the veteran physical medium described his 60 years of mediumship at the Penarth Summer School. Below we print a slightly abridged report of his address.

\* Not until 1903 did Conan Doyle bring Holmes back to life in *The Adventure of the Empty House* – wherein it was explained away that the great detective had had a miraculous escape (Psypioneer).

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<sup>31</sup> *Psychic News*, August 27th, 1955 page 4

## What Evan Powell reportedly stated:

### DOYLE'S REPLY

A most memorable incident in my life was on July 16, 1915.<sup>32</sup>

I persuaded Conan Doyle to come to Merthyr to speak, and he wrote back that he was very busy, but added, "White monkey blackie doggie."<sup>33</sup> I come to Merthyr, you give me a sitting—that's fair."

After that circle Doyle went out on the balcony with Lady Doyle. The furnaces were lighting up the sky.

He said, "Evan, I am going to commit murder. For tonight I have finished. Rachel is still weeping for her children. I am going to devote my life to the propaganda of the return of the dead."

## The Psychic News editor commented:

It was the "murder" of Sherlock Holmes that Doyle meant. He had determined to forsake the profitable detective fiction for which he was paid 10s. a word and spent his whole time propagating Spiritualism—Editor.<sup>34</sup>

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Another reference at this period can be found in *The Two Worlds*,<sup>35</sup> published below in full:

## SEANCE MADE DOYLE "MURDER" SHERLOCK HOLMES

SHERLOCK HOLMES, one of the supreme immortals of literature, was "murdered" by his creator because of Spiritualism.

Evan Powell, the famous medium, disclosed this on Sunday in the Victoria Hall, Bloomsbury, at a service conducted by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association.

He related how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle turned to him after receiving overwhelming evidence of Survival at one of Powell's seances, saying "Sher-

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<sup>32</sup> This year seems too early, as ACD had not then come out as a Spiritualist - LP.

<sup>33</sup> ... expressing a fair exchange.

<sup>34</sup> To my knowledge the *Psychic News* editor at this time was Fred Archer, who had taken over the editorship in 1953 from A. W. Austin.

<sup>35</sup> *The Two Worlds*, 26th, March 1955.

lock Holmes must die. I am going to devote the rest of my life to wiping the tears from the cheeks of the mourners.”

“Though he was getting 10s. a word writing for the “Strand Magazine,” ” said Powell, “he threw Sherlock Holmes over a cliff and devoted the rest of his life to propagating Spiritualism.”

Doyle later estimated that the decision had cost him a quarter of a million pounds. “It was a bit of a sacrifice,” he admitted to Powell, “but a wonderful investment.”

—§—

It appears this story started in 1955, long after the death of Doyle in 1930. I have checked earlier reports and they make no mention of this story and it appears to make its main entrance at the time of Powell’s death. It is clear that some misrepresentation by Powell or the Spiritualist press has sneaked in as the time line of established events cannot fit into this story!

Paul J. Gaunt.

**In conclusion we publish a posthumous tribute to Evan John Powell:**

## **LAST OF A GREAT LINE**

*Psychic News:—*<sup>36</sup>

*Evan Powell may be said to have the widest endowment of spiritual gifts of any medium at present in England. He preaches the doctrines of Spiritualism both in his own person and while under control, and he can in himself exhibit nearly the whole range of phenomena.*

Those words of praise were written many years ago by Arthur Conan Doyle. Through Evan Powell he obtained, to cite a writer of that day, “that final and ineradicable conviction which has led him to become an apostle of spirit return.”

And Conan Doyle was only one of hundreds who were impressed, became convinced of the truths of Spiritualism, and later became friends of the kindly, self-effacing little Welsh born miner’s son who passed last Friday evening after a brief but serious illness.

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<sup>36</sup> *Psychic News*, September 13th, 1958.

## Scared

*He was stated in this paper almost eight years ago to be our main living link with the pioneers, the last of a line of great British physical mediums stretching back to D. D. Home.*

His many years of service, when he amazed thousands by the versatility of his gifts, began suddenly and dramatically when he was only sixteen years old.<sup>37</sup>

Though for some years he had been made aware of unusual and even frightening powers within himself, and had, only a few months before been badly scared at a seance in his home town, Merthyr Tydfil, he went hopefully one evening to a local Spiritualist meeting to hear a well-known lecturer.

Quietly, he made his way to the back of the hall. There he shared the audience's disappointment when the chairman told them the lecturer had suddenly been taken ill and could not attend.

But, the chairman went on, it was to be hoped the spirit world would find some way for the meeting to carry on.

*The spirit world did not let them down. It launched Evan Powell, unconsciously and inexplicably into the work which he carried on until his retirement.*

"I was sitting at the back of the hall," he recalled, many years later, to *Psychic News*, "and the next thing I remember I was finding myself seated beside the chairman on the platform.

"He told me I had been speaking for half an hour without any notes on 'If a man dies, shall he live again?'"

Before long he was invited to join a home circle whose nine members sought further evidence of survival. There he soon found himself controlled by a guide, later to be as well-known as himself, Black Hawk.

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<sup>37</sup> Taken from his obituary in *The Two Worlds*, September 13th, 1958:—"... in 1896, Powell began his investigation of Spiritualism at a table-tipping circle in his native Merthyr Tydfil, the following was one of the first messages he received: "Ma Ka Tai Me She Kia Kiak." "This is all bosh! said Evan, and was discouraged. "Your guide tells us his name is Black Hawk," his sitters told him. But miner Powell was still puzzled. "Who is this Black Hawk?" he pondered. "Is he a figment of my imagination, a delusion or a secondary personality?" Then, during another Black Hawk seance, the communicator said he had written a book on his earthly life. "If a copy can be obtained," the old Indian told his listeners, "it will prove my existence and the veracity of communication." After the circle, one of the sitters told the medium: "I am going to book a passage to America next week. If that book can be found I am going to find it." The determined seeker duly crossed the Atlantic and placed orders for the book with three booksellers. Six months later, a copy of the book was found. On the fly-leaf appeared the following: "Ma Ka Tai Me She Kia Kiak—the life of Black Hawk."

## Reward

This guide told the circle in halting English that if they were prepared to sit regularly once a week for nine months they would be rewarded with physical phenomena. Patiently and regularly they sat and waited.

Nearly on the nine-month mark, one of the sitters reminded Black Hawk of his promise.

*“I know, and I will not fail you,” was his reply, and, during the next seance, large bunches of flowers fell into the room, still fresh with raindrops. If the sitter went into the back garden, said the guide, they would find they could fit the flowers to the plants from which they had been plucked.*

There could be no mistake about the genuineness of these apports. Before every seance started, Evan Powell was searched thoroughly in another room, so, too, were all the other sitters to prevent there being any collusion.

The wonderful phenomena caused a sensation in Merthyr. A Spiritualist society was formed soon afterwards, consisting at first of only fourteen members.

That was about fifty-six years ago. When Evan Powell left Merthyr in 1921,<sup>38</sup> that society had grown more than ten-fold and several other societies had come into being - all as a result of those first early sittings.

The former Serbian Ambassador to Britain, Count Myatovitch, whose interest in Spiritualism had led him to give talks in London of his convictions, was invited to lecture to the then small society in Merthyr. He accepted, and it was arranged that the editor of the local “Merthyr Express” should entertain him.

*He gave his lecture and, asked by Powell what his fees and expenses would be, said “I want nothing except that you would grant me the privilege of a private sitting with your good self whom I have heard so much about”*

## Made History

Evan could hardly refuse this unexpected request and he called together some of his regular sitters and assembled to hold the seance at the editor’s house.

The seance made Spiritualist history.

The first spirit to manifest was a woman who spoke in a foreign language. The room was then lit up by a strange light and then Queen Draga, the lately assassinated Queen of Serbia, stood fully materialised before the Count, addressing him by a familiar name.

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<sup>38</sup> Taken from:—*The Two Worlds*, September 2nd, 1921 page 413:—Famous Medium for Devon:—“MR, EVAN R. POWELL, of Merthyr Tydfil, the excellent medium for materialisation, voice phenomena, and trance speaking, will shortly be leaving South Wales for Paignton, Devon, where he will be engaged in the coal business. Mr. Powell has done good service for the Movement for over 20 years. Originally a Baptist, he was largely instrumental in founding the Merthyr Temple of Spiritualism, which owns its own church and has done good work in the district.”

*Myatovitch fell on his knees and embraced her. For fully four minutes they conversed in a tongue none of the others could understand.*

Then King Alexander, Draga's husband who was assassinated with her, manifested and spoke with his former Ambassador.

Afterwards, the editor of the "Merthyr Express" said he could not vouch that the language they spoke was Serbian, but he testified that he heard the conversation in a strange tongue between Draga and Myatovitch, and saw her materialised figure.

In fact, he added, "if nothing ever happens again, this convinced me beyond all doubt that there is no death."

During his close association with Evan Powell, Conan Doyle told how on one occasion he heard three voices talking at once during a seance. One, he said, spoke to Lady Conan Doyle, another to Sir James Marchant, the third to Sir Robert McAlpine.

Through Evan Powell, the famous writer spoke also to his own son.

*"I state definitely that I spoke I to my son and that I heard his I voice, and I would be the most blasphemous liar if what I told you was not true," the stated emphatically on one occasion.*

Another author who joined Doyle and Powell in their seances was Horace Annesley Vachell. He was impressed during one of these sittings by the spirit of a little girl who addressed her father with the question, "Why do you wear such a funny collar, Daddy?"

The father was a parson but did not wear his dog collar. He told Vachell afterwards that when the little girl died, he lost faith in God and had not worn a dog collar since.

"That was the question a child would ask and could hardly have been invented by the medium who had no reason to suspect that the man was a parson," was Vachell's opinion.

Others have testified<sup>39</sup> to seances where equally remarkable phenomena have taken place. Hannen Swaffer has told how Northcliffe materialised clearly enough to be recognised by Mrs. Swaffer, and, another time, Swaffer was there when well-known writer, Tom Gallon, gave remarkable evidence to his sister.

*At every seance, Powell insisted that he should be bound to his chair. On more than one occasion his jacket was turned inside out although the ropes remained undisturbed.*

Those are but a few of the highlights in Evan Powell's long life. He was perhaps one of the very few mediums who became a legend in his lifetime.

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<sup>39</sup> Taken from his obituary in *The Two Worlds*, September 13th, 1958:—"Sir Oliver Lodge, that Great scientist and fearless champion of Spiritualism, received outstanding proofs of Survival from Evan, whom he was proud to call, "my dear friend." "

Many years have passed since he retired from active public mediumship. In his latter days he gave equally of his best in other directions where his services were needed and welcomed.

He became a Councillor in Paignton for many years and, for his public work, was made a J.P. for Devon.<sup>40</sup>

*But even after he retired he found himself making headline news for Spiritualists. He seemed to have the happy knack of saying always the right thing at the right time. Not always did he sugar the pill. Never, however, did he seem to make an enemy.*

Kind and friendly though he was, Powell could be forthright and vigorous in his battle against ignorance, prejudice, narrow-mindedness and malice—as “churchianity” (as he called it) had good cause to know.

### Aspirations

Nor did the Spiritualist movement itself escape his strictures. “You do not seem to seek spirit in the same way that you used to seek it,” he commented two years ago. “And you will not get it—you will not get that outpouring of spirit unless you aspire in order to become inspired.

“If our aspirations are no higher than a parlour game, touching the fringe—if we only want to know if Aunt Jane or Uncle John is there—then we will get what we deserve and no more.

*“If you want the materialisation of spirit, try a little to spiritualise the material,” he continued. “Do not expect your sainted mother to come back to a room full of tobacco-smoke and the fumes of alcohol.”*

And the audience loved it. Only a man 100 per cent sincere and full of love could make people feel ashamed of themselves and hold on to their love as well as their respect.

Evan Powell never had anything to fear—because he himself feared nothing. He has nothing to fear now.

There will be many who will miss his bodily presence, few perhaps as much as Ralph Rossiter, secretary of the M.S.A., the man who is proud to say he owes his life to him.

Years ago Ralph Rossiter suffered terribly from asthma. Specialists had pronounced him incurable. He went to Powell to be healed.

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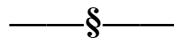
<sup>40</sup> Taken from his obituary in *The Two Worlds*, September 13th, 1958:—“From his modest beginnings he rose to become chairman of Paignton Urban Council. His crowning achievement while on the Council, was the transformation of Goodrington from an unproductive marshland into the holiday area known today. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1936, and sat for several years on the Paignton and Brixham Bench.”

*Before attempting to cure him, Evan Powell made him promise to do exactly what he was told. He agreed, and for ten years obeyed his healer's instructions.*

At the end of that time all traces of the asthma had vanished.

A few years later, Rossiter contracted tuberculosis and again he sought Evan Powell's help. Again he recovered.

By the time this paper reaches you, Ralph Rossiter will have carried out a sad duty but one that he must have been proud and grateful to perform. He will, together with another Marylebone Spiritualist Association official, Robert Dell,<sup>41</sup> have conducted his friend and former healer's funeral service.<sup>42</sup>



*Due to lack of space Kate Wood will continue in the next issue- PJG.*

## SOME BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

*If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author*

**An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium**, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

**Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial**, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

**Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling**, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:—<http://www.theohistory.org> then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

**Dead Men's Embers**, by Gerald O'Hara, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2006. Large Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9514534-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 1-2:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Dell a well known medium who demonstrated at many large public meetings. He became an approved medium at the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (MSA) in 1945, and died in 1965.

<sup>42</sup> Evan Powell died suddenly from thrombosis on September 5th, 1958. His funeral was held at Paignton Spiritualist Church, Devon on Tuesday September 9th, at 2.30 p.m., prior to cremation at Torquay.

**Mrs Miller's Gift' - a Celebration of 75 Years of the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology formerly Edinburgh Psychic College & Library**, by Gerald O'Hara & Ann Harrison, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2007. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-951-4534-9-0., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 1-4:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift CD:—Helen Duncan Séance, Ernest Oaten and Harry Edwards**, Written and produced by Gerald O'Hara B.Sc. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 106-107:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.4April09.pdf>

**The Indescribable Phenomena – The Life and Mysteries of Anna Eva Fay**, by Barry H. Wiley published by Hermetic Press, Inc., Seattle Washington 2005. ISBN: 0-945296-50-9., available at:—[http://www.hermeticpress.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=45](http://www.hermeticpress.com/product_info.php?products_id=45) Psypioneer references by Leslie Price pages 39-42:— <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09.pdf>

**Immortal Longings – FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death**, by Trevor Hamilton published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, U.K (also VA, U.S.A) 2009. ISBN: 9-781845- 401238 H.B, 9-781845-402488 PB, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 157-148:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

**Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism**, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)

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Paul J. Gaunt

