

MY SITTINGS with ARTHUR FORD

In looking over the records of our many meetings, I am overwhelmed by the preponderance of evidential communications.

By Paul Lambourne Higgins

THE LATE great medium Arthur Ford, subject of the important new biography by Allen Spraggett and Canon William Rauscher (see FATE July 1973), was not only a warm personal friend but the channel for some most convincing messages for me from the spirit side of life.

I first met Arthur Ford at the suggestion of the great Christian leader Dr. Sherwood Eddy, who shared my interest in the psychic and spiritual elements within Christianity. Dr. Eddy suggested I have a sitting with Arthur Ford who at that time (the summer of 1953) lived in New York City. A few weeks later I was in New York and phoned Arthur for an appointment. The next day—August 7, 1953—I went to his room at the Bryant Hotel.

Arthur Ford slipped into trance and his well-known con-

trol Fletcher took control of his body. Fletcher first described a young man who had been killed in the war, saying he had been a close friend of mine and like myself had planned to enter religious work. The statement applied to my friend Nelson Hoit and I felt that Fletcher was contacting him.

Among other messages brought by Fletcher was one from Ozora Davis, onetime president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, who said: "I lived near where you live in Chicago. Preach the simple gospel that helps people. Tell them about immortality." Dr. Davis indeed had resided only two or three blocks from my home in Hyde Park on the south side of Chicago.

More important for me, however, were messages from my parents. Fletcher accurately described them and correctly

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PAUL LAMBOURNE HIGGINS was born in Long Beach, Calif., in 1916. He did his undergraduate work at the University of California at Los Angeles and Southwestern University. In 1940 he entered the Methodist ministry and served as pastor for a Domingues, Calif., congregation while continuing his studies at Whittier College where he received his M.A. in 1943.

In that year he moved to Illinois and held a pastorate in Washburn while pursuing his theological studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School, receiving his D.B. degree in 1945. From 1946 to 1952 he was minister for the Washington Heights Methodist Church in Chicago, Ill.

While serving at Hyde Park Methodist Church (1952 to 1961) the Reverend Higgins was a cofounder of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship and served as its first president. The sittings with Arthur Ford described in this article took place during this period.

In 1961 the Reverend Higgins became minister at Richards Street Methodist Church in Joliet, Ill., where he served until his retirement in 1973. Currently he is director-pastor of The Rockport Colony, Rockport, Mass., a retreat center which offers a program of courses and weekend seminars on spiritual life.



Among the books the Reverend Higgins has written are "Preachers of Power," "John Wesley: Spiritual Witness," "Encountering the Unseen," "Mother of All" and the recently-published "Spiritual Horizons."

stated that my father Clarence F. Higgins had died several years before my mother. My father also spoke of my older sister Jean Clarabell who had died before I was born.

"Your mother was sorry to leave California where she had lived so long," Fletcher reported, "but never told you. She wanted to be with you and encourage you in your ministry.

She liked being in your church with you." All of this was true. After my father died in 1943 my mother Minnie Higgins moved to Illinois to live with me and I always had suspected that the harsh winters were difficult for her.

But a far more evidential message came from Mother at a later sitting with Arthur Ford in Chicago on December 6, 1953.

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which obviously did not mean much to me at the time. Fletcher said that Bishop Bristol sent me greetings and was interested in my future work and that Charles Wilson was associated with him and shared this interest. I never had known Bishop Frank Bristol who had died a generation or more earlier, and I could not understand why he was interested in my future. I knew no one named Charles Wilson.

On June 1, 1961, I was appointed minister to the Richards Street Methodist Church in Joliet, Ill., a church I knew little about and had entered only once before for a conference there in 1960. I knew nothing of its origin and history. But when I read over my seance notes in 1971 the light finally dawned. As a young man Bishop Bristol had been the first pastor of Richards Street Church in Joliet when it was founded in 1872. It was only years later that he became a distinguished bishop. Charles Wilson, a Joliet banker, was a charter member of the congregation and for a number of years served as chairman of the church's board of trustees. On the wall of my office in Joliet hung a photograph of a building committee which supervised the

erection of the beautiful French Romanesque sanctuary in 1890. Charles Wilson was chairman of that committee and worked closely with the Reverend Bristol. While others might dismiss this as conjecture, in the light of these remarkable events I feel these two men from the Other Side had a hand in my coming to Richards Street Church.

One other message from that sitting of November 1957 holds special meaning for me. Fletcher said, "Dr. Hill is here and he wants you to know, Paul, he will be helping you in the ministry of healing." Dr. Walter B. Hill, my family physician and Bible class teacher years earlier in my boyhood home of Long Beach, Calif., had influenced me to go into the ministry. Now from the Other Side he was offering to help me with the spiritual healing work I was doing.

In looking over the records of the many sittings I had with Arthur Ford I am overwhelmed by the preponderance of evidential communications. Arthur's dedication during his half-century of psychic work helped strengthen the faith of thousands of persons. He put them in contact with the wonders of the spiritual world.

This time Arthur did not go into trance but received spirit messages while in the waking state. He suddenly brought me a message from Mother, using her maiden name Minnie Hauk: "When her body was buried you put on her dress a little cameo; this is her sign to you now."

No one then alive could have known the meaning of this message. When I was a little boy one of the first gifts I ever bought with my own allowance was a cameo for my mother. She always cherished it. Years later when she died, at her request we did not hold a wake. But just before the coffin was taken to the church for the funeral service I pinned the cameo onto Mother's dress.

The next evening, December 7, 1953, Arthur Ford held another sitting, again in the waking state. Ruth Paddock, later to be my wife, attended with me and received meaningful messages from her Aunt Jessie and her grandmother. Right at the very end Arthur Ford predicted that December 9 would be an important day for us both.

A couple of days later I was in downtown Chicago shopping. As I passed the jewelry counter in a department store I suddenly decided to buy an engagement ring to present to Ruth. On my way out of the store the thought

dawned on me, "Why, this is December 9!"

In March 1956 a group of dedicated Christians with whom I shared a desire to bring back into the church the forgotten heritage of psychic and spiritual gifts met with me in my parish church, Hyde Park Methodist Church in Chicago, to found the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, now a nationwide organization with several thousand members. Arthur Ford was with us from the beginning and gave countless hours to forwarding the growth of SFF. Numerous ministers and laymen first were introduced to the evidence for spirit communication through this gifted American medium. During these years I had several further sittings with Arthur and never failed to receive noteworthy messages from departed loved ones.

A particularly notable sitting took place in my Chicago home on the afternoon of November 5, 1957. Several Methodist ministers and a hospital superintendent were in the circle with us and Fletcher brought forth evidential messages for us all. Yet the most amazing aspect of that afternoon escaped my notice until 13 years later when I reviewed my notes on it not long after Arthur's death in 1971.

Among the messages brought to me that afternoon was one



ARTHUR FORD

loses to a

DEMON



What began as a comforting presence became something evil—
feeding on emotions and not healthy emotions either.

By Edward Buller

A RETIRED college professor is *not* supposed to cast out demons in the literal biblical sense of the term. It is permissible for him to be informed about parapsychology; numerous American colleges give courses and even degrees in the field. He may even safely have some knowledge of demonology and Spiritualism. But he must not delve too deeply nor take more than a passing interest in such subjects. Under no circumstances, if he values his status in the academic community, may he *do* anything about such exotic and unhallowed affairs.

I knew all this perfectly well. Yet as I placed the phone gently back in its cradle I knew I already was committed.

Mary Ellen Marshall's voice

on the other end of the wire had held a note of urgency, almost of desperation. Over the course of a 20-year friendship I never had known her to shy at shadows or to chase chimeræ. Indeed it was largely my conviction of her maturity and stability which made me decide to see her at once.

Ordinarily I would have refused; for Mary Ellen was presenting me with a demon. She was convinced of it and even as I gazed out the window at the distant towers of the university I was half-inclined to accept her belief.

It was not her own demon, however. Whatever it was, it was intruding in the life and perhaps the self of a niece who lived in nearby Hollywood, Fla. But Mary Ellen felt herself at least

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evening but still felt like a diletante when a car entered my driveway shortly after dinner.

This first meeting brought me two surprises. In the first place Alice Anderson did not look at all as I had expected. She was slight and blonde with pale blue eyes—with nothing to distinguish her from the suburbanite wives of young executives or junior faculty members of my acquaintance. To my untrained eye there was nothing to suggest the neurotic or the hysterical, although she was understandably tense and hesitant.

When she spoke it was with the accent and idiom of the typical middle-class college-educated girl of our part of the world. The words came slowly at first but after a while fairly poured forth.

The automatic writing incident described by her aunt had been Alice's first experience with this gift. At first she had been more intrigued than frightened. Whatever guided her hand had written words of affection, hinting and then claiming to be the spirit of her father who had died when she was only seven. Incidents of her childhood were mentioned. The handwriting was unlike her own, although not markedly so.

"I was happy about it then," she remarked. "I thought it was really my father and it was

rather like a reunion. He hadn't written any of those awful things yet. Besides, this wasn't the first time he had been near me."

Mary Ellen's sudden tension told me that this last news was as much a surprise to her as it was to me. I knew that whatever the prior experience had been it could greatly complicate our present problem. "Tell me about that," I said with what I felt to be remarkable restraint.

From time to time since she was six or seven—just about the time heart disease killed her father—Alice had been conscious of a "presence" close to her, nearly always at night. At first the visits had been associated with some emotional storm or period of acute depression. She never had seen anything nor heard any voice speaking to her. She just had "known" that "he" was there and was aware of her need.

She hadn't been afraid, for there was nothing to be afraid of. This she repeated several times. In fact the presence was rather comforting. For fear of ridicule she never had told anyone except a close girl friend with whom she since had lost touch.

During her college years the apparition had not come very often. Perhaps she had been too busy or preoccupied to notice it. But as I listened the rare mani-

partly to blame for the problem.

About a month before, after a small dinner party Mary Ellen had "foolishly" suggested an experiment with automatic writing about which she recently had read an article. With the lights dimmed all six people present had taken pencils and blank pads and attempted to clear their minds of distracting thoughts. Before the silence had lasted long enough to bore the group her niece Alice had begun to write.

She covered one sheet of paper and then another as the group watched, fascinated. What most impressed them was her strained expression and the fact that not once did she appear to look down at what she was writing.

Suddenly she broke off with a gasp, ripped the two sheets from the pad and without any explanation ran up the stairs to her room. She did not come down again that evening, pleading a headache when Mary Ellen went to inquire.

"Since that evening," Mary Ellen had said, "it has absolutely obsessed her. She has been trying that awful writing over and over, although I know she's frightened to death of what happens."

"What does happen?" I had asked.

"I don't really know. He, it,

something claims to be her father, I think. It has her half believing her father was poisoned. I *must* come over and see you about it. I—I mean we—have no one else to turn to."

My first reaction had been to say, "Go to your minister, my dear. He's the proper one to look into a thing of this sort." Then I had imagined the reaction of gentle aging Dr. Robertson and the words had died unspoken. So I had consented to an appointment that same evening.

Perhaps I should not admit it even now but the whole affair held the fascination of the unknown and the exotic. It had been a long time since I had felt this stimulated and challenged. Even though the whole thing might be no more than a neurotic or hysterical reaction on the part of a young woman I never had met I felt there might be danger involved as well.

I recalled the famous Loudon possessions of 1632 to 1638 when the priests sent to exorcise the "demons" possessing the Ursuline nuns became themselves possessed—with horrible results. I certainly did not feel myself even a fraction as well equipped to deal with such a problem as those unfortunate priests. I spent the afternoon consulting various reference works in order to prepare myself for the

festations began to assume more significance in my mind.

Once she had felt "him" near when parked at night with her then-current beau. She did not say so but I gathered that she and the boy were doing more than conversing at the time—though nothing too serious or she would not have mentioned it so casually.

Another time she had had a drink too many at an after-football party and had tumbled into bed quite groggy indeed. When she woke she knew "he" had been there. But this time the knowledge was mixed for the first time with a nightmarish feeling of repugnance and fear. "I felt somehow dirty. I don't know why. It had never been that way before."

I made a note on my pad: "feeds on emotions and not the healthy emotions either."

At this point the outrush of words slowed and Alice showed some embarrassment. She had married shortly after graduation, but a near-perfect honeymoon had been marred by her unseen visitor. "He came at night when we were . . . Oh, you know. I could feel him watching us. I wanted him to go away but he wouldn't. Of course I didn't dare tell my husband."

It sounded like a horrible honeymoon. The pattern was beginning to take shape and I had

a real idea of what we were up against. I had heard my friend Arthur Ford, the celebrated sensitive, speak of similar cases.

After the honeymoon there had been a relaxation of "his" surveillance. He still came occasionally but not always at "those times." It was, she said, "almost as if he would not be able to come at all if I got too angry with him."

I saw Mary Ellen's eyes seek mine and gave her an almost imperceptible nod. We both realized something of great importance had been said.

I could not help contrasting the two women. The slim blonde girl spoke almost carelessly of horror incarnate. When she named "him" there were no quotation marks around the word. Her dark sophisticated aunt, immaculately gowned, half buried in the big wing chair, was far more shaken than Alice but far stronger too. I knew I could count on her help in fighting the "thing" I was beginning to recognize.

Further questioning of Alice brought out the facts I was expecting. Soon after the automatic writing began, Alice had connected the messages she wrote with the familiar presence she had known. In fact the writing soon claimed as much and insisted that "he" was her father. But the sometimes incoherent

and obscene writings gave the lie to any such claim.

Why then had she continued with the writing?

Her unconvincing reply was that the writing had "interested and fascinated" her at the same time it frightened her. It was a chance to get to know more about the unseen presence who had been with her most of her life.

But then he began to threaten her. She was afraid of what he might do if she stopped. The nightly visitations had begun again and this time she was afraid. The phantom had begun to be more "solid," more easily seen. Finally she had appealed to her aunt for aid. She dared not go home to her husband though her visit to Miami had stretched beyond the time originally planned.

By now it was clear that this was not merely a case of imagination and it was surely beyond anything I felt equipped to cope with. "I think you should go to someone who knows a great deal more about these things than I do," I told them both. "Perhaps someone in your church. I don't think a psychiatrist can help because we seem to be dealing with a very real entity of some sort. I suggest we go to see my friend Arthur Ford, who knows a great deal about these things.

"Meanwhile I am going to give

you something I am sure will help. Keep it with you and use it as I say." I took a small gold cross on a thin chain from a box of antique family jewelry. "Wear this around your neck, Alice. When you feel 'him' around you, touch it and pray. Command 'it' in God's name to go away, and it will do so. Never try the writing again. Leave a night-light on when you go to bed."

"This is dangerous then?" Mary Ellen interrupted.

"Yes," I replied gravely. "I believe it is very dangerous indeed. But we have one sure hope. It can't hurt Alice unless she lets it come to her. By using the cross and calling on God for help, I'm sure we can keep it away until we can get help. I'm going to call Arthur tomorrow and make an appointment to drive into the city to see him."

On this note we let the matter rest for the evening. Alice put the thin chain around her neck and let the little cross hang down inside her dress. She did not question my assurance that it would serve as a charm to ward off the apparition. On the other hand she did not seem nearly as pleased to have the cross as I would have liked her to be.

In the morning I succeeded in getting Arthur Ford on the phone. He agreed that the matter was urgent and told me to bring Alice

that he could. The trouble is that unless the girl herself sends this thing away it or possibly something a good deal worse will come back in time. A person who is vulnerable to begin with seems to attract these things.

"For that reason I'm going to ask you to try and get this young woman to go to a good psychiatrist. Perhaps he can get at the attitude within her mind that makes her receptive to the visits of the spirit. That is, if he will listen to her at all. I'll give you the name of a man if you like."

Mary Ellen did like and copied the name and address of the doctor carefully in her small notebook. By now both she and I had come to accept the fact of the spirit's existence. It did not occur to us to doubt what Arthur Ford told us. If we had had lingering doubts the ride home would have dispelled them.

It was a warm evening. All three of us sat in the front seat of the car with the windows open for air. I was driving and Alice sat in the middle. We talked quietly and seriously as the dark miles slipped by.

Suddenly in the back seat there was darkness and cold. There was a center of nothingness, not black but lightless, and a numbing vortex of chill cold. I heard Mary Ellen gasp, "Oh, go away. Get out."

I thought rather than spoke the first thing that came to mind, "In the name of God, go." Out of the corner of my eye I saw Alice's face. The nostrils were pinched thin, the lips pulled back a trace, the eyes clouded and the lids heavy. I thought of a child waiting to cry, of a woman in passion.

The back seat was suddenly empty again. Nothing was there. Nothing ever had been there. My back was still tight from cold.

Alice spoke, her voice thin, young, querulous. "He was there. He was angry at me."

Little more was said during the drive. Somehow neither Mary Ellen nor I cared to put this experience into words. In the age of astronauts and television there really aren't any words in which a retired professor can verbalize these things.

It was over in less time than it takes to read these lines. There was only the heavy-lidded silent girl to remind us.

I dropped the two women off at Mary Ellen's home, refused the offer of a late cup of coffee and hurried to the sanctuary of my own apartment.

Our visit to Arthur Ford had been on Tuesday. The following Friday I drove Alice to the station. She was going home. There had been no more visitations and she had tried no more automatic writing. Under the high collar

to his home that evening.

I drove the two women to downtown Miami, stopping for dinner on the way. 'All of us were subdued and there was little conversation as we rode through the peaceful countryside. The reality of entities and apparitions in late afternoon traffic strained credulity. Yet there was the gold chain around Alice's neck as a reminder.

When we reached Arthur's apartment he had Mary Ellen and me wait in the living room while he took Alice into his study for what he referred to as a "session." In about a half hour he brought Alice out and beckoned the two of us into his study. He came right to the point.

"You were perfectly right to bring this girl to me. There is a spirit trying to dominate her and it certainly isn't her father. In life this was an illiterate degenerate old bum who died in an alcoholic convulsion and never found his way off this earth. He found this girl receptive long ago and has been growing stronger by feeding on his contact with her. Unless he is stopped the dominance will grow until he may actually be able to take possession of her mind and will."

"Can it be stopped?" asked Mary Ellen with alarm.

"At this stage, definitely yes." Arthur Ford spoke with the con-

fidence of authority. "A being of this sort can come only where he is invited. She can keep him off by using the cross you gave her although she doesn't really need it. The cross is just a symbol. The important thing is for her to know that this thing is evil and to refuse any voluntary contact. When she commands it to go away in the name of God, it must go."

"What if she doesn't?" I asked — although already pretty sure of the answer.

"Have you ever heard the old East European vampire legend?" Arthur asked in return. "Once the vampire has been asked into a house it can change shape and come in through the smallest crack. It can't be kept out and it grows stronger until it has destroyed the people in the house.

"The analogy is similar here. If your niece goes on letting this thing come to her, eventually she won't be able to stop it from coming and doing as it pleases. It will dominate her like a Sven-gali. It may even come to inhabit her body against her will."

"How about exorcism?" I asked. "Should we ask her to try that? Would it work with this thing?"

"Oh, yes," Arthur replied. "Any priest or minister willing to try could send the thing away, particularly if the girl believed

of her blouse I saw the thin gold chain. She promised to call the psychiatrist Arthur had recommended. In all honesty I was glad to see her leave.

A week later I had a call from Mary Ellen. Alice and her hus-

band had abruptly moved from Hollywood leaving no forwarding address. "I've been cleaning the guest room," Mary Ellen continued. "In the dresser, back of the top drawer, I found your little gold cross."



NAVIGATION BY "MAGIC STONES"

By Melba Blanton

EVERY YEAR more evidence accumulates to indicate that Viking sailors made their way to the American continent long before Columbus came here. But up till now it has been generally assumed that such discoveries by the Vikings were due to storms at sea that drove these intrepid sailors off course. Authorities have pointed out that these ancient adventurers navigated primarily by the sun and the stars and that a journey across the Atlantic would have been virtually impossible without sophisticated navigational aids.

But recent discoveries by Danish archaeologist Thor-kild Ramskou link a reference to "magic stones" in runic inscriptions with certain minerals found around the North Sea. One of

these — cordierite, a silicate of aluminum, iron and magnesium — turns from yellow to dark blue whenever its natural axis is held at right angles to the plane of polarized light from the sun.

According to Donald E. Carr in *The Forgotten Senses* (Doubleday & Co., New York, N.Y.), Ramskou checked cordierite as a navigational tool by taking a flight from Denmark to Greenland and charting the sun's position while the plane's pilot used the more conventional twilight compass. With such a "magic stone" the Vikings could have located the sun on cloudy days and even when it was up to seven degrees below the horizon. Thus a scientific basis exists for what was assumed to be merely legend.



NOT FOR PROPHETS

BEHAVIOR OF animals reflects the past six months of weather, scientists claim, rather than predicts the weather in store for the future. When bees put away an extra-large supply of honey, when geese have extra-thick down feathers, when there's a plentiful harvest generally — these are the natural consequences of a fine summer, not a prediction of the weather ahead. — *Raymond C. Otto.*