

– Long Concealed, Now Revealed – Overwhelming Evidence for Life After Death

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Abstract

This essay is an abridged “transcript” and summary of a simulated present-day court trial between The Survival School and The School of Materialism, also known as The School of Nihilism. The Survival School (“plaintiff”), which contends that consciousness survives permanent physical death in a greater reality, filed suit against the School of Materialism (“defendant”), alleging malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance, all leading people to believe that death is a plunge into an abyss of nothingness with the result being despair, grief, hopelessness, and emotional distress among the masses. The complaint further alleges that the defendant’s nihilistic worldview has contributed significantly to hedonism, immorality, and social disorder, not only in the United States but in the “civilized” world.

As the plaintiff has the burden of proof, this abridgement/summary is primarily of the plaintiff’s case, which claims that the evidence for survival produced before 1920 in mediumship research easily meets the “preponderance” standard in a civil court of law and even exceeds the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard of our criminal courts; and that the legal doctrine of “Res Judicata,” meaning, “it has been decided,” should have been applied to it a century ago. However, because the pre-1920 research took place in the wake of Darwinism, when science had impeached religion, and also because the goals of psychical research were much the same as those of religion, particularly with regard to the survival concern, educated people of that time closed their minds to anything that conflicted with the materialistic worldview. They saw psychical research as supporting the follies and superstitions of religion. The pioneers of psychical research were continually disparaged by their peers in mainstream science and their research therefore received little recognition. What did reach the public was usually distorted, twisted, or misrepresented, based on false assumptions and ignorance of the anomalies involved with inter-dimensional communication by those reporting it.

During the 1930s, after most of the pioneers of psychical research had “died,” psychical research gave way to parapsychology, which, to survive and invite funding in the materialistic environment, focused on extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK), while avoiding any mention of spirits or survival. The research of the pioneers was filed away and for the most part forgotten. Historical references today, nearly all fully grounded in materialism, suggest it has all been debunked and is otherwise outdated, but a thorough review and in-depth understanding of all that research reveals that it is as valid today as it was at the time.

More current research, in near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, past-life memories, remote viewing, clairvoyance, induced after-death communication,

instrumental transcommunication, and deathbed phenomena, has significantly added to the findings of the pioneers of psychical research, all lending themselves to a realization that mind is separate from the brain and survives the dissolution of the body. However, very few of the modern-day researchers seem to know enough about the old research to defend it and link it to their research. They focus only on the phenomenon they have studied, and therefore the early evidence is rarely heard and the new research is not fully appreciated.

The plaintiff is represented by Edward Randall, a respected Buffalo, New York trial lawyer and a devoted psychical researcher, remembered primarily for his 20 years of research with direct-voice medium Emily French. He authored seven books, including "The Dead Have Never Died" (1917), and Frontiers of the Afterlife (1922). The plaintiff does not seek damages in money. It asks only for a judgment declaring the validity of the "overwhelming" evidence" supporting the survival of consciousness at death before 1920.

Randall called 11 witnesses to the stand, but due to the word limitation of this essay, the transcript is significantly abridged and otherwise summarized. Randall's comments are in standard type, while his questions are in bold-faced type. Words in italics are the author's summary of some of the testimony. The testimony of the witnesses, as set forth in the transcript, is in their own words, as extracted from their books and reports, all of which are now in the public domain. Words in brackets are inferred to permit a proper flow. Randall's questions are tailored to fit the answers. It should be noted that the author of this paper previously did simulated "interviews" with most of the witnesses, as well as with other researchers, and many of the questions asked by Randall appeared in the author's interviews published in the The Journal for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies. Randall has added to those questions and in some cases modified them.

The Opening Statement

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my name is Edward Randall and I represent The Survival School in this litigation. I'd like to begin by quoting the words of Carl Gustav Jung, one of the pioneers of modern psychology and psychiatry. Dr. Jung lived in Switzerland and wrote these words some 70 or 80 years ago, but Europe seems to have been well ahead of the United States in its efforts to divorce itself from what it imagined as the superstitions and follies of religion. He wrote:

"Critical rationalism has apparently eliminated, along with many other mythic conceptions, the idea of life after death. This could only have happened because nowadays most people identify themselves almost exclusively with their consciousness, and imagine that they are only what they know about themselves. Yet anyone with a smattering of psychology can see how limited this knowledge is. Rationalism and doctrinairism are the disease of our time; they pretend to have all the answers." (Jung, 299)

Dr. Jung recognized that there are people who have no craving for immortality and even shudder at the thought of it, as they imagine sitting on clouds and playing harps for eternity. He further recognized that the focus should be on this life, not on some future life. Nevertheless, he concluded that it is important, especially during the second half of life, when careers, raising a family, and social existence are of diminishing value, to fill the void by preparing oneself for death. “A man should be able to say he has done his best to form a conception of life after death, or to create some image of it – even if he must confess his failure,” he counseled. “Not to have done so is a vital loss.” (Jung, 302)

The defendant will likely argue that Jung and others who subscribe to such a belief are wrong, that we can live both a meaningful and moral life without a conviction that we survive death. They call it humanism. The focus of humanism is “living in the moment,” with proper love and concern for others, while giving little or no heed to tomorrow, even while approaching what they see as total extinction. The epicurean’s “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die,” is, in essence, the motto of many humanists. Another pioneer of psychology, Professor William James of Harvard University, addressed this mindset when he wrote:

“The luster of the present hour is always borrowed from the background of possibilities it goes with. Let our common experiences be enveloped in an eternal moral order; let our suffering have an immortal significance; let Heaven smile upon the earth, and deities pay their visits; let faith and hope be the atmosphere which man breathes in; and his days pass by with zest; they stir with prospects, they thrill with remoter values. Place around them on the contrary the curdling cold and gloom and absence of all permanent meaning which for pure naturalism and the popular-science evolutionism of our time are all that is visible ultimately, and the thrill stops short, or turns rather to an anxious trembling.” (James, 124)

The defendant will argue that there is no link between a belief in life after death and the enjoyment of the present life. Indeed, it is difficult to prove this link as many people hide their true feelings or are not even aware of them in the first place, but we believe there is much truth to the conclusions of anthropologist Ernest Becker, as set forth in his 1974 Pulitzer prize-winning book, *The Denial of Death*. Dr. Becker explained that to free oneself of death anxiety, nearly everyone chooses the path of repression. That is, we bury the idea of death deep in the subconscious and do our best to escape from the reality of it while avoiding any discussion of what might come after, whether it be total extinction, a horrific hell, or a humdrum heaven. (Becker, 20-24) No consideration is given to the more dynamic and progressive afterlife suggested by the research you’ll hear about from our witnesses.

Becker subscribed to many of the ideas of Soren Kierkegaard, known as “the father of existentialism.” Kierkegaard saw most people as “philistines,” escaping from the reality of death with mostly meaningless activities. A philistine was a man (or woman) fully tranquilized with the trivial. As Kierkegaard saw it, most people are so absorbed in

philistinism that they don't even realize they are in constant despair from their fear of death. (Kierkegaard, 194-196))

Dr. Jung wrote that most of his patients were non-believers, those who had lost their faith. They were "neurotics" who were focused on marriage, careers, and outward success without sufficient content or meaning in their lives. (Jung, 140) But Jung recognized that it is apparently impossible for us to know with *absolute* certainty that consciousness survives death in a larger life. In fact, there is very little, if anything, we know with such certainty. As suggested in the works of the great French author Victor Hugo, absolute certainty may not be a good thing. When Hugo was purportedly communicating with the spirit of Martin Luther through a medium, he asked why God doesn't better reveal himself. The reply from Luther:

"Because doubt is the instrument which forges the human spirit. If the day were to come when the human spirit no longer doubted, the human soul would fly off and leave the plough behind, for it would have acquired wings. The earth would lie fallow. Now, God is the sower and man is the harvester. The celestial seed demands that the human ploughshare remain in the furrow of life." (Chambers, 104)

The evidence strongly lending itself to proof that consciousness survives bodily death in a larger reality is substantial; it is nonetheless, complex, confusing, convoluted, complicated and sometimes conflicting, seemingly beyond the limits of exact or pure science. It can, however, be examined from the standpoint of more inexact science. Call it courtroom science. The objective is not absolute certainty. In this court we need only prove our case with a "preponderance of evidence," that is, the evidence *for* outweighs the evidence *against*, but we intend to prove this case to you with a higher standard, the criminal court standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt." As that standard is intended to give the accused, the defendant in a criminal case, the benefit of the doubt, it is somewhat difficult to apply in this situation. Therefore, since we have voluntarily raised the standard we must meet, defendant has agreed that we will accept "overwhelming evidence" to mean the same thing as "beyond a reasonable doubt." According to my dictionary, "overwhelming" means "so strong as to be irresistible."

Before getting to that overwhelming evidence, let me further preface my remarks by pointing out that the question of God's existence is not at issue here. The defendant and others of the materialism school often find it convenient to treat God and the afterlife as concomitants, implying that they go hand-in-hand, arguing that we must find proof of God before we can even consider the question of consciousness surviving death in what is called the "afterlife." It is a deductive approach: no proof of God, no reason to believe in an afterlife. We contend that the inductive approach is much more logical and appropriate. That is, consider the evidence for survival first and then ask if there is a Supreme Being, a Supreme Intelligence, a Creator, a God, whatever name one chooses to assign to Him, Her, or perhaps something much more abstract called *Cosmic Consciousness*.

Nor are we concerned here with the nature of the afterlife. The evidence suggests a much more dynamic and vigorous afterlife than the monotonous heaven and terrifying hell advanced by orthodox religions, the one Dr. Jung referred to – that of sitting on clouds and strumming harps. That is a subject in itself. Our aim here is to examine the best evidence for survival, not to examine the nature of that survival. We do believe, however, that the nature of the afterlife is for the most part beyond human comprehension. In this regard, I suspect that many of you will be convinced that there is an afterlife but may have reservations about the idea of reincarnation, to which some current research is devoted. Without going into detail, let me say now that there are several schools of reincarnation and that a belief in reincarnation does not necessarily mean believing that the entire personality is reborn. One school – referred to as the Group Soul School – holds that only a small portion of the soul comes back in a future life, while the “Higher Self” – the greater part of the individual soul – remains in the larger life. Again, so much of this is beyond both science and human comprehension. The point I wish to make is that in accepting the reality of consciousness surviving death, one does not necessarily subscribe to a belief in the usual concept of reincarnation. So please do not let the idea of reincarnation, which is distasteful to some people, prevent you from deciding that consciousness survives death.

The best evidence, The Survival School contends, was developed in the early years of what came to be called psychical research, from 1850 to 1920, primarily with trance mediums, not to be confused with the clairvoyant-type mediums we hear about today and might see on television. More current research, in deathbed phenomena, past-life memories, near-death experiences, induced after-death communication, electronic voice phenomena and related studies have significantly supplemented the early research. Much of it has come from respected men and women of science at the University of Arizona, the University of Virginia, the Windbridge Institute in Tucson, and from independent scholars and scientists. It is icing on the cake, so to speak, but the early research offered compelling – better yet, *overwhelming* – evidence on its own. We contend that the legal doctrine of *Res Judicata*, a Latin term meaning “it has already been decided,” should be applied to the pre-1920 evidence.

That early evidence came from scientific research demonstrating that consciousness does not originate in the brain, as the defendant believes. Yes, I said “scientific.” The evidence was carefully studied by some renowned scholars and scientists, 11 of whom will testify before you over the next week. We contend that the research that took place before 1920 is compelling enough – *overwhelming* enough – to meet the aforementioned standard of proof and that there has been no research or development in the years since to refute, repudiate, or reject that research. We recognize that many modern references, influenced by the defendant’s distortions, attempt to debunk the earlier research, but it is clear to us in The Survival School that, fully understood, it is solid evidence today. To put it another way, the early evidence – that developed by the pioneers of psychical research before 1920 – overwhelmingly made the case for survival.

You may not have heard much about the old research or even the more current research because it conflicts with the materialistic mindset and therefore it was, and still is, either

ignored or rejected by mainstream science as well as by the mainstream media. It calls for a major overhaul of academic and scientific thought. Moreover, some of it is not totally consistent with the dogma and doctrines of religions; it is therefore seen as a threat to their teachings and has been rejected by them as well. When the research is reported on by the mainstream, it is almost always distorted, incomplete, twisted, or clearly not understood by the reporters. Even many current researchers in the areas of near-death experiences and the other disciplines previously noted seem to know very little about the research of the true pioneers of survival research. The bottom line here is that the most compelling evidence has long been censored and concealed. With this litigation, it is hopefully revealed.

As one final comment before we get to the evidence, let me point out that in addition to the evidence coming to us through scientific research, there is circumstantial evidence, including anecdotal evidence, which will also be discussed here. Contrary to what television programs often lead you to believe, such evidence counts here when it is credible and especially when it happens over and over again to different people. The defendant will turn up their noses at such evidence and remind you that it is merely circumstantial or anecdotal, but that does not mean it shouldn't be considered in your judgment. Such evidence is admissible in this litigation.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is my opening statement. I will now proceed to introduce you to the compelling evidence, the *overwhelming* evidence, and I'll begin by calling upon Judge John Edmonds as my first witness.

Judge John W. Edmonds

Judge Edmonds served as Chief Justice of the New York State Supreme Court after serving in both houses of the New York legislature, including as president of the Senate. Following the advent of the spirit communication epidemic that hit the world with the so-called "Rochester Knocking" in 1848, a number of educated and prominent men and women observed various mediumistic phenomena, but Judge Edmonds carried his investigation beyond a few casual observations. Beginning in early 1851, and continuing for 23 months, he sat with numerous mediums, closely testing them in every conceivable way in search of the truth.

Several months after beginning his investigation, Judge Edmonds realized that he had mediumistic powers of his own. Early in 1852, he met George T. Dexter, a New York physician, who, like himself, had begun as a doubter, then had become a believer, and then a medium. Edmonds, Dexter, and several others formed a circle that met on a regular basis and received frequent communication purportedly coming from the spirits of Emanuel Swedenborg, an eminent seventeenth century scientist, and Francis Bacon, a renowned philosopher and statesman of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

When Edmonds went public with his findings, he was attacked by the press, the pulpit, and politicians, and he was forced to resign his position on the Bench and return to the practice of law. One of the more sympathetic articles appeared in the *New York Evening*

Mirror during 1853. Permit me to read it to you: “John W. Edmonds, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of this District, is an able lawyer, an industrious judge, and a good citizen. For the last eight years, occupying without interruption the highest judicial station, whatever may be his faults, no one can justly accuse him of a lack of ability, industry, honesty, or fearlessness. No one can doubt his general saneness, or can believe for a moment that the ordinary operations of his mind are not as rapid, accurate, and reliable as ever.” (Hardinge, 99-100)

Thank you, Judge Edmonds, for being here today. It is my understanding that you began your investigation of mediums in January 1851, soon after the death of your wife. Do I understand it correctly?

“[Yes,] I was all this time an unbeliever, and tried the patience of believers sorely by my skepticism, my captiousness, and my obdurate refusal to yield my belief. I saw around me some who yielded a ready faith on one or two sittings only; others again, under the same circumstances, avowing a determined unbelief; and some who refused to witness it at all, and yet were confirmed unbelievers. I could not imitate any of these parties, and refused to yield unless upon most irrefragable testimony.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 71)

How did it all come to public attention?

“It was [about 1848 that] the subject first attracted public attention. Though we discover now that for the previous ten or twelve years there had been more or less of it in different parts of the country; but it had been kept concealed, either from fear of ridicule or from ignorance of what it was. The first public demonstration, however, was [in 1848], through the family of Mrs. Fox, near Rochester, in the State of New York. Through them the manifestations were by rapping on the floor, or a table, and the intelligence displayed itself by selecting from the alphabet as it was called over, letter by letter, until words were spelled out.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 36)

What happened at your first sitting?

“My first interview (*sitting*) was with the rappings (*one rap for each letter of the alphabet, so three raps for ‘yes,’ and one for ‘no’*), and three things struck me as remarkable. One was that under the circumstances it was beyond all cavil that the sounds were not produced by the instrumentality of any person present. Another was that my mental questions were answered, when I knew no person present could know what they were, or even that I was asking any; and a third was, that I was directed to correct a mistake I had made in my written memorandum of what was occurring, when I knew that no one present was aware that I had made a mistake, or what it was.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 13)

Were you assisted by anyone in your investigation?

“After depending upon my senses, as to the various phases of the phenomenon, I invoked the aid of science, and with the assistance of an accomplished electrician and his

machinery, and of eight or ten intelligent, educated, shrewd persons, examined the matter. We pursued our inquiries many days, and established to our satisfaction two things: first, that the sounds were not produced by the agency of any person present or near us; and, second, that they were not forthcoming at our will and pleasure.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 73)

You reported on much wisdom coming through, not simply trivial facts as seen with clairvoyant-type mediums in the twenty-first century.

“[The] general character has been such as to warrant me saying that I have been struck with their beauty – their sublimity at times – and the uniformly elevated tone of morals which they teach. They are eminently practical in their character, and not a sentiment is to be found that would be unacceptable to the most pure and humble Christian. The lessons which are those of love, kindness, and are addressed to the calm, deliberate reason of man, asking from him no blind faith, but a careful inquiry and a deliberate judgment... [At one sitting] it was said, ‘Imitate Christ in his humility, in his submission to the will of God, and in his love to man, and you will be acceptable to God.’” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 54-56)

Would you mind summarizing a little of what you witnessed in the way of physical manifestations?

“To detail what I witnessed would far exceed the limits of this [testimony], for my records of it for four months alone fill at least one hundred and thirty closely-written pages. I will, however, mention a few things, which will give a general idea of that which characterized interviews, now numbering several hundred... I have known a pine table with four legs lifted bodily up from the floor, in the center of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads, and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have known that same table to be tilted up on two legs, its top at an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present put it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a center leg, and with a lamp burning on it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place though its glass pendants rang again. I have seen the same table tipped up with the lamp upon it, so far that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity, yet if fell not, moved not... I have frequently known persons pulled about with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once, when all my strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected. This is not a tithe – nay! not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 72-74)

According to reports by historian Emma Hardinge, your daughter Laura (Edmonds), when under the influence of spirits, conversed in Greek, Latin, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Hungarian, and several Indian dialects. (Hardinge, 101)

Although you are apparently reluctant to identify her by name in your reports, Laura seems to have been a very gifted medium.

“[Let me say this.] She was a young girl of tolerable education and warmly attached to the Roman Catholic faith. Her church told her to disbelieve in Spiritualism, and she refused to witness any of the manifestations, though they were frequent all around her... [However,] she soon saw enough to convince her of a spiritual agency, and very soon became herself a medium... At first she was violently agitated in her person. She soon wrote mechanically; that is, without any volition on her part, and without any consciousness of what she was penning... She next became a speaking medium. She was not entranced as some are, into a state of unconsciousness, but was fully aware of all she was saying and of all that occurred around her... She next became developed to speak different languages. She knows no language but her own, and a little smattering of boarding-school French. Yet, she has spoken in nine or ten different tongues, sometimes for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native. It is not infrequent that foreigners converse with their spirit friends through her in their own language. A recent instance occurred where a Greek gentleman had several interviews, and for several hours at a time carried on the conversation on his part in Greek, and received his answers sometimes in that language and sometimes in English; yet until then she had never heard a word of modern Greek spoken.” (Edmonds, Vol. 2, 45)

I recall reading that she unexpectedly developed musical abilities.

“[Yes.] About the same time her musical powers became developed. She repeatedly sang in foreign languages, such as Italian, Indian, German, and Polish, and it is now not infrequent that she sings in her own language, improvising both words and tune as she proceeds – the melody being very unique and perfect, and the sentiments in the highest degree elevating and ennobling.” (Edmonds, Vol. 2, 45)

I gather that she came to accept that spirits were involved in her new gifts?

“[Correct.] Her next advance was to see spirits and spiritual scenes, and now scarcely a day passes that she does not describe the spirits who are present, entire strangers to her, yet very readily recognized and identified by their inquiring friends. This has of late been witnessed by very many persons, and many an unbeliever in spiritual intercourse has been overwhelmed with the evidence of identity which thus by sight and communion has been presented. At one time she was used as the instrument for delivering long and didactic discourses on the principles of our faith. Now she is mostly used to give moral and mental tests, which to many are very satisfactory. At one time, she saw chiefly allegorical pictures; now she sees the reality of spiritual life.” (Edmonds, Vol. 2, 46)

Have you witnessed others with such a gift?

“I do not mention this case as a solitary or extraordinary instance of spirit power, for I am aware of many others of a similar character. But I refer to it because it is an apt illustration of the view I am endeavoring to present, and because the whole development

having occurred under my own observation, I incur the less hazard of being mistaken.” (Edmonds, Vol. 2, 46)

Much of it seems like tomfoolery. What is your understanding of it all?

“[It was said at one sitting that] ‘these manifestations are given to mankind to prove their immortality, and teach them to look forward to the change from one sphere to another with pleasure.’ ... I was satisfied that something more was intended than the gratification of an idle curiosity; something more than pandering to a diseased appetite for the marvelous; something more than the promulgation of oracular platitudes; something more than upsetting material objects to the admiration of the wonder-lover; something more than telling the age of the living or the dead, etc.” (Hardinge, 98)

What is that “something more”?

“[It is] the intelligence displayed by this unseen power. That was almost always manifested at every interview, and the question that obviously presented itself on the very outset was, whether that was from the mind of any mortal present, or from some other source. So that, even if it had been established that the sounds and physical manifestations of which I have been speaking were produced by mortal agency, still the question remained, whence came the intelligence that was displayed? For instance: What was the power that read the thoughts which I had buried for a quarter of a century in the depths of my heart? What was the power that knew my interrogatory the instant it was formed in my mind? What was the power that read the questions which I had written in the solitude of my study? What the power that revealed my secret purposes to the bystanders, and the purposes to the bystanders, and the purposes of others to me?” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 76)

But did you ask the communicating spirits what it was all about?

“[Certainly], one of the first of [my] questions was this: What is this which I am witnessing? Is it a departure from nature’s laws or in conformity with them? Is it a miracle, or is it the operation of some hitherto unknown but pre-existing cause, now for the first time manifesting itself? The answer I got was: ‘It is the result of human progress, it is an execution, not a suspension, of nature’s laws, and it is not now for the first time manifesting itself, but in all ages of the world has at times been displayed’.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 39)

As you and others have often asked, Cui Bono?

“To that inquiry I have directed my earnest attention, devoting to the task for over two years all the leisure I could command, and increasing that leisure as far as I could by withdrawing myself from all my former recreations... I found there were very many ways in which this unseen intelligence communed with us, besides the rappings and table tippings (*automatic writing, direct writing, trance voice*), and that through those other modes there came very many communications distinguished for their eloquence, their

high order of intellect and their pure and lofty moral tone; at the same time I discovered many inconsistencies and contradictions that were calculated to mislead.” (Hardinge, 98)

Calculated to mislead? I don’t understand.

“The difficulty in all this matter lies in our expecting too much perfection in the spirits, in looking upon them in knowing more than they do, and as being able to do more than they can; in other words in the erroneous conception of the true nature and character of the spirit world... [Moreover] I have good reason to believe that there is in the spirit world much opposition to this intercourse with us, and that a combination has been formed to intercept and, if possible, to overthrow it, and one mode is by visiting circles and individuals, exciting their suspicions of spirits, and bad thoughts as to their good faith and purity of purpose.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 455-456)

So there may very well be reasons why some passages in Scripture warn against it?

“Oh, how sad is the mistake of him, who from a superficial examination, ventures to pronounce it all evil! He may as well enter the dens of iniquity in this great city, and hearing amid its festering wickedness the mingled shout of blasphemy and ribaldry that will ascend before him, thence infer that such is the character of this whole community.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 54)

I understand that the discourses from Swedenborg and Bacon were received through Dr. Dexter’s hand. Would you mind explaining a little of that?

“The handwriting of each is unlike the other, and though both are written by Dr. Dexter’s hand, they are both unlike his; so that with ease, when he is under the influence [*of spirits*], he writes several different kinds of handwriting, and some of them more rapidly than he can write his own. This he cannot do when he is not under the influence; and I have never seen any person that could, in his normal condition, write with such rapidity, at one sitting, four or five different kinds of handwriting, each distinctly marked, and having and always retaining its peculiar characteristic.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 50)

Although Swedenborg and Bacon appear to be in agreement with each other, one of the difficulties in accepting all of this spirit communication is the fact that there are occasionally various contradictions relative to what is supposedly truth. I take it that this is because the spirits are at different levels of advancement.

“[True], there are at times contradictions and inconsistencies in spiritual intercourse, as all must be aware, but there is one remarkable fact, viz., that amid all these incongruities – through all mediums, whether partially or highly developed – from all the spirits who commune, whether progressed or unprogressed, there is a universal accordance on one point, and that is that we pass into the next state of existence just what we are in this; and that we are not suddenly changed into a state of perfection or imperfection, but find ourselves in a state of progression, and that this life on earth is but a preparation for the next, and the next but a continuation of this.” (Edmonds, Vol. 2, 21-22)

What made you decide to go public with your findings?

“I went into the investigation originally thinking it a deception, and intending to make public my exposure of it. Having from my researches, come to a different conclusion, I feel that the obligation to make known the results is just as strong. Therefore, it is mainly, that I give the result to the world. I say mainly, because there is another consideration which influences me, and that is the desire to extend to others a knowledge which I am conscious cannot but make them happier and better.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 79)

Thank you, Judge Edmonds. Any parting thoughts?

[“Let me leave you with the message given to me at one of the sittings]: ‘No one can begin to progress until he has correct ideas of the future existence; and it is only when not in error on that subject, only when knowing our spiritual nature and destiny that we begin to progress.’” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 57)

George T. Dexter, M.D.

Much more was said by Judge Edmonds, which space does not permit here. At one point, he began to discuss the wisdom given him and others in his circle by the spirits of Swedenborg and Bacon – wisdom that covers nearly one-thousand pages in their two-volume book – but defendant’s counsel objected to this testimony as irrelevant and the objection was sustained. He also testified as to his own mediumship, though it was apparently limited to clairvoyance. Dr. George T. Dexter, the New York physician who collaborated with Edmonds in his research and reporting, was then called to the stand and testified as to his experiences. He explained that he was initially opposed to the whole idea of mediumship and spirit communication, considering it either a foolish delusion or outrageous deception. However, he was persuaded to observe a medium of “considerable power” and was able to put questions to an invisible source and receive proper answers by “spirit raps.” In a second demonstration, at Dexter’s home, Dexter’s young daughter began trembling and then writing in bold, large letters, not resembling her ordinary handwriting. Dexter testified:

“And what was yet more remarkable, she wrote rapidly and easily, and the style of the composition and the spelling far excelled what we know was the character of her original attempts at composition, or her spelling previous to this time.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 84)

“I have listened to the most elevated thoughts couched in language far beyond her comprehension, describing facts in science, and circumstances in the daily life of the spirit after death, which were corroborated fact by fact, idea by idea, by other mediums with whom she was entirely unacquainted, uttered by a little girl scarce nine years old. The same medium I have heard repeat verse after verse, impromptu, of poetry, glowing with inspiration and sparkling with profound thought and sentiment, and yet this child never wrote a line of poetry before in her life.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 87)

After many correct answers were given to questions put by the sitters to the “invisible” communicating through his daughter’s arm, the daughter, obviously fatigued, was, according to Dexter, levitated and placed on a couch by an unseen force. As everything he had witnessed was in total conflict with his religious beliefs and natural law, he refused to give it more attention. However, not long after, he testified, he was sitting alone in his office when his arm began trembling as he heard distinct raps. He asked if a spirit was attempting to influence him and then heard three more distinct raps, the response previously used for “yes.” Dexter further resisted, not only that night but in the following days. He often felt his arm agitated and a trembling sensation would be felt for hours. He further testified:

“After this concerted and continued attempt to impress me had passed over, I refrained from visiting circles and thought by staying away I might be free from any impression; on the contrary, my arm would be moved when asleep, and awake me by its motion. During the time I abstained from sitting in any circle, I was twice lifted bodily from my bed, moved off its edge, and thus suspended in the air... My mind was unusually active, and I noted every thing that took place with an intenseness of perception I never before experienced. My bodily sensation was likewise increased in power.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 91-92)

Dexter eventually gave into the impulses and became an automatic writing medium. He explained:

“During the whole time, from their earliest endeavor to write, they have used my hand as the instrument to convey their own thoughts, without any appreciation on my part of either ideas or subject. I know nothing of what is written until after it is read to me, and frequently, when asked to read what has been communicated, I have found it impossible to decipher it. Not only is the thought concealed, but after it has been read to me I lose all recollection of the subject, until again my memory is refreshed by the reading. The peculiar effect on my recollection occurred more frequently when the spirits commenced writing, and I have been told by them that it was produced by their efforts to separate the action of my own mind from their thoughts, when teaching on a subject which required several sittings to finish.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 93)

Swedenborg and Bacon eloquently explained the nature of reality and the meaning of life in a manner that appeals to reason, though slightly in conflict with or beyond orthodox religion and mainstream science. Counsel for the defense continued to object to any of it being mentioned, as it was irrelevant.

Governor Nathaniel P. Tallmadge

After serving 10 years as a United States Senator from New York, Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, a lawyer by profession, served two years as Governor of the Territory of Wisconsin. He had practiced law in the same courts as Judge John Edmonds and knew him as a man of “classical education” and “acute mind.” He was mystified by Edmonds’s reports on spirit phenomena and therefore began to take an interest in the

matter. His interest was peaked when his 13-year-old daughter began playing the piano “on the instruction of spirits, like an experienced pianist.” He testified:

“She knows nothing of notes or music, and never played the piano before in her life. The first time she played was Beethoven’s Grand Waltz, and then several others which we were familiar. After that, she played many we had never heard before, and improvised words suited to the airs, beautiful, and of the highest tone of religious and moral sentiment.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 35)

Beginning in 1852, Tallmadge sat with a number of mediums, including rapping mediums, writing mediums, and speaking mediums. He also reported witnessing physical phenomena, including movement of tables without any visible force. He opined that the physical manifestations were more satisfactory to most observers, but he was more pleased with mental phenomena than physical. Testifying as to the answers he received through various mental mediums, he stated:

“Objectors cannot deny that these answers came from an intelligent source; but they sometimes say that they are to be found in the mind of the interrogator. It is true that the interrogator oftentimes knows the answer to the question mentally propounded by him; and it is equally true that he frequently does not know what the appropriate answer should be, but ascertains its truth afterward. Neither can he in any way anticipate many communications which are made without any questions being asked. I have frequently received such communication of an elevated character, and far above the capacity of the medium. I conclude, therefore, they do not come from the medium, nor from the mind of the interrogator.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 420)

Tallmadge went on to testify that the communications are perfectly characteristic of the individuals from whom they had purportedly come. He said that he had received frequent communication from his old friend, John C. Calhoun, who had served as the seventh vice-president of the United States, from 1825 to 1832, and had died on March 31, 1850. One message from Calhoun to Tallmadge by means of automatic writing read “I’m with you still.” Tallmadge showed the message to three of their mutual friends and one of Calhoun’s sons, and all agreed that it was a perfect fac simile of the handwriting of John C. Calhoun. It was especially noted that Calhoun was in the habit of writing “I’m” for “I am,” which was not common at that time. (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 430)

With another medium, Calhoun asked Tallmadge to bring a guitar to their next meeting. He did so and placed it on a drawer, no one touching it. Tallmadge testified:

“The guitar was touched softly and gently, and gave forth sweet and delicious sounds, like the accompaniment to a beautiful and exquisite piece of music. It then played a sort of symphony, in much louder and bolder tones. And, as it played, these harmonious sounds, becoming soft and sweet and low, began to recede, and grew fainter and fainter, till they died away on the ear in the distance. Then they returned, and grew louder and nearer, till they were heard again, in full and gushing volume as when they commenced. I am utterly incapable of giving any adequate idea of the beauty and harmony of this

music. I have heard the guitar touched by the most delicate and scientific hands, and heard from it, under such guidance, the most splendid performances. But never did I hear any thing that fastened upon the very soul like these prophetic strains drawn out by an invisible hand from the spirit world.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 428)

After the music stopped, Tallmadge received this message: “This is my hand that touches you and the guitar. [signed] John C. Calhoun.” Over the objection of defense counsel, Tallmadge was permitted by the judge to read, in part, a message he received from Calhoun, which read:

“How very dim life on earth seems to me now! I look upon it as a troubled dream, wherein were indeed some bright spots, some kind feelings shed around my path to make it brighter. I was but the germ placed in a casket of clay, whose inner unfoldings, whose heaven-sent aspirations, should have begun to develop themselves sooner while placed there. (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 403)

When Tallmadge asked Calhoun the purpose of the manifestations he had witnessed. Calhoun replied: “My friend, the question is often put to you, ‘What good can come from these manifestations?’ I will answer it. It is to draw mankind together in harmony, and convince skeptics of the immortality of the soul.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 425)

Tallmadge had put the same question to W. E. Channing, with whom he was communicating through another medium at an earlier date. The response was: “To unite mankind, and to convince skeptical minds of the immortality of the soul.” (Edmonds, Vol. 1, 425)

Professor Robert Hare

Ladies and gentlemen, you should be overwhelmed by now, but let me continue with witnesses. I’d now like to call Professor Robert Hare to the witness stand. Professor Hare was a world-renowned inventor and an esteemed professor of chemistry before becoming one of the early psychical researchers. In 1818, he was called to the chair of chemistry and natural philosophy at William and Mary and that same year was appointed as professor of chemistry in the department of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where he would remain until his retirement in 1847. He was awarded honorary M.D. degrees from Yale in 1806 and Harvard in 1816. In 1839, he was the first recipient of the Rumford Award for his invention of the oxy-hydrogen blow-pipe and his improvements in galvanic methods. In addition to frequently writing on scientific subjects, Professor Hare also wrote, using the pen name Eldred Grayson, articles on political, economic, and philosophical issues, including opposition to slavery.

Professor Hare invented an apparatus, called the spiritoscope, to facilitate and expedite communication, as the process he had observed was very slow. His invention consisted of a circular disk with the letters of the alphabet around the circumference of the disk. It had weights, pulleys, and cords attaching it to the tilting table. The medium would sit behind

the table in order to supply the “psychic force” through which the spirits spelled out messages.

Professor Hare, as I understand it, you initially concluded that spirit communication was nothing but a “popular madness”?

“In common with almost all educated persons of the nineteenth century, I had been brought up deaf to any testimony which claimed assistance from supernatural causes, such as ghosts, magic, or witchcraft...[and] I was at that time utterly incredulous of any cause of the phenomena excepting unconscious muscular action on the part of the persons with whom the phenomena were associated. The inference of [Professor Michael] Faraday, tending to the same conclusion, I thoroughly sanctioned.” (Hare, 37)

Your reports suggest that you have done a complete turnabout.

“It is a well-known saying that there is ‘but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.’...I sincerely believe that I have communicated with the spirits of my parents, sister, brother, and dearest friends, and likewise with the spirits of the illustrious Washington and other worthies of the spirit world; that I am commissioned, under their auspices, to teach truth and to expose error... If I am a victim to an intellectual epidemic, my mental constitution did not yield at once to the miasma.” (Hare, 15)

I gather from your reports that you have studied more than 20 mediums. What kind of mediumship have you witnessed?

“There are two modes in which spiritual manifestations are made through the influence or sub-agency of media. In the one mode, they employ the tongue to speak, the fingers to write, or hands to actuate tables or instruments for communication; in the other, they act upon ponderable matter directly, though a halo or aura appertaining to the media; so that although the muscular power may be incapacitated for aiding them, they will cause a body to move, or produce raps intelligibly so as to select letters conveying their ideas, uninfluenced by those of the medium” (Hare, 159)

I recall reading that your first sitting involved communication by raps or taps.

“[True, we were] seated at a table with half a dozen persons, a hymn was sung with religious zeal and solemnity. Soon afterward tappings were distinctly heard as if made beneath and against the table, which, from the perfect stillness of every one of the party, could not be attributed to any one among them. Apparently, the sounds were such as could only be made with some hard instrument, or with the ends of fingers aided by the nails. I learned that simple queries were answered by means of these manifestations; one tap being considered as equivalent to a negative; two, to doubtful; and three, to affirmative. With the greatest apparent sincerity, questions were put and answers taken and recorded, as if all concerned considered them as coming from a rational though invisible agent.

“Subsequently, two media sat down at a small table (drawer removed), which upon careful examination I found to present to my inspection nothing but the surface of a bare board, on the underside as well as upon the upper. Yet the taps were heard as before, seemingly against the table. Even assuming the people by whom I was surrounded, to be capable of deception, and the feat to be due to jugglery, it was still inexplicable. But manifestly I was in a company of worthy people, who were themselves under a deception if these sounds did not proceed from spiritual agency.” (Hare, 38)

But why such crude method of communication, such as raps and table tilting?

“An effort has been made to throw ridicule on spiritual manifestations, on account of phenomena being effected by means of tables and other movable furniture; but it should be recollected that, when movements were to be effected, resort to movable bodies was inevitable; and as generally the proximity of media, if not the contact, was necessary to facilitate the movements, there was no body so accessible as tables. But these violent mechanical manifestations were always merely to draw attention; just as a person will knock, or even kick, violently at the front door, until someone looks out of a window to communicate with him. The more violent manifestations ceased both at Hydesville, at Rochester, and at Stratford in Connecticut, as soon as the alphabet mode of communicating was employed. I never have had nay to take place during my intercourse with my spirit friends, unless as tests for unbelievers, when intellectual communications could not be made. It is more than 15 months since I have resorted to instruments which have nothing in common with tables.” (Hare, 21)

Will you give an example of the kind of evidence that was convincing to you?

“[Certainly,] having my [spiritoscope] at the residence of the lady by whom it had been actuated in the third trial, this lady sitting at the table as a medium, my sister reported herself. As a test question, I inquired ‘What was the name of a partner in business, of my father, who when he had left the city with the Americans during the Revolutionary war, came out with the British, and took care of the joint property?’ The disk revolved successively to letters correctly indicating the name to be Warren. I then inquired the name of my English grandfather, who died in London more than seventy years ago. The true name was given by the same process. The medium and all present were strangers to my family, and I had never heard either name mentioned, except by my father. Even my younger brother did not remember that of my father’s partner.

“Subsequently, in the presence of a medium utterly unacquainted with my family, to whom I was first introduced in December, 1853, and who had only within two years previously moved to our city from Maine, I inquired of my (deceased) father the name of an English cousin who had married an admiral. The name was spelled out. In like manner, the maiden name of an English brother’s wife was given – an unusual name, Clargess.” (Hare, 44-45)

There are those who would say the mediums were simply reading your mind, still a non-mechanistic theory but one in opposition to spirit agency. Can you give an example of some information conveyed of which you were unaware?

“[Yes,] on one occasion, a spirit gave his initials as C. H. Hare. Not recollecting any one of our relations of that name precisely, I inquired if he were one of them. The reply was affirmative. ‘Are you a son of my cousin Charles Hare, of St. Johns, New Brunswick?’ ‘Yes,’ was spelled out. This spirit then gave me a profession of his grandfather, also that of his father, and the fact of the latter having been blown into the water at Toulon, and of the latter having made a marvelous escape from Verdun, where he had been confined until his knowledge of French enabled him to escape by personating in disguise an officer of the customs. Only one mistake was made in referring to my English relatives, respecting an uncle’s name. Other inquiries were correctly answered. Subsequently, the brother of this spirit made us a visit in Philadelphia, and informed us that the mundane career of his brother, Charles Henry, had been terminated by shipwreck some few years anterior to the visit made, as mentioned, to me.

“[At this same sitting], no one being present beside myself, and the medium ignorant of Latin, my father spelt out upon the disk the words he had pointed out to me in Virgil more than fifty-five years ago, as expressive of the beating Entellus gave Dares, as described by Virgil – ‘*pulsatque versatque*’; also the word which so much resembles the sound of horses’ hoofs trampling on the ground, ‘*Quadrupedante*’.” (Hare, 53)

You frequently mention the spheres. Would you mind elaborating a little on that subject?

“It is plain that between the lowest degrees of vice, ignorance, and folly, and the highest degrees of virtue, learning, and wisdom, there are many gradations. When we are translated to the spheres, we take a rank proportional to our merit, which seems to be there intuitively susceptible of estimation by the law above alluded to, of the grossness being greater as the character is more imperfect. Both the spirits and spheres are represented as having a gradation in constitutional refinement, so that the sphere to which a spirit belongs is intuitively manifest. Rank is determined by a sort of moral specific gravity, in which merit is inversely as weight.” (Hare, 121)

Would you elaborate a little on “moral specific gravity”?

“Spirits are carried along with our globe by their moral affections and affinity, which upon them acts as gravitation upon material bodies. They are just where they wish themselves to be, as they move in obedience to their moral impulses or aspirations, not having a gross, material body to carry along with them. Spirits of the higher spheres control more or less those below them in station, who are sent by them to impress mortals virtuously. Spirits are not allowed to interpose directly, so as to alter the course of events upon earth. They are not allowed to aid in any measure to obtain wealth... In proportion as spirits improve in purity, benevolence, and wisdom, they ascend.” (Hare, 122-123)

Please tell us something of the mediumship you, yourself, developed.

“[Of course.] I was sitting in my solitary third-story room at Cape Island, invoking my sister as usual, when to my surprise I saw Cadwallader spelt out on my disk. ‘My old friend, General Cadwallader?’ said I. ‘Yes.’ A communication ensued of much interest. But before concluding, I requested him, as a test, to give me the name of a person whom I met in an affair of honour more than fifty years ago, when he (General Cadwallader) was my second. The name was forthwith given, by the pointing out on the disk the letters requisite to spell it. Now as the spirit of General Cadwallader, during more than fifteen months that other friends had sought to communicate with me, had never made me a visit, why should his name have been spelt out when I had not the remotest hope of his coming, and was expecting another spirit, the only one who had been with me at the Cape?” (Hare, 171)

Were you able to come to any conclusion as to what is behind mediumship?

“The aura of a medium which thus enables an immortal spirit to do within its scope things which it cannot do otherwise, appears to vary with the human being resorted to; so that only a few are so endowed with this aura as to be competent as media. Moreover, in those who are so constituted as to be competent instruments of spiritual actuation, this competency is various. There is a gradation of competency, by which the nature of the instrumentality varies from that which empowers violent loud knocking and the moving of ponderable bodies without actual contact, to the grade which confers power to make intellectual communication of the higher order without that of audible knocking. Further, the power to employ these grades of mediumship varies as the sphere of the spirit varies.” (Hare, 160)

Did you ever inquire of the spirits as to what it was all about?

“Agreeably to my spirit father’s communication, the manifestations which of late have given birth to Spiritualism, have been the result of a deliberate effort on the part of the inhabitants of the higher spheres to break through the partition which has interfered with the attainment, by mortals, of a correct idea of their destiny after death. To carry out this intention, a delegation of advanced spirits has been appointed. Referring to this statement, I inquired how it happened that low spirits were allowed to interfere in the undertaking. The answer was that the spirits of the lower spheres being more competent to make mechanical movements and loud rappings, their assistance was requisite.

“Likewise, I inquired why it was deemed expedient to make these manifestations in the first instance at Hydesville, near Rochester, through the spirit of a murdered man. The answer to this was that the spirit of a murdered man would excite more interest, and that a neighborhood was chosen where spiritual agency would be more readily credited than in more learned or fashionable and conspicuous circles, where the prejudice against supernatural agencies is extremely strong; but that the manifestations had likewise been made at Stratford, in Connecticut, under other circumstances. Nor were these the only

places. They had been made elsewhere without much success in awakening public attention.

“Thus, it appears that at the outset, the object was to draw attention, and in the next place to induce communication. It will appear from the account of the manifestations at Hydesville and Stratford, that as soon as through an ingenious agreement upon signals rational intercommunication was established, the manifestations became changed in character. The mischievousness displayed in the primitive derangement of furniture ceased. This was attributed to the replacement of spirits of inferior grade, by their superiors.” (Hare, 85)

Why do you think there has been so much resistance to all this?

“Bigotry, fanaticism, selfish sectarianism, the want of media, and bold, enlightened investigators, seem to have formed impenetrable obstacles to the promulgation of a knowledge of the greatest importance to human prosperity, morals, and future happiness. No doubt that so much evil should arise merely from want of a knowledge so near at hand, is one of the facts which human reason find it most difficult to reconcile with the power and goodness of the Almighty Ruler of the universe; but that is a difficulty which exists in case any one creed be assumed as true; since none has been heretofore so communicated as to be within reach of mankind in general. Meanwhile the error has originated in various sects, that they have been especially favored by God, so that they alone of all his creatures have had true light let in upon them” (Hare, 175-176)

The press has also been antagonistic, has it not?

“Almost every editor is, more or less, a censor to the press, and a peon of popularity. The tendency is not to repress, but to gratify, and, of course, promote existing bigotry. This bigotry and its Siamese brother, intolerance, have, in all countries and ages, been exercising a mischievous, though often a well-intended, vigilance, over any innovation of a nature to emancipate the human mind from educational error; and whenever supported by temporal power, has resorted to persecution – even to the use of the sword, of the rack, or the fagot; and, in this country of boasted freedom and much-vaunted liberty of the press, shows its baleful power by defamation, or alleging disqualification for employment, wherever its influence can be exerted.” (Hare, 23)

Thank you, Professor Hare. Any parting thoughts?

“[Yes,] it is evident from the creative power which the spirits aver themselves to possess, that they exercise faculties which they do not understand. Their explanation of the mysteries of mediumship only substitutes one mystery for another. [And] it has appeared to me a great error on the part of spirits, as well as mortals, that they should make efforts to explain the phenomena of the spirit world by the ponderable or imponderable agents of the temporal world. The fact that the rays of our sun do not affect the spirit world, and that there is for that region an appropriate luminary whose rays we do not perceive, must demonstrate that the imponderable element to which they owe their peculiar light differs

from the ethereal fluid which, according to the undulatory theory is the means of producing light in the terrestrial creation.” (Hare 161)

Your research and comments are very much appreciated, Professor Hare. And now I'd like to call Professor James Mapes to the stand.

Professor James J. Mapes

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce Professor James J. Mapes. He is remembered primarily as an agricultural chemist, inventor, and professor of chemistry and natural philosophy. He gained a reputation as an analytical chemist, inventing a new system of sugar refining and a process for tanning leather. He developed the use of a super-phosphate of lime which is said to have transformed American agriculture. He is also credited with many improvements in tempering steel, and in methods of distilling and dyeing. He served as professor of chemistry at the National Academy of Design in New York and later as professor of chemistry and natural philosophy at the American Institute. In 1844, he was elected president of the Mechanics' Institute of New York and was a founder of the of the National Agricultural Society.

Mapes testified that he became interested in psychic matters when both his wife and his daughter began displaying mediumistic ability. His wife, not known to have any artistic ability, began producing fine art, and his daughter became an automatic writing medium. In one sitting, the daughter claimed to be receiving messages from Mapes's father. Mapes asked for proof. The daughter's hand then wrote: "You may recollect that I gave you, among other books, an encyclopaedia; look on page 120 of that book, and you will find my name written there, which you have never seen." Mapes went to the warehouse where the books were stored, opened the box, which had been unopened in 27 years, and found his father's name written on page 120. (Doyle, 134)

Attorney Randall then said it was necessary for him to give a little background on Cora L. V. Scott, later Cora L. V. Richmond, a trance-speaking medium from Cuba, New York, before putting further questions to Mapes. Defense counsel objected but the judge permitted it. Randall explained that beginning in 1851, at age 11, young Cora would go into a trance and lecture on subjects far beyond her education, experience, and exposure. The subjects of her lectures included social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical matters, even extending to the emancipation of slaves. Her lectures were almost always prefaced with "we," referring to a group of 12 apparently advanced spirits speaking through her, e.g., "We come to tell you that your bodies shall go back to the dust, whence they came, but the spirits shall ascend to the 'mansions not made with hands.' There is happiness for all. Not perfect, nor immediate, but each one, according to his deeds and conditions, shall be happy. Everyone shall have such happiness as he is lifted to enjoy and comprehend." (Barrett, 1895, 292)

At age 15, Cora spoke about spiritual truth, saying: "Greatest and best of all, the divinest evidence is that which comes to the human spirit in its hours of exaltation, in its moments of intuition and inspiration, when it is brought vividly in contact with the upper world.

There is no questioning, no setting aside, no pushing away. The senses may cry deception, the intellect may say it is false, but the spirit, calm in the majesty of its own intuition and certainty, rests upon the mountain top of truth and says: 'We know whereof we testify. It is not blind faith; it is not fictitious logic. It is the certainty of absolute knowledge that causes every human spirit to shrink away from error, darkness, oppression, and bigotry.'" (Barrett, 1895, 293)

The young girl was studied by scientists, scholars, lawyers, ministers, and journalists. She would be given a subject matter by one of them and then immediately give a lengthy discourse on the subject, sometimes as long as an hour. She occasionally spoke in a foreign language and on one occasion responded to a man in Indian sign language. While touring the United Kingdom in 1874, at age 34, she spoke, according to one newspaper account, with "an unmistakable Scotch accent." (Barrett, 1895, 158)

Mapes traveled to Buffalo, New York, in 1854, to study the then 14-year-old marvel, asking her to speak on "primary rocks," to which Cora (or the spirits speaking through her) replied with a discourse on geology that left Mapes awestruck. He testified:

"I am a college educated man, and have been all my long life an investigator of scientific subjects and associated with scientific men, but I [stood there that afternoon] *dumb* before this young girl... She renders the most abstruse points perfectly understandable to the most common auditor. In close analysis of words she is not surpassed, and her knowledge of natural law seems to be an intuition amounting to almost a certainty. Her high-toned moral character has at all times defied the tongue of calumny. In metaphysics she shows a degree of erudition hitherto among the greatest scholars of the world." (Barrett, 1895, 90)

Mapes testified that he also witnessed phenomena with Daniel Dunglas Home and the Davenport Brothers. Asked by Randall to finalize his testimony with his conclusions, Mapes stated:

"The manifestations which are pertinent to the ends required are so conclusive in their character as to establish in my mind certain cardinal points. These are: First, that there is a future state of existence, which is but a continuation of our present state of being, devoid of such portions of our organism as are now denominated material. Second, that the great aim of nature, as shown through a great variety of spiritual existences, is progression, extending beyond the limits of this mundane sphere. Third, that spirits can and do communicate with mortals, and in all cases evince a desire to elevate and advance those they commune with. Fourth, that spirits have, in a vast number of well-attested instances, proved their will and ability to ward off dangers, cure sickness, prevent crimes, reform criminals, restore lost property, and communicate many useful, scientific, and some highly-occult and novel ideas to mankind." (Hardinge, 199)

Thank you, Professor Mapes. I now call Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace to testify before you.

Alfred Russel Wallace

Ladies and gentlemen, while history has given Charles Darwin most of the credit for the natural selection theory of evolution, it is well documented that Dr. Wallace, a British naturalist and explorer, was working on a parallel theory at the same time as Darwin and that he provided Darwin with his thoughts, including the “survival of the fittest” concept. When the ideas were made public before the Linnaean Society in London in 1858, it was referred to as the Darwin-Wallace paper.

Wallace’s conclusions concerning natural selection were arrived at after years of travel in wilderness areas, including the Amazon and the Malay Archipelago. He is said to have been Britain’s best-known naturalist and one of the world’s most recognized names, as he lectured extensively on *Darwinism*. He was awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Dublin and Oxford University. However, Wallace’s interest in Spiritualism tainted his reputation somewhat among some of his scientific colleagues.

Dr. Wallace, what were your early views relative to spiritual matters?

“Up to the time when I first became acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism, I was a confirmed philosophical skeptic, rejoicing in the works of Voltaire, Strauss, and Carl Vogt, and an ardent admirer (as I still am) of Herbert Spencer. I was so thorough and confirmed a materialist that I could not at that time find a place in my mind for the conception of spiritual existence, or for any other agencies in the universe than matter and force.” (Wallace, Preface, vi-vii)

So what changed your mind?

“My curiosity was at first excited by some slight but inexplicable phenomena occurring in a friend’s family, and my desire for knowledge and love of truth forced me to continue the inquiry. The facts became more and more assured, more and more varied, more and more removed from anything that modern science taught or modern philosophy speculated on. The facts beat me. They compelled me to accept them *as facts* long before I could accept the spiritual explanation of them; there was at that time no place in my fabric of thought into which it could be fitted. By slow degrees a place was made; but it was made, not by any preconceived or theoretical opinions, but by the continuous action of fact after fact, which could not be got rid of in any other way.” (Wallace, Preface vii)

Did you witness other phenomena after that?

“In September 1865, I began a series of visits to Mrs. Marshall (*a London medium*), generally accompanied by a friend – a good chemist and mechanic, and of a thoroughly skeptical mind. What we witnessed may be divided into two classes of phenomena – physical and mental. Both were very numerous and varied.” (Wallace, 135)

Would you give the jury some examples of the physical phenomena?

[Well, first], a small table, on which the hands of our person were placed (including my own and Mrs. Marshall's) rose up vertically about a foot from the floor, and remained suspended for about twenty seconds, while my friend, who was sitting looking on, could see the lower part of the table with the feet freely suspended above the floor.

[Second], while sitting at a large table... a guitar which had been placed in Miss T.'s hand slid down on the floor, passed over my feet, and came to Mr. R., against whose legs it raised itself up till it appeared above the table. I and Mr. R. were watching it carefully the whole time, and it behaved as if alive itself, or rather as if a small invisible child were by great exertions moving it and raising it up. These two phenomena were witnessed in bright gaslight.

[Third], A chair, on which a relation of Mr. R.'s sat, was lifted up with her on it. Afterwards, when she returned to the table from the piano, where she had been playing, her chair moved away just as she was going to sit down; on drawing it up, it moved away again. After this had happened three times, it became apparently fixed to the floor, so that she could not raise it. Mr. R. then took hold of it, and found that it was only by a great exertion he could lift it off the floor. This sitting took place in broad daylight, and in a room on the first floor with two windows." (Wallace, 135-136)

And you are certain there was no jugglery involved?

"I positively affirm that they are facts which really happened just as I have narrated them, and that there was no room for any possible trick or deception." (Wallace, 136)

What about mental phenomena?

"The mental phenomena which most frequently occur are the spelling out of the names of relations of persons present, their ages, or any other particulars about them. They are especially uncertain in their manifestation, though when they do succeed they are very conclusive to the persons who witness them." (Wallace, 136)

Did you personally hear from anyone?

"When I first received a communication myself, I was particularly careful to avoid giving any indication, by going with steady regularity over the letters; yet there was spelt out correctly, first, the place where my brother died, Para; then his Christian name, Herbert; and lastly, at my request, the name of a mutual friend who last saw him, Henry Walter Bates. On this occasion our party of six visited Mrs. Marshall for the first time, and my name, as well as those of the rest of the party, except one, were unknown to her. That one was my married sister, whose name was no clue to mine." (Wallace, 137)

Wallace also reported that with another sitter, the first three letters to come through were y-r-n, after which the sitter said they made no sense to her and asked the spirit to begin again. The complete name came as yrnehkcoffej, which meant absolutely nothing to the woman until Wallace figured out that the name was "Henry Jeffcock," the name the

woman was hoping for, spelled backwards. (Wallace, 138) He further reported witnessing apports. With one medium, Wallace accompanied a friend to a sitting. When the friend asked for a sunflower, a six-foot tall sunflower with a mass of earth about its roots fell on the table. (Wallace,171)

I gather from your various writings that you gradually came to accept the spirit hypothesis? Would you mind explaining that?

“The spiritual theory is the logical outcome of the whole of the facts. Those who deny it, in every instance with which I am acquainted, either from ignorance or disbelief, leave half the facts out of view.” (Wallace, 187)

What about the theory holding that the medium has a secondary personality which is somehow giving rise to all the phenomena?

“[Various] theories of a double or multiple personality, of a subconscious or second self, or of a lower stratum of consciousness, are called in to explain them or to attempt to explain them. The stupendous difficulty that, if these phenomena and these tests are to be all attributed to the ‘second self’ of living persons, then that second self is almost always a deceiving and lying self, however moral and truthful the visible and tangible first self may be, has, so far as I know, never been rationally explained; yet this cumbrous and unintelligible hypothesis finds great favour with those who have always been accustomed to regard the belief in a spirit world, and more particularly a belief that the spirits of our dead friends can and do sometimes communicate with us, as unscientific, unphilosophical, and superstitious.” (Wallace, Preface, xiv-xv)

So you feel the spirit hypothesis is definitely a scientific one?

“Why it should be unscientific more than any other hypothesis which alone serves to explain intelligibly a great body of facts, has never been explained. The antagonism which it excites seems to be mainly due to the fact that it is, and has long been in some form or other, the belief of the religious world and of the ignorant and superstitious of all ages, while a total disbelief in spiritual existence has been the distinctive badge of modern scientific skepticism.” (Wallace, Preface, xv)

Do you feel there is as much evidence for survival as there is for biological evolution?

“My position is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved quite as well as facts are proved in other sciences.” (Wallace, 211)

The skeptics often point to the trivial nature of mediumistic messages. Do you have any thoughts on that?

“The trivial and fantastic nature of the acts of some of these disembodied spirits is not to be wondered at when we consider the myriads of trivial and fantastic human beings who are daily becoming spirits, and who retain, for a time at least, their human natures in their new condition. So if we realize to ourselves the fact that spirits can in most cases only communicate with us in certain very limited modes, we shall see that the true ‘triviality’ consists in objecting to any mode of mental converse as being trivial or undignified.” (Wallace, 110)

What do you say to those members of orthodox religion who seem to be satisfied with faith alone and ask what the good of spirit communication is?

“It substitutes a definite, real, and practical conviction for a vague, theoretical, and unsatisfying faith. It furnishes actual knowledge on a matter of vital importance to all men and to which the wisest men and most advanced thinkers have held, and still hold, that no knowledge was attainable.” (Wallace, 220)

Sir William Crookes

Ladies and gentlemen, my next witness is Sir William Crookes. Sir William was a Fellow of the Royal Society and taught at the Royal College of Chemistry before becoming a meteorologist at the Radcliffe Observatory in Oxford. In 1861, he discovered the element thallium, and later invented the radiometer, the spintharoscope, and the Crookes tube, a high-vacuum tube which contributed to the discovery of the X-ray. He was founder and editor of *Chemical News* and later served as editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*. Knighted for his scientific work, he was not someone to be easily duped or to fabricate strange stories. In fact, Crookes undertook psychical research with the intent of demonstrating that the alleged phenomena of spiritualism were all fraudulent. He opined that the increased employment of scientific methods would drive the “worthless residuum of spiritualism into the unknown limbo of magic and necromancy.” Crookes is best remembered for his investigation of mediums Daniel Dunglas Home and Florence Cook, but he sat with a number of other mediums, including Kate Fox.

Sir William, when it was first announced that you would be conducting an investigation of D.D. Home and other mediums, didn’t your scientific peers applaud, assuming you would expose it as all fraudulent and thereby rescue science?

“[Correct.] It was taken for granted by [my peers] that the results of my experiments would be in accordance with their preconception. What they really desired was not *the truth*, but an additional witness in favor of their own foregone conclusion. When they found that the facts which that investigation established could not be made to fit those opinions, why – ‘so much the worse for the facts.’ They try to creep out of their confident recommendations of the enquiry by declaring that ‘Mr. Home is a clever conjurer, who has duped us all.’” (Crookes, 13)

Is there even a remote possibility that Mr. Home was a master magician?

“It is idle to attribute these results to trickery, for I would [point out] that what I relate has not been accomplished at the house of a medium, but in my own house, where preparations have been quite impossible. A medium, walking into my dining room, cannot, while seated in one part of my room with a number of persons keenly watching him, by trickery make an accordion play in my own hand when I hold it keys downward, or cause the same accordion to float about the room playing all the time. He cannot introduce machinery which will wave window curtains or pull up Venetian blinds eight feet off, tie a knot in a handkerchief and place it in a far corner of the room, sound notes on a distant piano, cause a card-plate to float about the room, raise a water bottle and tumbler from the table, make a coral necklace rise on end, cause a fan to move about and fan the company, or set in motion a pendulum when enclosed in a glass case firmly cemented to the wall.” (Crookes, 39-40)

One of your reports referred to you and the others present observing a phantom playing the accordion. Would you mind elaborating on that incident?

“A phantom form came from a corner of the room, took an accordion in its hands, and then glided about the room playing the instrument. The form was visible to all present for many minutes, Mr. Home also been seen at the time. Coming rather close to a lady who was sitting apart from the rest of the company, she gave a slight cry, upon which it vanished.” (Crookes, 44)

Could the accordion you mentioned have had some special mechanism built into it, as with a self-playing piano? Of course, I realize that this would not explain how it floated about the room.

“The accordion was a new one, having been purchased by myself for the purpose of these experiments, at Wheatstone’s, in Conduit Street. Mr. Home had neither handled nor seen the instrument before the commencement of the test experiments.” (Crookes, 7)

You also reported on luminous appearances.

“I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air, whilst my hand was moving about amongst them. I have seen a luminous cloud floating upwards to a picture. Under the strictest test conditions, I have more than once had a solid, luminous crystalline body placed in my hand by a hand which did not belong to any person in the room. In the light, I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about.” (Crookes, 44-45)

Can you say a little more about the hands? Were Mr. Home’s hands observed during all this?

“A hand has been repeatedly seen by myself and others playing the keys of an accordion, both of the medium’s hands being visible at the same time, and sometimes being held by

those near him. The hands and fingers do not always appear to me to be solid and lifelike. Sometimes, indeed, they present more the appearance of a nebulous cloud not equally visible to all present... I have more than once seen, first an object move, then a luminous cloud appear to form about it, and lastly, the cloud condense into a shape and become a perfectly-formed hand. At this stage the hand is visible to all present. It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly life-like and graceful, the fingers moving, and the flesh apparently as human as that of any in the room. At the wrist, or arm, it becomes hazy, and fades off into a luminous cloud. To the touch, the hand sometimes appears icy cold and dead; at other times, warm and life-like, grasping my own with the firm pressure of an old friend. I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get loose, but it gradually seemed to resolve itself into vapour, and faded in that manner from my grasp.” (Crookes, 41-42)

Your reports often refer to an “intelligence” involved with the phenomena. Please explain to the jury to what you are referring.

“At a very early stage of the enquiry, it was seen that the power producing the phenomena was not merely a blind force, but was associated with or governed by intelligence... The intelligence governing the phenomena is sometimes manifestly below that of the medium. It is frequently in direct opposition to the wishes of the medium: when a determination has been expressed to do something which might not be considered quite right, I have known urgent messages given to induce a reconsideration. The intelligence is sometimes of such a character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present. (Crooks, 36-37)

Mr. Home is best remembered for being levitated by spirits. Did you actually observe such levitations?

“The most striking cases of levitation which I have witnessed have been with Mr. Home. On three separate occasions have I seen him raised completely from the floor of the room. Once sitting in an easy chair, once kneeling on his chair, and once standing up. On each occasion, I had full opportunity of watching the occurrence as it was taking place. (Crookes, 38)

Did you observe him under full light?

“The occurrences have taken place in my own house, in the light, and with only private friends present besides the medium... The power possessed by Mr. Home is sufficiently strong to withstand this antagonistic influence (bright light); consequently he always objects to darkness at his séances. Indeed, except on two occasions, when, for some particular experiments of my own, light was excluded, everything which I have witnessed with him has taken place in the light. (Crookes, 33)

You recorded some 28 sittings with Mr. Home. Why wasn't he levitated more often than three times?

“In the case of Mr. Home, the development of this force varies enormously, not only from week to week, but varies from hour to hour; on some occasions the force is inappreciable by my tests for an hour or more, and then suddenly reappears with great strength. It is capable of acting at a distance from Mr. Home not unfrequently as far as two or three feet, but it is always strongest close to him. (Crookes, 23)

“There are at least a hundred recorded instances of Mr. Home’s rising from the ground, in the presence of as many separate persons, and I have heard from the lips of this kind – the Earl of Dunraven, Lord Lindsay, and Captain C. Wynne their own most minute accounts of what took place. The accumulated testimony establishing Mr. Home’s levitations is overwhelming.” (Crookes, 39)

In your records of April 12, 1871, you recorded that one of the sitters was levitated and then dropped on the table. Would you summarize that for our jury?

“[Certainly. It was suggested that we sing and] after that Mr. Home gave us a solo – rather a sacred piece – and almost before a dozen words were uttered Mr. [Frank] Herne was carried right up, floated across the table and dropped with a crash of pictures and ornaments at the other end of the room. My brother Walter, who was holding one hand, stuck to him as long as he could, but he says Herne was dragged out of his hand as he went across the table. Mrs. W. Crookes, who was at the other side of the corner, kept hold all the time.” (Medhurst, 158)

Crookes explained that low-class influences seemed to have caused the occurrences, but Home resumed singing and this appeared to drive them away. After a minute or two, Crookes suggested another group song, “For he’s a jolly good fellow,” but then heard a very sweet voice, high overhead, say, “You should rather give praise to God.” They then tried a sacred piece and heard other voices singing over their heads, after which the accordion was levitated from the table and floated about the room, while playing “one of the most exquisite sacred pieces I have ever heard, and being accompanied by a very fine male voice.” (Medhurst, 158-159)

Asked by Randall, to recount the experience recorded in his record for June 28, 1971, Crookes testified that Home appeared to be going into the trance state when he asked for the accordion and played two simple airs. While entranced, Home started speaking to others in the room, apparently out of character, when a Mrs. Humphrey asked who was speaking. The reply, through Home’s vocal cords, came: “It is not one spirit in particular. It is a general influence. It requires two or three spirits to get complete control over Dan. The conditions are not very good tonight.” It was further said that very few spirits are able to communicate with them and that they are constantly experimenting on their side. (Medhurst, 190) Randall continued with his questions.

I understand that many of your friends and colleagues from the science world have been present at these experiments in your home. Except perhaps for Alfred Russel

Wallace, we haven't seen much from them attesting to your observations. Why is that?

“It argues ill for the boasted freedom of opinion among scientific men, that they have so long refused to institute a scientific investigation into the existence and nature of facts asserted by so many competent and credible witnesses, and which they are freely invited to examine when and where they please. For my own part, I too much value the pursuit of truth, and the discovery of any new fact in nature, to avoid inquiry because it appears to clash with prevailing opinions. But as I have no right to assume that others are equally willing to do this, I refrain from mentioning the names of my friends without their permission.” (Crookes, 8)

And yet your scientific colleagues still scoff at your reports?

“Science has trained and fashioned the average mind into habits of exactitude and disciplined perception, and in so doing has fortified itself for tasks higher, wider, and incomparably more wonderful than even the wisest among our ancestors imagined. Like the souls in Plato's myth that follow the chariot of Zeus, it has ascended to a point of vision far above the earth. It is henceforth open to science to transcend all we now think we know of matter, and to gain new glimpses of a profounder scheme of Cosmic Law.” (Crookes, 70)

Thank you, Sir William, I now call to the stand Sir William Barrett.

Sir William Barrett

Before making a name for himself in psychical research, ladies and gentlemen, Sir William Barrett established himself in the world of physics. After serving as assistant to the famous physicist John Tyndall from 1862 to 1867, he became professor of physics at the Royal College of Science in Dublin. He went on to become a distinguished scientist in his own right, developing a silicon-iron alloy known as stalloy, used in the commercial development of the telephone and transformers, while also doing pioneering research on entoptic vision, leading to the invention of the entoptiscope and a new optometer. In 1912, he was knighted for his scientific work. Sir William was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research.

Good afternoon, Sir William. Please tell the jury member when and how you became interested in psychical research?

“In 1874, I made my first acquaintance with the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, and was able to put to the test my preconceived theory of hallucination, which was gradually dispelled, and I became convinced of the objective reality of the phenomena... For us wayfaring men, reason needs some help in climbing the steeply attained by faith. And is not this help afforded by the steps slowly being cut in the upward path by means of psychical research?” (Barrett, 1926, 138)

So you initially concluded that all of the phenomena you had heard about were the result of hallucination?

“I was at one time disposed to think it was an adequate explanation. In fact, in a paper read before the British Association in 1875 on ‘abnormal conditions of the mind,’ I detailed some experiments I had made, showing that by suggestion it was easy to lead a subject, when in a light hypnotic trance, to hold the most extravagant beliefs, e.g., that he had floated around the room, and this for some days after complete waking. But hallucination cannot account for the permanent records Sir William Crookes obtained, even if it extended to all the numerous witnesses who were sometimes present with him on these occasions. Hence, though admitting that it is of great importance to be on one’s guard against hallucination and mal-observation, as well as fraud, I am fully satisfied that these causes are quite inadequate to explain all the phenomena before us.” (Barrett, 1917, 105)

You reported on a very interesting experience with the medium Kathleen Goligher with experiments conducted by Dr. William Crawford. Would you mind summarizing that experience?

“[Not at all.] I was permitted to have an evening sitting with the [Goligher family], Dr. Crawford accompanying me... The room was illuminated with a bright gas flame burning in a lantern, with a large red glass window, on the mantelpiece... They sat round a small table with hands joined together, but no one touching the table. Very soon knocks came and messages were spelt out as one of us repeated the alphabet aloud. Suddenly the knocks increased in violence, and being encouraged, a tremendous bang came which shook the room and resembled the blow of a sledge hammer on an anvil. A tin trumpet which had been placed below the table now poked out its smaller end close under the top of the table near where I was sitting. I was allowed to try and catch it, but it dodged all my attempts in the most amusing way, the medium on the opposite side sat perfectly still, while at my request all held up their joined hands so that I could see no one was touching the trumpet, as it played peep-boo with me. Sounds like the sawing of wood, the bouncing of a ball, and other noises occurred, which were inexplicable. The table then began to rise from the floor some 18 inches and remained suspended in the air. I was allowed to go up to the table and saw clearly no one was touching it, a clear space separating the sitters from the table. I tried to press the table down, and though I exerted all my strength could not do so; then I climbed up on the table and sat on it, my feet off the floor, when I was swayed to and fro and finally tipped off. The table of its own accord now turned upside down, no one touching it, and I tried to lift it off the ground, but it could not be stirred; it appeared screwed down to the floor. At my request all the sitters’ clasped hands had been kept raised above their heads, and I could see that no one was touching the table. When I desisted from trying to lift the inverted table from the floor, it righted itself again on its own accord, no one helping it. Numerous sounds displaying an amused intelligence then came, and after each individual present had been greeted with some farewell raps the sitting ended.” (Barrett, 1917, 47-48)

Barrett's court transcript filled 125 pages of observations and experiences, including many with renowned Irish Mediums Hester Travers Smith and Geraldine Cummins. He reported many more veridical cases.

Why were so many of your scientific colleagues so opposed to Sir William Crookes and then to you?

“The popular habit of thought, whether lay or scientific, regards the whole thing as too contemptible for any inquiry, that it reeks, not of the bottomless pit, but of the dunghill; superstition, fraud, and tomfoolery amply accounting for all of the alleged ‘phenomena.’ Hence, they regard with complacency the many shallow *quid-nuncs*, ever on the lookout for something new, who find it in fourth-hand stories of ‘spooks’ abundant material for the entertainment of their friends. In a busy world, occupied with other things – where the fierce struggle for material existence, wealth, and position dominates everything – such a state of mind is very natural. But I have failed to find that a single person who ridicules Spiritualism has given to the subject any serious and patient consideration; moreover, I venture to assert that any fair-minded person who devotes to its careful and dispassionate investigation as many days, or even hours, as some of us have given years, will find it impossible to continue sitting in the seat of the scornful, whatever other position he may take up.” (Barrett, 1917, 2-3)

After so many years of seemingly evidential mediumship, the world seems no less skeptical? Do you feel that there is a point at which no further evidence can help us?

“It is probable we shall never be able to see behind the veil with the clearness and assurance that Swedenborg claimed to possess, although he warned others off the ground he trod. There may be, and are, I believe, good reasons for this obscure vision. If everyone were as certain as they are of day following night, that after the momentary darkness of death they would pass into an endless life of brightness and freedom, such as many spiritualists depict, it is possible few would wish to remain on earth. May be multitudes of earth-worn and weary souls would resort to some painless and lethal drug that would enable them to enter a realm where they hoped their troubles would be forever ended. A vain and foolish hope, for the discipline of life on earth is necessary for us all, and none can hope to attain a higher life without the educative experience of trial and conflict.” (Barrett, 1917, 247-248)

So if doubt is a necessity, what is the point of psychical research?

“The paramount importance of psychical research is found in correcting the habit of Western thought – of the average men we meet – that the physical plane is the whole of Nature, or at any rate the only aspect of the universe which really concerns us. Under this false and deadly assumption all wider views and spiritual conceptions wither and die as soon as they are born. Instead of a universe peopled with unseen personalities, the science of today has gone to the other extreme, and as Mr.[Frederic] Myers once eloquently said, we are now taught to believe ‘the Universe to be a soulless interaction of atoms, and life a paltry misery closed in the grave.’” (Barrett, 1926, 145)

Why not leave it to organized religion to deal with that?

“Surely it is the business of science to extend its domain in these fruitful fields of research, and it is only because the trained scientific investigator has, until quite recently, turned his back on these phenomena, that the humble spiritualists have had to try and do the neglected work of science in this very difficult region of enquiry; and now having done it to the best of their ability, they are scorned and pelted by the educated world and told they are guilty of ‘intellectual whoredom,’ whilst their painstaking effort to enlarge the sum of human knowledge is stigmatized as the ‘recrudescence of superstition,’ and this by the leaders and organs of scientific thought, where one would have expected a welcome even to the humblest seeker after truth.” (Barrett, 1917, 99)

Would you mind summarizing your current belief?

“I am personally convinced that the evidence we have published decidedly demonstrates (1) the existence of a spiritual world, (2) survival after death, and (3) of occasional communication from those who have passed over... It is however hardly possible to convey to others who have not had a similar experience an adequate idea of the strength and cumulative force of the evidence that has compelled [my] belief.” (Barrett, 1926, 162)

Thank you, Sir William. My next witness is a man of organized religion, a maverick of sorts in that regard, The Reverend William Stainton Moses.

Rev. William Stainton Moses

A little background on Reverend Moses to begin with, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. He took his master’s degree at Oxford in 1863 and was then ordained a clergyman in the Church of England. After serving as curate on the Isle of Man for some five years, he returned to London and took a position as English Master in University College, a position he would hold until 1889.

Moses testified that he initially considered reports on mediumship, especially those with medium D. D. Home, as the “dreariest twaddle.” However, he was persuaded to attend a sitting with Miss Lottie Fowler and received some very evidential information from a deceased friend. His curiosity aroused, he and his friend, Dr. Stanhope Speer, who considered it all “stuff and nonsense,” began attending other seances, including some with D. D. Home. After several months, Moses was convinced that he was indeed communicating with the spirit world, and soon thereafter he began to realize that he had mediumistic abilities. He then began sitting in a circle with Dr. and Mrs. [Maria] Speer, their son Charlton Speer, and several others. Mrs. Speer kept detailed records of the sitting, and Charlton Speer later wrote a biography of Moses. Randall put more questions to him:

Rev. Moses, will you please describe the automatic writing that came through your arm.

“At first the writing was very small and irregular, and it was necessary for me to write slowly and cautiously and to watch the hand, following the lines with my eye, otherwise the message soon became incoherent, and the result was mere scribble. In a short time, however, I found that I could dispense with these precautions. The writing, while becoming more and more minute, became at the same time very regular and beautifully formed. As a specimen of calligraphy, some of the pages are exceedingly beautiful. The answers to my questions were paragraphed and arranged as if for the press, and the name of God was always written in capitals, and slowly, and, as it seemed, reverentially. The subject matter was always of a pure and elevated character.” (Moses, 1976, 2-3)

If I understand you correctly, you are saying that your mind was not operating the pencil.

“I never could command the writing. It came unsought usually; and when I did seek it, as often as not I was unable to obtain it. A sudden impulse, coming I knew not how, led me to sit down and prepare to write. Where the messages were in regular course, I was accustomed to devote the first hour of each day to sitting for their reception. I rose early, and the beginning of the day was spent in a room that I used for no other purpose, in what was to all intents and purposes a religious service. These writings frequently came then, but I could by no means reckon on them. Other forms of spirit manifestations came too. I was rarely without some, unless ill-health intervened, as it often did of late years, until the messages ceased.”

Over the objection of defense counsel, attorney Randall was permitted to read from a deposition under oath by Charlton Speer, who reported a great variety of communicating raps, numerous lights, luminous hands, musical sounds, direct writing (no hand holding the pencil), apports, the passage of matter through matter, the direct voice, and trance voice, the latter including inspirational messages given by advanced spirits through the entranced Moses. Of the latter, Speer testified: “Touching the manner of these addresses, I can only say that they were delivered in a dignified, temperate, clear, and convincing tone, and that though the voice proceeded from the medium, it was always immediately apparent that the personality addressing us was not that of the medium. The voice was different, and the ideas were often not in accordance with those held at the time by the medium.” (Moses, Preface xvii)

While different spirits came through, the chief communicator called himself Emperor. Mrs. Speer did the recording of the trance voice messages, but she said, according to her son, that it was impossible for her to capture the beauty and refinement of the manifestations or the power and dignity of Emperor’s influence. The majority of messages, however, came by means of automatic writing. While a little of it was evidential, relating to others, most of it was of the “teachings” type. There were also physical manifestations, including levitations of heavy tables and music played by invisible hands, even invisible instruments.

In his deposition, Charlton Speer, a musician, further testified that there were musical sounds produced in the room in which there were no instruments. “The sounds given forth were clear, crisp, and melodious. No definite tune was ever played, but the sounds were always harmonious, and at the request of myself, or any other member of the circle, the ‘bells’ would always run up or down a scale in perfect tune. It was difficult to judge where the sound of these ‘fairy bell’ came from, but I often applied my ear to the top of the table, and the music seemed to be somehow in the wood –not underneath it, as on listening under the table the music would appear to be above. Next we had quite a different sound – that of a stringed instrument, more nearly akin to a violoncello than anything else I have ever heard. It was, however, more powerful and sonorous, and might perhaps be produced by placing a ‘cello on the top of a drum, or anything else likely to increase the vibration. This instrument was only heard in single notes, and was used only by one spirit, who employed it usually for answering questions – in the same way others did by raps.” (Moses, Preface, xiv, xv)

Again, over the objection of defense counsel, Moses was permitted to tell what the Imperator group explained to him relative to spirit communication and the problems facing them. He was told that the discarnate Benjamin Franklin discovered the means of communicating with humans by raps, and that he was greatly aided by Swedenborg in awakening other spirits in the subject. Quoting Imperator, Moses read: “At the time of discovery, it was believed that all denizens of both worlds would be brought into ready communion. But on the account of the obstinate ignorance of man, and of the extent to which the privilege was abused by spirits who assumed well-known names and personated them and so deceived men, that privilege has been greatly narrowed.” (Moses, 1942, 78)

On cross-examination, defense counsel asked why the spirits had such strange names, as Imperator, Rector, Prudens and others. Moses explained that he was told that the names are “but convenient symbols for influences brought to bear” on him, and that in many cases the messages were not of one mind, but the collective influence of a number of spirits. “We deliberate, we consult, and in many instances you receive the impression of our united thought,” Moses quoted one communication. (Moses, 1942, 64)

Dr. Richard Hodgson

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, our witnesses so far have taken you from 1850 to around 1880. The cake batter was almost ready for the oven, but something was lacking – a more controlled or scientific approach to it all. Sir William Barrett and Reverend William Stainton Moses, both of whom have testified, were two of the pioneering researchers who recognized the need for a formal organization to undertake such investigation under more controlled conditions and they were among the founders of the Society for Psychical Research in England during 1882. Time does not permit me to go into the detailed history of that organization, so I will summarize by saying that Dr. Richard Hodgson was among the early members of that organization and, in 1887, was

asked to move from England and take over the management of the recently formed American Society for Psychical Research, which had its headquarters in Boston.

A native of Australia, Dr. Hodgson earned his master's, law, and doctorate degrees at the University of Melbourne. He then moved to England, entering the University of Cambridge as a scholar of St. John's College while studying moral sciences. After taking honors in 1881, he began teaching poetry and philosophy at University Extension and in 1884, he accepted a position at Cambridge as lecturer on the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Spencer was very much an agnostic. While still in England, Hodgson took part in several investigation of mediums and concluded that "nearly all the professional mediums are a gang of vulgar tricksters who are more or less in league with one another." (Baird, 26)

Upon arriving in the United States, Hodgson began an investigation of a medium named Leonora Piper, a resident of Boston. Mrs. Piper had very much impressed Professor William James of Harvard University, who sat with her on a number of occasions. Professor James referred to her as his "white crow," the one who proved that all crows are not black. Dr. Hodgson actually spent nearly 18 years studying Mrs. Piper, sitting with her on the average of three times a week over those 18 years. So let me now put some questions to Dr. Hodgson.

Dr. Hodgson, it has been recorded that you were anxious to prove that Mrs. Piper was a charlatan. Is that true?

"I had but one object, to discover fraud and trickery...of unmasking her. Today, I am prepared to say that I believe in the possibility of receiving messages from what is called the world of spirits. I entered the house profoundly materialistic, not believing in the continuance of life after death; today I say I believe. The truth has been given to me in such a way as to remove from me the possibility of a doubt." (Tweedale, 470)

It is my understanding that even after you ruled out deception on the part of Mrs. Piper, you continued to reject the spirit hypothesis, preferring a secondary personality with some complex form of telepathy or even a cosmic reservoir into which the secondary personality could access information. It wasn't until George Pellew, whom you refer to as G.P. in your reports, started communicating in 1892 that you accepted it all as spirit communication. Do I understand that correctly?

"[That you do.] With the advent of the G.P. intelligence, the development of automatic writing, and the use of the hand by scores of other alleged communicators, the problem ha[d] assumed a very different aspect. The dramatic form has become an integral part of the phenomenon. With the hand writing and the voice speaking at the same time on different subjects and with different persons, with the hand writing on behalf of different communicators at the same sitting, with different successive communicators using the hand at the same sitting, as well as at different sittings, it is difficult to resist the impression that there are here actually concerned various different and distinct and individually coherent streams of consciousness. To the person unfamiliar with a series of

these later sittings, it may seem a plausible hypothesis that perhaps one secondary personality might do the whole work, might use the voice and write contemporaneously with the hand. I do not, however, think it all likely that he would continue to think it plausible after witnessing and studying the numerous coherent groups of memories connected with different persons, the characteristic emotions, tendencies distinguishing such different persons, the excessive complication of acting required, and the absence of any apparent bond of union for the associated thoughts and feelings indicative of each individuality, save some persistent basis of that individuality itself.” (Holt, 518-519/ PR. XIII, 357f)

Please tell our jury members a little about G.P.

“G.P. met his death accidentally, and probably instantaneously by a fall in New York, in February 1892, at the age of 32... He was an associate of our Society, his interest in which was explicable rather by an intellectual openness and fearlessness characteristic of him than by any tendency to believe in supernatural phenomena... We had several long talks together on philosophical subjects, and one very long discussion, probably at least two years before his death, on the possibility of a ‘future life’.” (Holt, 464, Pr. XIII, 293)

What were his views on a future life?

“In this he maintained that in accordance with a fundamental philosophical theory which we both accepted, a ‘future life’ was not only incredible, but inconceivable; and I maintained that it was at least conceivable. At the conclusion of the discussion he admitted that a future life was conceivable, but he did not accept its credibility, and vowed that if he should die before I did, and found himself ‘still existing,’ he would ‘make things lively’ in the effort to reveal the fact of his continued existence.”(Holt, 464/ PR XIII, 293)

Hodgson testified that beginning on March 22, 1892, and continuing for many months, 30 people who knew G.P. were brought to sit with Mrs. Piper, their names not given to her. G.P. recognized 29 of them, giving their names in one form or another and reacting with the appropriate emotions in seeing old friends, while otherwise providing much veridical information. The only one he did not immediately recognize was a woman who was a young girl when he last saw her, although as soon as she identified herself he recalled her and her mother.

With the very first sitter, G.P. recognized that the studs he was wearing were once his and were given to the sitter by his (G.P.’s) parents. He talked about mutual friends, by name, and recalled that he had a discussion with the 15-year-old daughter of some mutual friends about “space, God, and eternity,” something unknown to the sitter or to Hodgson but later confirmed as true. One close friend asked G. P. to tell him something only the two of them knew. G.P. responded with something so private and personal that the old friend asked Hodgson to not make it part of the record, even though it was accurate.

With another old friend, G.P. was asked what he was doing to occupy himself. Hodgson was permitted to read from the record of that sitting, quoting G.P. "I am scarcely able to do anything yet; I am just awakened to the reality of life after death. It was like darkness. I could not distinguish anything at first. Darkest hours just before dawn, you know that, Jim. I was puzzled, confused. Shall have an occupation soon. Now I can see you, my friends. I can hear you speak. Your voice, Jim, I can distinguish with your accent and articulation, but it sounds like a big bass drum. Mine would sound to you like the faintest whisper... Now it is as clear to me as daylight. We have an astral fac-simile of the material body" (Holt, 468/ Pr. XIII, 300f)

With the same sitter, Hodgson explained that G.P. asked what Rogers, a mutual friend was now writing. Jim told G.P. that Rogers was writing a novel. "No, not that. Is he not writing something about me? G.P. responded. Jim acknowledged that Rogers was writing a memorial of G.P., to which G.P. replied: "That is nice; it is pleasant to be remembered. It is very kind of him. He was always kind to me when I was alive. Martha Rogers [deceased daughter] is here. I have talked with her several times. She reflects much on her last illness, on being fed with a tube. We tell her she ought to forget it, and she has done so in good measure, but she was ill for a long time. She is a dear little creature when you know her, but she is hard to know. She is a beautiful little soul. She sends her love to her father... Berwick, how is he? Give him my love. He is a good fellow; he is what I always thought him in life, trustworthy and honorable. How is Orenberg? He has some of my letters. Give him my warmest love. He was always very fond of me, though he understood me least of all my friends. We fellows who are eccentric are always misunderstood in life. I used to have fits of depression. I have none now. I am happy now. I want my father to know about this. We used to talk about spiritual things, but he will be hard to convince. My mother will be easier." (Holt, 468/ Pr. XIII, 300f) After being allowed to read from his records, Hodgson further testified:

"There are thirty cases of true recognition out of at least one hundred and fifty persons who may have had sittings with Mrs. Piper since the first appearance of G.P. and no case of false recognition... The continual manifestation of this personality, so different from Phinuit or other communicators, with its own reservoir of memories, with its swift appreciation of any reference to friends of G.P., with its give-and take in little incidental conversations with myself has helped largely in producing a conviction of the actual presence of the G.P. personality, which it would be quite impossible to impart by any more enumeration of verifiable statements. It will hardly, however, be regarded as surprising that the most impressive manifestations are at the same time the most subtle and least communicable." (Holt, 514/ Pr. XIII, 323f)

Hodgson added that the very non-recognition of the many sitters G.P. had not known in the earth life added to the evidence. That is, if Mrs. Piper or her "secondary personality" were reading minds or tapping into a cosmic reservoir for information, there should have been no significant difference between the information coming through for those G.P. knew and those he didn't know. (Holt, 514)

Is there now any doubt in your mind that spirits are communicating through Mrs. Piper?

“I have no doubt but that the chief communicators to whom I have referred...are veritably the personalities they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us, whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper’s entranced organism.” (Baird, 85)

Thank you, Dr. Hodgson. Any parting thoughts?

“It adds a great deal to life, of course, to be assured of the nearness and help of particular discarnate spirits, but, apart from this, there is no necessity for anyone who believes in God doubting the absolute persistence of the moral order throughout the whole of existence.” (Baird, 296)

Sir Oliver Lodge

Ladies and gentlemen, my final witness is a renowned scientist who also studied Leonora Piper, as well as many other mediums. He was known foremost as a physicist, especially for his work in electricity, thermo-electricity, and thermal-conductivity. He perfected a radio wave detector known as a “coherer” and was the first person to transmit a radio signal, a year before Marconi. He later developed the Lodge spark plug. Sir Oliver received his doctorate in 1877 and went on to teach physics and mathematics at University College in London and Liverpool. In 1900, he became principal of Birmingham University, remaining there until his retirement in 1919. He was knighted for his scientific work in 1902 and served as president of the prestigious British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1913.

Sir Oliver, prior to getting into psychological research, what were your views of survival?

“It did not seem to me possible that a man could survive the death of the body. I did not think that we could ever know the truths about things of that kind, and was content with whatever destiny lay in store for us, without either inquisitiveness or rebellion. I felt that our knowledge would not make any difference, and that we had better leave questions of that kind to settle themselves in due course.” (Lodge, 1932, 345)

So what changed your mind?

“The verification of the fact of telepathy, indicating obscurely a kind of dislocation between mind and body, was undoubtedly impressive, so that it began to seem probable, especially under (Frederic) Myers’s tuition, that the two –mind and body – were not inseparably connected, as I had been led by my previous studies under Clifford, Tyndall, and Huxley to believe they were. I began to feel that there was a possibility of the survival of personality.

“Then came the revelation, through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, in the winter of 1889, not only that the personality of certain people could survive, but that they could communicate under certain conditions with us. The proof that they retained their individuality, their memory, and their affection, forced itself upon me, as it had done upon many others. So my eyes began to open to the fact that there really was a spiritual world, as well as a material world which hitherto had seemed all sufficient, that the things which appealed to the senses were by no means the whole of existence, that the reality of the universe was only dimly appreciated by us, and that our animal senses gave us no clue or indication to the wealth and existence operating in the intangible and unseen.”
(Lodge, 1932, 345-346)

Lodge then told of experiments carried out with two of his academic colleagues on Mrs. Piper's visit to England in late 1889 and early 1890. Dr. Gerald Rendall, then principal of University College, Liverpool, was introduced to Piper as Mr. Roberts. Phinuit, Piper's spirit control speaking through her voice mechanism, prior to G.P. taking on spirit control duties gave the names of his four brothers along with details of his mother's and eldest brother's deaths. There was also some discussion of a woman named Agnes, a relative by marriage who had died of consumption 21 years earlier. Phinuit said that Agnes was quite fond of his brother, Arthur, and that she had a close friend named Louis. Rendell confirmed the accuracy of it all and said he was "quite convinced" of the genuineness of the communication and told Lodge that there was no opportunity for fraud.

Lodge later introduced Professor, E. C. K. Gonner, a lecturer on economics at University College, as a Mr. McCunn, another colleague, the purpose being to uncover fraud if Piper had in fact been able to do a background investigation before traveling to England from Boston. Gonner also had many correct details concerning his family related to him by Phinuit, including how his Uncle William had been killed by a blow on the head.

*Lodge further testified that when his wife, Mary, was sitting with Piper, Phinuit described the circumstances of the death of her father, who died after falling down the hold of a ship, "rather vividly," along with precise information about the death of her stepfather.
(Lodge, 1909, 215-216) The testimony continued:*

You referred to a sitting with your next-door neighbor, Isaac C. Thompson as one of the best?

“[Correct.] “Before he had been in any way introduced, Phinuit sent a message purporting to come from his father. Three generations of his and of his wife's family, living and dead (small and compact Quaker families), were, in the course of two or three sittings, conspicuously mentioned, with identifying detail; the main informant identifying himself as the deceased brother, a young Edinburgh doctor, whose loss had been mourned some twenty years ago. The familiarity and touchingness of the messages communicated in this particular instance were very remarkable, and can by no means be produced in any printed report of the sitting. Their case is one in which very few mistakes

were made, the details standing out vividly correct, so that they found it impossible not to believe that their relatives were actually speaking to them.” (Lodge, 1909, 223-224)

Lodge also heard from his Uncle Jerry, whose twin brother, Robert, had recently sent a watch which had belonged to Jerry to Oliver for test purposes. “After some difficulty and many wrong attempts, Dr. Phinuit caught the name Jerry, short for Jeremiah, and said emphatically, as if impersonating him, “This is my watch, and Robert is my brother, and I am here. Uncle Jerry, my watch.” During their exchange, Lodge asked his uncle to mention some things about his boyhood unknown to him (Oliver) but which Robert might confirm. Uncle Jerry recalled swimming at a creek and running some risk of getting drowned, killing a cat in Smith’s field, the possession of a small rifle, and of a long peculiar skin, like a snake skin, which he thought might be in Robert’s possession. Robert more or less recalled all of them, except killing the cat and Smith’s field. However, another brother, Frank, recalled them all, including the killing of the cat and Smith’s field. (Lodge, 1909, 228-229). Randall’s questions continued:

Sir Oliver, would you mind summarizing your conclusions relative to death and the afterlife?

“My testimony, and that of others, to the reality of a spiritual world is based upon direct experience of fact, and not upon theory. Test the facts whatever way you choose they can only be accounted for by the interaction of intelligences other than our own. Intelligences there appear to be of every grade, some of them possessing powers unknown to us. The higher of those intelligences feel their responsibility as agents of a dominant Power Whom even they only partially apprehend: One Who understands and guides and influences, and Who has brought everything into existence for some inscrutable end.” (Lodge, 1932, 351)

You say that with so much conviction.

“I am as convinced of continued existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here. It may be said, you cannot be as sure as you are of sensory experience. I say I can. A physicist is never limited to direct sensory impressions; he has to deal with a multitude of conceptions and things for which he has no physical organ – the dynamical theory of heat, for instance, and of gases, the theories of electricity, of magnetism, of chemical affinity ... lead him into regions where sight and hearing and touch are impotent as direct witnesses, where they are no longer efficient guides.

“I shall go further and say that I am reasonably convinced of the existence of grades of being, not only lower in the scale than man but higher also, grades of every order of magnitude from zero to infinity. And I know by experience that among these beings are some who care for and help and guide humanity, not disdaining to enter even into what must seem petty details, if by so doing they can assist souls striving on their upward course. And further it is my faith – however humbly it may be held – that among those lofty beings, highest of those who concern themselves directly with this earth of all the

myriads of worlds in infinite space, is One on whom the right instinct of Christianity has always lavished heartfelt reverence and devotion.” (Lodge, 1916, 375-376)

Why do you think mainstream science objects so much to psychical research?

“The aim of science has been for the most part a study of mechanism, the mechanism whereby results are achieved, an investigation into the physical processes which go on, and which appear to be coextensive with nature. Any theory which seems to involve the action of Higher Beings, or of any unknown entity controlling and working the mechanism, is apt to be extruded or discountenanced as a relic of primitive superstition, coming down from times when such infantile explanations were prevalent.” (Lodge, 1932, 29)

Is there any way to overcome such a mindset?

“It is not easy to unsettle minds thus fortified against the intrusion of unwelcome facts; and their strong faith is probably a salutary safeguard against that unbalanced and comparatively dangerous condition called ‘open-mindedness,’ which is ready to learn and investigate anything not manifestly self-contradictory and absurd.” (Lodge, 1909, 1-2)

Some have suggested that we can get too hung up on investigating and confirming survival to the detriment of fully living our lives now? Would you agree?

“It is no doubt possible, as always, to overstep the happy mean, and by absorption in and premature concerns with future interests to lose the benefit and training of this present life. But although we may rightly decide to live with full vigour in the present, and do our duty from moment to moment, yet in order to be full-flavoured and really intelligent beings – not merely with mechanical draft following the line of least resistance – we ought to be aware that there is a future, a future determined to some extent by action in the present; and it is only reasonable that we should seek to ascertain, roughly and approximately, what sort of future it is likely to be.

“Inquiry into survival, and into the kind of experience through which we shall all certainly have to go in a few years, is therefore eminently sane, and may be vitally significant. It may colour all our actions, and give a vivid meaning both to human history and to personal experience.” (Lodge, 1916, 313)

Thank you, Sir Oliver, do you have any closing thoughts?

[Let me close with this.] The hypothesis of continued existence in another set of conditions, and of possible communication across a boundary, is not a gratuitous one made for the sake of comfort and consolation, or because of a dislike to the idea of extinction; it is a hypothesis which has been gradually forced upon [me] – as upon many other persons – by the stringent coercion of definite experience. The foundation of the atomic theory in chemistry is to [me] no stronger. The evidence is cumulative, and has broken the back of all legitimate and reasonable skepticism.” (Lodge, 1916, 288)

Closing Argument

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, as I said in my opening statement, the question before you is not whether God exists. Nor is it whether reincarnation is a fact. It is whether there was overwhelming evidence that we live on after physical death produced before 1920. If you decide that it was so produced, we have proved our case and the defendant in this action is liable for all damages claimed by The Survival School on behalf of humanity since that time. In fact, the testimony you've heard has the evidence being produced before 1900, but we have elected to give the benefit of any doubt to the defendant by drawing the line at 1920. We have not discussed, and you need not consider, the strong evidence developed in more recent decades supporting the early evidence.

As I also mentioned in the opening statement, this does not mean having "absolute certainty" that we live on in another realm of existence. Overwhelming evidence, as with evidence that meets the beyond a reasonable doubt standard of our criminal courts, does not extend to 100 percent certainty. Moreover, you don't have to think of it as the heaven and hell taught by many religions. The nature of the afterlife is not at issue here.

You've heard from a judge, a physician, a lawyer, three chemists, a biologist, two physicist, a theologian, and a philosopher, all with impeccable qualifications. All of them began as non-believers or skeptics to some high degree, but, after extensive investigations, all were convinced that spirits exist, that many of these spirits once occupied earthly bodies, and that some – apparently not all – can break through the veil separating our material world from the immaterial one and occasionally communicate with us, all of which leads to a compelling belief that consciousness does survive physical death.

I could bring many more esteemed scholars and scientists to the witness stand, but there is a point at which it becomes redundant, and I think we have reached that point. To put it another way, if you are not prepared to believe the 11 distinguished witnesses who have testified here the past week, it's likely you will not believe the next 11 or the next 22 were we to continue with more witnesses.

The defendant asks you to believe that our witnesses were all duped by clever magicians of one kind or another – not once or twice, but hundreds of times. They claim a good magician can always outsmart a good scientist. That's a self-serving debunker's axiom which is bunk in itself. But even if the magicians succeeded in fooling the scientists a time or two, it doesn't follow that they could trick them hundreds of times, some of them under controlled conditions. Please recall that Sir William Crookes observed D. D. Home in his (Crookes's) own home under lighted conditions. Dr. Hodgson studied Mrs. Piper on the average three times a week for some 18 years. Do you really think that he, a man with a reputation of debunking other so-called mediums, could have been fooled so many times? And keep in mind that Sir Oliver Lodge studied her on 83 separate occasions on her first visit to England and more on later visits. He introduced his academic associates under fictitious names so that if Mrs. Piper had anticipated Lodge bringing his associates

to sit with her and had somehow carried out background investigations on them she might have been crossed up and exposed as a fraud. Remember that Mrs. Piper lived in Boston and this was in the late nineteenth century, long before the internet or any inexpensive way of doing a background investigation from the other side of the ocean was feasible.

Now you might ask why Hodgson and Lodge had to have so many experiments with Mrs. Piper. It's not because they didn't conclude early on in their investigations that she was a genuine medium, but because there was so much to learn about her mediumship and such mediumship in general. Also, there was a school of thought that recognized such mediumship didn't involve deception of any kind but theorized that it was all produced by the medium's subconscious in ways that science did not yet understand. It was very "unscientific" then, as much as it is now, for academicians and scientists to even utter the words "spirits" and "afterlife." Thus, the pioneers of psychical research had to keep investigating and finding new cases in attempts to convince an unbelieving world. They had to keep "reinventing the wheel," just as researchers of the twenty-first century are still doing.

Hodgson, Lodge and the researchers who followed ruled out the subconscious theories, including mental telepathy and the so-called cosmic reservoir into which mediums could access information, as there was simply too much personality, too much volition, too much give and take in the communication coming through Leonora Piper from G.P. to believe in those far-fetched theories, for which there was no significant evidence otherwise. Yes, telepathy among humans was studied and confirmed as fact, but such telepathy did not explain communication with the deceased or come close to approaching the exchange of information between spirit and sitter.

Remember that four of our witnesses – Judge Edmonds, Dr. Dexter, Professor Hare, and Reverend Moses – reported becoming mediums themselves. Short of calling them all liars, the defendant says that they just imagined it all, that they were suffering from some mental disorder, schizophrenia or paranoia, whatever works for them. They would have you believe that they were delusional, that they were hallucinating, perhaps hypnotized. And they must have had a will to believe, a will so strong that they were blinded to the truth. As we used to say in my day, hogwash!

The defendant has offered theories on how the medium "could have" or "might have" tricked our dedicated researchers – again, not once, not twice, but on hundreds of occasions. They say the mediums skillfully "fished" for information or did some kind of muscle reading to draw information out of the observers – even information they didn't know at the time but later determined to be fact. Defense counsel tried to shame our witnesses with her sneers and scoffs. Her clever smirks and eye-rolling when questioning our witnesses concerning phenomena discussed by them did not go unnoticed. She referred to it as "woo-woo nonsense" and called spirits "ghosts," turning to give you a look that suggests that only a fool would believe such things and that you will be categorized a fool if you accept the statements of our witnesses as fact. It is an appeal to your ego and your fears. Accept the testimony of our witnesses and your character will be called into question by your sane friends, she wants you to believe. Please don't allow

yourself to be a victim of defendant's attempt at ridicule. Have the courage to rise above it.

The defendant offered witnesses who say a particular medium was proved to be a fraud because on the night their witness sat with the medium nothing happened. It is well established by researchers that mediums do not perform on demand. With some of them, the researchers had to sit for hours before anything happened. There were many times when nothing happened. We do know that harmonious conditions are a big factor in the medium being able to produce, or should I say, in the spirits being able to produce. It's sort of like baseball. The best of players do not get hits every time at bat, not even every game, maybe one hit in every three or four at bats. And they usually do better in their home park, where there are positive vibes from fans, not heckling and jeering from those opposed to them. And so it is with mediumship. The medium might hit a "home run" on one "at bat" and "strike out" the next three, much depending on the harmony in the room. Even with the strikeouts, the genuine mediums succeed far above coincidence or chance guessing.

It's not what didn't happen, as the defendants want you to believe; it's what *did* happen when the conditions were harmonious and permitted it, and you've heard our witnesses tell you in no uncertain terms what they observed. They had all heard of ways in which they might have been deceived by a charlatan, and they were on the lookout for any possible trick. Clearly, our witnesses were by no means unprepared for what they studied.

Very few people, if any, have taken the time to put all the testimony you've heard together and recognize a plan of action by the spirit world. If they believe that the "dead" live on in another realm of existence, they've come to assume that they are angels with wings of some kind and are omnipotent and omniscient – all powerful and all-knowing – that if they wanted to communicate with us, that they would do it with much more finesse and accuracy than you've heard from our witnesses. They wouldn't have to tap out messages or make tables float in the air to get your attention. But the research carried out by the pioneers has revealed that spirits are not all-powerful or all-knowing, nor are they angels or demons. Many of them don't know much more now, if anything more, than they did when they transitioned to the spirit world. And here's the big paradox you've heard from our witnesses: Research has revealed that the less advanced spirits can more easily communicate with us because they are closer in vibration to us. The really advanced spirits find it more difficult to communicate because they are at such a high vibration. Thus, the more advanced spirits have to relay messages to us using less-advanced spirits. In the process, the communication is often distorted. You'd think it would be just the opposite, that the more advanced spirits would be more capable of communicating with us, but it is the other way around. Grasping that is essential to a critical understanding of the difficulties of communicating with the spirit world.

I hope you can see what I see. I admit that I also have the advantage of seeing it from my 20 years of research with Mrs. Emily French, but I don't need those 20 years of research to piece it together from what the witnesses have testified. Here is what I see: During the nineteenth century, as science asserted itself, the civilized world had come to doubt the

teachings of the Church and many people had become nihilists, believing in nothing but this life, then oblivion. Such a philosophy resulted in a doom and gloom mindset and a very melancholy approach to life, this at a time when hardships were abundant for most people, when the greater part of the population was struggling to make a living, to simply survive. They didn't have all the comforts and luxuries that people of the twenty-first century have. Knowing that this life was part of a larger life helped them deal with their daily struggles, but when the fundamentalists of science pulled the rug out from under them and told them, no, this life is all there is, they sank further into despair and depression.

People of the twenty-first century have many more escape methods than the people of the nineteenth century. They have radio, television, phones, computers, whatever gadget turns them on and permits them to escape into a mostly fictitious world and thereby not think about death and what might or might not come after. It's a life in which movie actors and athletes are worshipped and held in high esteem. It's a pretend world – the movie actors are pretending to be real people, the athletes pretending to be real war combatants. The people of the nineteenth century had few such escapes. They toiled in the fields or wherever they worked for 12 or 14 hours a day and their leisure was sitting around a fire knitting, whittling, or reading the Bible. The average life expectancy was much less than it is now. Loved one frequently died prematurely, often as children. Their church was their refuge until science impeached it.

Seeing this nihilistic mindset overtaking the material world, the spirit world apparently became alarmed and decided to give the material world some evidence that consciousness lives on in a larger world. According to one report, Benjamin Franklin, then part of the spirit world, figured out a way to communicate with humans by means of raps and taps. They progressed rapidly from there. They soon learned how to manipulate matter in other ways, to levitate people and tables, to make musical instruments play without human hands touching them, to even materialize their bodies, to control human hands to write messages from them, to take possession of human bodies to talk with us, to speak directly with us. They were experimenting on their side of the veil and their efforts often failed. When they did succeed, it was too mind-boggling for most people and especially for educated people grounded in science. It was opposed to natural law and so it was ignored or rejected as fraud. They called it humbug.

Initially, the spirits provided much philosophy and wisdom, as recorded by Judge Edmonds, Dr. Dexter, Professor Hare, Reverend Moses, and others. The primary teaching was that consciousness does live on in a greater reality and that there are many planes, spheres or levels in the afterlife environment, not just a blissful heaven and horrible hell as depicted by religions. They taught that our initial place in the afterlife is based on something called a "moral specific gravity," sort of an amalgamation of all our good deeds and selfish acts. The hell of religion is more a "fire of the mind," something akin to a nightmare, but it is not eternal. We judge ourselves and can't cheat in that regard. The soul gravitates to what it has earned in the material life and progresses from there. The earth life is a learning experience, one that is best experienced by dealing with adversity, and in which free will is a necessity.

The spirit world came to realize that few people were accepting the phenomena they were producing, the teachings they were giving, and the evidence they were providing, and that many good people were being ridiculed and scorned because of it. As Reverend Moses was told, very low-level spirits, what are sometimes called “earthbound” spirits, were interfering with their communication and the desired results were not being obtained. The advanced spirits overestimated our ability to discern the messages, to separate the positive from the negative. By around 1920, they had given about as much as they could, and because it wasn’t working as they had hoped, they began to withdraw. Anything more would be redundant and would result in more innocent people being disparaged. And as Judge Edmonds was told, there were those in the spirit world who were opposed to the whole idea of spirit communication in the first place. It was not explained, but my guess is that those in opposition apparently felt that the new revelation conflicted with man’s free-will opportunities. To put it another way, the greater the adversity, the greater man’s free will is put to use and the more he progresses.

The spirits withdrew gradually but left a small task force to do whatever it could to enlighten those in the material world with open minds. There was something of a revival during the Great War, as so many people lost loved ones, but with the end of the war and the beginning of the “Roaring Twenties,” materialism –I call it hedonism – again flourished and what remained of the task force had little effect. The pioneers of psychical research died off and nobody ventured to take their place.

That’s what I see, but you don’t have to accept that scenario in making your decision. You might interpret it all differently, but the testimony of our 11 witnesses is what you must consider. Does it provide overwhelming evidence that we do live on after death? In your deliberation I urge you to go back over the testimony of each of our witnesses and ask yourself if each one of them is lying, is exaggerating, was tricked, just imagined it, or if it was really coming from the spirit world.

You might set the physical phenomena aside. The researchers were told it was just to get our attention. Focus on the mental phenomena, the veridical information coming through the medium from spirits of the dead about their personal lives, giving names and experiences which the medium could not possibly have researched. Consider the testimony by Dr. Hodgson that he brought 30 people who knew George Pellew, G.P., when alive to sit with Mrs. Piper. Their names were not given to Mrs. Piper. Speaking through Mrs. Piper, G.P. recognized 29 of them. The only one he didn’t recognize was a woman who was a young girl when he met her. He talked with his old friends, giving details which Mrs. Piper could not possibly have known. Sir Oliver Lodge, one of that era’s greatest scientists, confirmed Dr. Hodgson’s observations as did many other respected men and women of science. What you’ve heard about the study of Mrs. Piper is only a small fraction of the research carried out with her. I contend that the case for consciousness surviving death can be made by studying the evidence coming from Mrs. Piper alone.

Ladies and gentlemen, in concluding I'd like to point out that much has been reported recently about our exploration of Mars and our attempts to find evidence of some microscopic form of life there. Is finding evidence of life on another planet more important than finding evidence of life after death? I can't imagine how it even approaches it in importance. If there was life on Mars at one time or is to be millions of years from now, but we are all extinct at death, so what? What good does that knowledge do future generations when compared with the knowledge that we live on after death in an eternal life?

Our ancestors resisted the overwhelming evidence for life after death. They allowed ego and fear to influence their reasoning powers. Please don't make the same mistake that they did. The case for survival was made and was recognized by those with open minds who were willing to investigate. Again, I say, the legal doctrine of *Res Judicata*, meaning, "it has been decided," should be applied to all that evidence testified to by our esteemed witnesses. All the research after 1920, including that in recent years, in near-death experiences and other phenomena, supplements the old research, but the research by the pioneers who have testified before you stands on its own. I repeat, the cake was baked before 1920; everything since then is *icing on the cake*. I trust you will agree and find for the plaintiff in this case. Thank you for your time and attention to the most important matter concerning humankind.

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