

and women, and many of the most perplexing problems thrown up by the contemporary moral chaos. It is commonly thought that the Christian Church is not concerned with sex (except in so far as it leads to the commission of sin), and that it views the subject with apprehension and distaste. It must be admitted that there is some ground for this view. But the social and pastoral concerns of the Church demand a fearless and realistic concentration of theological attention upon the field of sexual relationship in all its aspects. And there is much to encourage us. The theories of the amoral materialistic and pseudo-scientific thinkers of the twenties and thirties are spent of much of their force, and the initiative lies with us. A new theological approach to sex is beginning to emerge, bringing with it a demand for interpreters, and new evangelistic possibilities. It will not be easy to get rid of the emotional prejudices which have infected the attitude of the Church, nor will it be a congenial task to subject to a critical examination the supposedly well-grounded assumptions of centuries. But this is the challenge with which the contemporary moral situation faces us on the one hand, and the emergence of new theological studies and questionings on the other. So far, most of the initiative has come from the Continent, but a real and vitally important task awaits the Anglican Church in this land.

Parapsychology and the Christian

BY THE REV. J. STAFFORD WRIGHT, M.A.

MOST of us have a friend who knows someone who once had a queer experience. Even scientists can tell ghost stories. But if they were asked whether they thought that their stories were true, they would probably say, "Well, of course, there must be some explanation if we knew all the facts"—by which they would mean some explanation in harmony with the laws of physical science.

That is the difficulty with so many of these queer stories; they are generally not amenable to scientific investigation, and they lack that important quality of being reproducible at will, so that anyone can check them. The scientist says, "Bring your ghost to my laboratory, and I'll look through him for you". But the ghost hunter has to admit that he has no control over the ghost at all. Similarly, if a person has a sudden vision, or awareness of the death, or danger, of a friend in another part of the world, he cannot again deliberately create a similar experience to order; and unless he has obtained cast-iron witnesses to the fact that he had the vision before he could possibly have known of the corresponding event, the whole thing can be dismissed as conscious or unconscious fabrication.

Yet the scientist himself may not be altogether guiltless. Since 1882 the Society for Psychical Research has been investigating with scrupulous thoroughness the evidence for ghosts, survival of the spirit, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and other kindred subjects.

Scientists as a whole have not been interested. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that scientists have naturally concentrated on the physical universe, and have deliberately refused to consider anything that cannot be weighed or measured, or otherwise brought within the laws of physical investigation. It is for this reason that many scientists have been sceptical of religion. It has seemed to them to be a betrayal of the scientific method to admit the active existence of spiritual, or non-material, forces. The most that could be admitted was the existence of religion as a psychological phenomenon, since there was the hope that the study of psychology might ultimately prove capable of being reduced to materialistic terms, as it has been in Behaviourism. Hence the scientist, as scientist, has had a bias against the supernatural in religion and the supernatural in experience.

But suppose that a series of repeatable experiments could be devised to demonstrate the existence of such factors as telepathy and clairvoyance. No scientist could then ignore these experiments without being an obscurantist. But if telepathy and clairvoyance are accepted as facts, then one must admit the existence of something that is not in the least explicable by the laws of physical science. It would be reasonable to draw the conclusion that there must be something equivalent to an immaterial mind, that can make contact with other minds and objects without that use of the senses and the nervous system that characterizes physical communication. In other words, pure materialism will have received a mortal wound. The only way of evading this conclusion would be to say that these things will ultimately become explicable by physical laws : but this is an act of faith for which there is no warrant. Certainly a reasonable person will see that such experiments as we have postulated would tend to support the traditional Christian, and even non-Christian, belief, that there is something in man over and above his brain and physical body. Of course, this cannot prove Christianity, nor can it become a new Gospel of salvation. But it puts the burden of proof upon the materialist. It is for him to show that in spite of these discoveries he can still honestly remain a materialist.

But all this rests upon a "suppose". We must now see what experiments have in fact been devised in what is now known as Parapsychology, and how far they can be regarded as convincing.

I

First of all, let us define our terms. *Telepathy* is the transference of knowledge from one mind to another without any contact through the physical senses. *Clairvoyance* is the awareness of objects or objective events without any contact through the physical senses. If you become aware of my thoughts when you are not in physical communication with me, that is telepathy. If I shuffle a pack of cards, take one out, and put it face downwards on the table without myself or anyone else knowing what it is, then if you have become aware of what it is, that is clairvoyance. But if I, or anyone else, can know what the card is, then it will be impossible to tell whether your awareness is the result of clairvoyance from the card, or of telepathy from our minds. And, as we shall see shortly, there is another factor which

makes it extremely difficult to tell whether such awareness is clairvoyance, or telepathy, even if no one at the time knows what the card is. Cards are a useful means of demonstrating the truth or falsity of alleged telepathy and clairvoyance. The transmission of drawings where the receiver endeavours to reproduce a picture at which the sender is looking, is difficult to assess. Unless there is a succession of accurate drawings, it is not easy to decide how to score the attempts, though a matching system has been devised to deal with this. With cards the receiver is either right or wrong, and the judge is not dependent upon his subjective opinion.

Of course, very great precautions must be taken. Those who have heard the Piddingtons or Maurice Fogel on the wireless know what an amazing display of telepathy can be given by highly competent stage methods. Fogel admittedly is a stage telepathist, and the Piddingtons have never offered themselves to be tested under control conditions by serious psychical researchers.

Experiments must take place under rigid test conditions, so that it is absolutely impossible for the receiver to make physical contact with the sender or with the cards. In the experiments to which I shall refer, it is absolutely certain that these conditions have been fulfilled. The next thing of which we must be sure is the method of scoring. Normally results will not on the face of them be spectacular. If they were, there would be no need to devise the experiments at all, since telepathy would by now be an obvious fact. What we must know is the number of cards that the receiver is likely to guess correctly by chance alone. If then he tells correctly more than the chance expectation, there may be a case for extra-sensory perception, or ESP. We say "may be", because obviously one run through the cards with a score above chance would prove very little. The chance expectation is not so fixed as that. But statisticians are able to give tables and figures that will enable one to say how far above or below the chance expectation any figure is for a number of runs through the pack. Here again the experiments to which I shall refer have been scrutinized by mathematicians. At the Annual Meeting of the American Institute of Mathematical Statistics in 1937, an official statement was made that, "assuming the experiments have been properly performed, the statistical analysis is essentially valid. If the Rhine investigation is to be fairly attacked, it must be on other than mathematical grounds" (J. B. Rhine, *The Reach of the Mind*, p. 132).

II

I have put these two facts, namely the care in the experiments and their assessment, in the forefront, before describing the experiments themselves, so as to prevent any prejudice arising in the mind on these grounds.

If cards are used, an ordinary pack of 52 playing cards is not the most suitable type, and would create difficulties in assessment. If, for example, the receiver said "Seven of clubs" and the card was seven of diamonds, how many marks should he receive for guessing *seven*? Or if the card was really the seven of spades, should he receive more marks, inasmuch as he guessed the correct *colour* of the seven?

Hence we must have a pack of cards that can be simply assessed. In practice the cards used are known as Zener cards, or ESP cards. A pack consists of 25 cards, composed of 5 sets of 5 different symbols. There are 5 each of a cross symbol, a circle, a rectangle, a star, and two wavy lines. If a receiver attempts to guess the order of these symbols in a pack of 25, chance alone would give him the expectation of 5 successes. If he consistently scores more than 5, statisticians can say what the probability is that chance alone did not produce the result.

From 1930 onwards experiments of this kind have been carried on in Duke University under the direction of Professor J. B. Rhine. The results of these experiments have been published from time to time, and may conveniently be assessed in Dr. Rhine's book *The Reach of the Mind*. The records of every single experiment have been published, or are open for public inspection, so as to avoid any accusation of having boosted up the figures by publishing only the favourable results. Moreover, although some receivers were obviously better than others, Dr. Rhine has worked with all types, though he has generally drawn his subjects from the students in the University.

In 1934 when the total results to date were analysed, and when all the bad receivers were included with the more successful ones, the average for more than 3,400 runs through the pack was 7 per 25. This may sound small, but since a series of only 6 runs with an average of 7 would be significantly above chance, it is obvious that the same average for 3,400 runs is of very great significance. If we turn to some individual scores, the above-chance figure mounts tremendously. One man averaged 8 per 25 for more than 700 runs through. To express the odds against a similar result by chance alone would, as Rhine says, require a paragraph of figures.

There have been times when a receiver scored 9 correct hits in succession, and a few days later scored 15 in succession. A child of nine, who on one occasion made up her mind to get a perfect score, so as to win a prize that was offered, was successful with all 25, as was also a 16 year old boy.

So far we have thought only of the receiver. But what about the sender? The sender may sit behind a screen, or in another room, and indicate to the receiver by a signal, preferably mechanical, that he is about to pick up the top card from a shuffled pack. When the receiver indicates that he has noted down, or when he has called out, what he believes the card to be, the sender picks up the next card. At first it was assumed that any transmission of the correct answer must be by telepathy, with the receiver reading the thought of the sender, but it later became clear that it might equally well be by clairvoyance, since the receiver might have direct perception of the cards. On the other hand the receiver might have a shuffled pack placed face downwards in front of him, or behind a screen, and note down, or say, the order in which the cards were. When this method has been used, sometimes the pack of cards was not touched until the subject had given what he believed to be the order of the whole 25. Sometimes the top card was removed after each guess, but no one looked at it until the receiver had been right through the pack. Any successful result was at first presumed to be due to clairvoyance, since there was no sender whose

thoughts could be transmitted ; but it suddenly emerged that it might equally well be due to telepathy.

The reason for this was the evidence which began to emerge for precognition. In this country Mr. Whately Carington found some indication that in the telepathy of drawings certain receivers appeared to be aware of a drawing which was to be chosen for telepathy on the following day or days. In the light of this he persuaded Dr. Soal, who had had little success in reproducing Rhine's experiments in this country, to go over the scores of his subjects again, and to see whether any of them had significant success with the next card to be exposed instead of the one actually exposed. Dr. Soal found that two of his receivers did show this displacement factor to a remarkable degree, giving odds against chance of many millions to one.

In Duke University Dr. Rhine tested for precognition by getting the receiver to guess the ultimate order of the pack before the pack was shuffled. Once again results were well above chance, the figures being some 400,000 to one. Mr. Tyrrell in this country devised yet another scheme, and obtained significant results.

It thus seemed impossible to distinguish precognitive telepathy from clairvoyance as classifications of the method used by the receiver. So long as anyone at any time would know the order of the cards, it was possible that the receiver was receiving the order of the cards from the future thoughts of those who looked at the pack to assess the results. Similarly apparent telepathy could also be explained as precognitive clairvoyance, if at some future time the sender ever recorded the contents of his mind.

III

One cannot here follow the intricacies of the struggle to devise experiments for pure telepathy and pure clairvoyance. They can be read about in Rhine's book, and in his Myers' Memorial Lecture, *Telepathy and Human Personality*, and also in Dr. Soal's Myers' Memorial Lecture for 1947, *The Experimental Situation in Psychical Research*. There is also a most interesting discussion in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research for June, 1946 (Part 172). Fortunately the distinctions between telepathy and clairvoyance do not appear to matter much, since, with few exceptions, receivers seem to obtain the same proportion of results with either telepathy or clairvoyance. The important thing that has been established is the existence of ESP.

A further set of experiments is even more startling, involving the discovery that the mind, by something equivalent to willing, can influence the fall of dice, so that in willing for high numbers or low numbers, and indeed for individual numbers, these numbers tend to turn up more often than can be ascribed to chance. To describe this phenomenon the letters PK were adopted, standing for Psycho-Kinesis.

This discovery was likely to encounter such incredulity that it was several years before Rhine published his results. But when they were published, and further tests made, PK took its place alongside of ESP as something that must be given serious consideration.

A remarkable thing about PK and dice is that in one respect at least

its effects are precisely opposite to the effects expected by normal physical laws. According to normal expectation, it should be easier to influence the fall of a single die than to influence the fall of a number of dice thrown simultaneously, just as it is easier to juggle with one or two tennis balls than with a number together. Yet, on the whole, better results have been obtained with quantities of dice, as many as 96 frequently being used. If we try to visualize PK as a physical brain-directed force, we can picture the waves from the brain affecting a single die at a vital point in its emergence from the box. But it becomes impossible to visualize the almost simultaneous influencing of a number of dice. Since the publication of Rhine's book there has been an interesting experiment with PK on living objects. Mr. Nigel Richmond has had some significant results in willing the movements of Paramecia under a microscope. (*Journal of S.P.R.*, March-April, 1952). This is something which will obviously be followed up.

Before going further, let us summarize the things that most of those who have seriously examined the evidence believe to have been established by the experiments of Duke University and elsewhere.

(1) The capacity of ESP, existing more strongly in some than in others, and taking the form of Telepathy and of Clairvoyance.

(2) The capacity of PK, or the ability to influence objects to a very small degree by some force that does not come under the category of other known forces.

(3) The possibility of Precognition.

To put it briefly, there is that in man which transcends space and time. Orthodox Christians have always believed these things on the authority of the Bible, but now for the first time they have been demonstrated, if only to a small degree, under laboratory conditions.

A further point that has emerged is that known physical laws will not account for the relation of ESP to space and time. There is no essential difference in results whether the distance involved is a few feet or thousands of miles. This would appear to rule out such physical explanations of telepathy as the picking up of the electrical waves from the brain, such as can be detected and recorded by the Electroencephalograph. If we add to this the displacement in time in the form of precognition, such an explanation would be altogether impossible. It is significant that Russia has found it necessary to ban Parapsychology behind the Iron Curtain because of the conclusions that reasonable people would draw from its findings, conclusions contrary to Communist materialism.

IV

The time has now come to try to assess the significance for the Christian of ESP and PK, and we may note the following points where a Christian, as a Christian, must be interested.

1. *The Existence of the Soul.* It is significant that this work on Parapsychology has come at a time when materialistic concepts might seem to be supported by the construction of Electronic Brains, and by such a book as Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of Mind*, in which he tries to dispose of what he calls "The ghost in the machine". It may well be by the providence of God that, at a time when Mind is being driven

out of one scientific door, it should be returning by another, for ESP makes it likely that there is an immaterial something over and above the physical brain. The nature of this something as yet cannot be determined by experiments, but investigators must be interested in the likelihood of its survival. If, while associated with the body, it can function in its own right, there is a consequent likelihood that it can continue to exist in its own right after the death of the body, though we cannot argue for anything more than survival for a time, keeping an open mind about immortality or immortality (i.e. potential immortality).

Whately Carington is perhaps the man who did most to formulate a theory of survival based on the facts of telepathy. In his book *Telepathy* he argues for the persistence of groups of associated ideas or thoughts, to which he gives the name of Psychon Systems, and holds provisionally that a System that is well knit together is likely to remain together permanently after the death of the body (p. 124f).

But I do not see how such permanent existence can be proved. If we agree that ESP has made it more reasonable to assume the survival of the soul after death than to assume its immediate extinction, ESP has given no warrant for assuming the immortality of the soul, nor has it shewn whether the soul may make progress after death, nor how the soul can be made fit to stand in the presence of God. People sometimes fail to see this point. They argue (rightly or wrongly) that *Spiritualism* has *proved* survival, and hence is ahead of Christianity, but they fail to see that merely to shift the soul on to another sphere of existence is not to solve the soul's ultimate need, which is reconciliation to God and fellowship with Him. ESP is in the same position. It is not a Gospel, but by itself can suggest only the sort of survival which Fred Hoyle in *The Nature of the Universe* complains of as becoming wearisome after it has lasted for 500 years or so. This is not the same as the Christian's assured hope of eternal life revealed in and through Jesus Christ. Yet the Christian can be thankful that ESP experiments have taken away one further excuse for not weighing up the evidence for survival after death. The conclusions from the evidence can be dismissed, but they cannot fairly be ignored.

2. *Miracles*. The effects of PK are relevant in any discussion of miracles, for many of the miracles in the Bible are examples of the influence of mind upon matter. But this can be a two-edged weapon. If the critic can no longer deny the possibility of such miracles, he can at least deny their divine origin, and assert that such miracle-workers as Moses, Elijah, and even Jesus Christ, were men who had mastered the control of PK force. It would be difficult to answer this charge if the miracles were viewed purely as isolated acts, especially since the Bible itself contains warnings that even evil men can work miracles and thereby deceive the people of God (e.g. Deut. xiii. 1-2; Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13, 14). A miracle must be judged in its context, and in the light of the place that it takes in manifesting the total plan of God.

The production of ESP and PK effects through normal people to-day makes it possible for us to escape the dilemma in which the older Evangelical sometimes found himself, when confronted with the fact

that good people, who held doctrines contrary to the Christian faith, were able to work miracles of healing, and exhibit other supernormal phenomena. The Evangelical could not ascribe their miracles to God, but was equally reluctant to ascribe them in all cases to the Devil. Now we can recognize that gifts of clairvoyance and of healing cannot by themselves be used to prove anything, though unfortunately the popular mind will still continue to regard a sign as an infallible authentication of the teaching that the sign-worker holds. This is one of the things that gives strength to the Spiritualist movement.

The Christian has often been laughed at for thinking that prayer can miraculously affect such things as the weather. Yet the Bible asserts continually that natural disasters are often a punishment for sin, and that man's repentance and prayer bring blessing in their place (e.g. Amos iv ; Haggai i ; Joel i, ii). Surely one can believe without credulity that the Supreme Mind can produce striking PK effects on natural processes without violating any of the laws that appear to govern the universe. No physical laws are violated when the mind of a man influences the fall of dice, even though some non-physical force appears to be in operation. Presumably each separate movement of the dice can be accounted for by the laws of material cause and effect, and at no point are the dice suddenly turned in the air by an invisible hand. Yet the result is produced by the act of will, as though an invisible hand had interfered.

3. *The place of ESP and PK.* What place are these faculties intended to have in the purpose of God? Their existence probably gives some answer to the theological problem of material evil and calamity in the world. ESP and PK are probably the faculties which, in unfallen man, would give him warning of approaching physical conditions that might harm him, just as animals have been observed to leave houses or ships that were shortly to be destroyed by bombs or shipwreck. Man would have sensed the places that were liable to be wrecked by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and would have avoided them. From time to time even to-day one hears of people who have saved their lives through premonitory warnings of some disaster. Through PK man would have exercised the control over the animal world that he was promised in Genesis i. 28, and would presumably have been immune from attacks of harmful bacteria, which even now exist in our bodies for long periods without doing harm (cf. the experiments already quoted on *Paramecia*). But through the Fall these powers have waned. They probably exist amongst certain animals, especially in the social insects and in gregarious mammals and birds. An interesting application of ESP to evolutionary theory was made by Professor A. C. Hardy in his Presidential Address to the British Association meetings in 1949. He later wrote an article on the subject in the *Journal of the S.P.R.*, No. 658.

It is possible that telepathy plays some part in prayer, as, e.g. when one Christian becomes aware of the needs of another. The union of a body of Christians in prayer for some specific object may in itself, quite apart from the direct answer of God, set up a field of force that becomes directly operative upon the seat of the need.

If this is true, one can see the need to pray "in the Name of the

Lord Jesus Christ", seeking to submit our desires to His Will; since it would be possible to generate a force that was directed to an evil end. It is likely that a force of this kind operates in witchcraft and black magic. Thus it is important to pray vertically and not simply horizontally, though one may hold that God frequently uses the horizontal force as one means of answering the prayer.

One can also see the need for unity when Christians meet together for worship and prayer. An Achan who is out of harmony with the rest could disturb the telepathic linkage that runs through a group that has a common mind.

Others, such as G. H. Pember in *Earth's Earliest Ages* (p. 253), have implied that these psychic powers are rudimentary gifts that God intended to be developed in unfallen man; and even in fallen and redeemed man they will have an important use in the life to come, when presumably they could be a means of communication between man and man. Pember holds that they ought not to be developed now.

4. *Precognition*. Acceptance of precognition must affect one's attitude to predictive prophecy. Laboratory experiments have of course established no more than a small degree of precognition, though there is considerable evidence from all times and places for successful prediction on a large scale.

But if the fact is established even in a small degree, it becomes impossible to dismiss alleged biblical predictions in the arbitrary manner adopted by many theologians and commentators. It is in fact a commonplace of modern exegesis that any definite prediction must be an editorial addition, or an insertion of some later prophecy into the work of an earlier prophet. It is assumed that a prophet could deal in detail only with the events of his own day or of immediately succeeding days. Now when we remember that the Jews always distinguished between teachers and prophets, and that most people to-day admit that the prophets were at times characterized by abnormal gifts, such as second-sight, it would be strange if they did not have the ability on occasions to transcend the course of ordinary time. It was well recognized that a prophet could give signs that would be fulfilled in the future (Deut. xiii. 1, 2; xviii. 22; Isaiah vii. 11; Jer. xxviii), and the New Testament writers, who were themselves experiencing a revival of prophecy and could speak from personal experience, declared that the Old Testament prophets spoke of things in a distant future about which they themselves were quite ignorant (1 Peter i. 10-12).

But one must emphasize that most of this predictive prophecy is represented as more than ordinary ESP, in which false prophets could share (Deut. xiii. 1, 2). The Spirit of God inspired the prophets to perceive facts about the Messiah, so that they did not simply perceive random events in the future, but those that were of permanent value for the people of God and for the world in general.

V

In closing we must be clear that we are not attempting to explain away the supernatural in terms of ESP and PK. It might be tempting

to write over the portals of Duke University, "This is the house of God; this is the gate of heaven". But it would not be true.

What we can say is that the results so far reached in parapsychology are favourable to the basic Biblical and Christian position, and unfavourable to a position of pure materialism. There are factors apparently operative in the life of man that link on to certain experiences of men of God in the past and in the present. These experiences are not thereby explained, but the sceptic can no longer dismiss them as the relics of outworn superstition. This is the point at which we have arrived. It will be thrilling to see where we go from here.

The following three books are easily obtainable, and give the relevant facts, whether or not one agrees with the authors' conclusions :

The Personality of Man, by G. N. M. Tyrrell (Pelican, 1946).

The Reach of the Mind, by J. B. Rhine (Faber, 1948, 10/6).

The Imprisoned Splendour, by Raynor C. Johnson (Hodder & Stoughton, 1953, 25/-).

Some Reflections on the Fifth Ordination Question

BY THE REV. F. H. DURNFORD, M.C., M.A.

WHEN after his preliminary year of ministry a deacon is ordained to the priesthood of the Church of England he is asked by the bishop eight questions. The eight brief, almost curt answers given by the deacon as he leaves forever the diaconate and enters on his priesthood, may legitimately be designated the eightfold ordination vows of a priest. After one year's experience of what it means to a man to hold the office of a deacon, he makes, in the Presence of God, and before the congregation assembled, eight solemn promises. It would be all to the good if all worshippers in our churches would read for themselves the eight questions asked; if this were done, they would be better acquainted with the duties and functions of an Anglican priest. They would know more wisely and accurately what to expect, and what not to expect, of the shepherd who has been appointed by the Chief Shepherd of the diocese to have charge of the flock.

The reflections which follow deal with the fifth of these questions : "Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?"

I

To begin with, let it be stated emphatically that the priest-about-to-be is asked eight questions. This fifth question about prayer and sacred