



SCIENCE OF SPIRITISM:

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

1876.

"Instead of being a superstition itself, as they may be disposed to think it, they would find it the explanation and the extinguisher of superstition."—*Dr. Robert Chambers.*

"All things being are in mystery ; we expound mysteries by mystery
And yet the secret of them all is one in simple grandeur :
All intricate, yet each path plain to those who know the way ;
All unapproachable, yet easy of access to them that hold the key."
—*M. F. Tupper.*

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?"—*Christian Scriptures.*

THE
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INTRODUCTION.

A KEY to open that which otherwise is inaccessible ; and by this means, to obtain satisfactory evidence concerning matters of incalculable interest. Add to this, that by such a course a man's life becomes more capable of accomplishing useful ends, while his pathway is cheered by the sunlight of a brighter clime ; encouraging him to pursue his way with faithfulness and vigour, and assuring to him a hearty welcome when he lands on the shining shore of the better country.

But the key to accomplish this has been lost ; and the trouble of the past, and unrest of the present, mainly consist in this very calamity, if such it may be termed. Wonderful to relate, however, like the pilgrim in an old allegory, every human being possesses in his bosom that key of promise, so potent to unlock the secret after which nearly every heart yearns, viz. : What comes after earth-life has ceased to run its course ; and, are our dead friends lost, or merely gone before ?

It is a remarkable fact that, on one hand or the other, every idea, or proposition, or system, which tends to throw light on the future of man, or the experience of

the departed, is branded as a superstition ; and as such is either avoided or feared, or becomes the iron chain whereby a human mind capable of expansion and growth is bound within the narrow circle of a senseless bigotry.

It is now, however, high time to awaken out of sleep, to shake off the indifference, or the fear, which hitherto have prevented the search for the key of knowledge ; and in the pursuit, to venture somewhat on ground which, although by a certain class denominated a dangerous superstition, by the institution of a rational investigation, may prove to be the very path which will lead man into the green pastures, and by the sparkling streams of a better state of life.

Now we come to the point, and tell our readers in plain terms, that the so-called superstition, "modern spiritualism," is indeed the solution of all the other so-called superstitions, and which, Dr. Robert Chambers declares, will be found one day to yield before the searching rays of a system, which, denounced as the deadliest evil, shall prove to be that very key whose wards of light shall unlock mystery, and make of the otherwise incomprehensible, a practical and universal means to facilitate growth onwards and upwards into a state of true manhood.

May we deem it possible, then, to take the reader into our confidence for a few moments, while we endeavour to remove from his mind a hurtful prejudice, and encourage him to venture on what may appear to be forbidden ground, but which we promise him, will prove the highway to undreamt of pleasures, and certainly, a not less secure standpoint than other more specious systems, because in fashion, afford their adherents.

The science of spiritism, or the system of spiritualism—and which resolves itself into the practical belief of a continuous life beyond the grave, and therewith the possibility of intercourse with those spirit intelligences in the spirit world who have preceded their more material brethren, but who, nevertheless, are able and delighted

to minister to them—is now making its existence felt in all parts of the civilized world ; not as a new light, but resurrected from the grave in which it appears to have been so long, and, bereft of its swaddling bands, a friendly hand to help the faithful and confiding disciple. Why should such a friend be looked upon with suspicion, or dismissed with an angry denunciation, until suspicion is seen to be well founded, or denunciation deserved? Is it not something to know that there are a considerable number of intelligent, educated, right-minded, and pure-lived men who have ventured on investigation, and found the fears of timid souls groundless ; and who, by their example, have removed many preliminary difficulties out of the way of those who will venture to inquire for themselves? It cannot now be said that modern spiritualism is so out of the fashion, or that inquiry into its merits renders an individual singular. The ice has been broken, many supposed dangers have been proved to be imaginary, and the practical issues of investigation on the part of those who are competent to present a result, are every way encouraging to lead our readers to make the attempt on their own account.

We may imagine three classes of persons who will read these pages : Those who are dead set against innovations, even though by such means more light may be attained ; those who would gladly gain more light if they did but know in what quarter to reach it, and could find the courage to seek it ; and those who are, by some previous experience, made ready to adopt at once the means of enlightenment which spiritualism affords. Now, for one and all of these classes, the best we can do is to state, in a few brief terms, the advantages to be derived by the intelligent adoption of the science of spiritism, and the faithful application of the system of spiritualism to the daily life, under all the circumstances for which it is peculiar. And they are these:—Enlightened views of the object of life as it regards the possibilities and ends to be attained ;—insight into the relationship which exists

between man, the finite spirit, and his Infinite Spirit Father ;—more practical conceptions of relative duties between man and man ;—realizations of those internal aspirations which form a part of man's being, and which draw him towards the future, and, at present, unseen state of existence ;—attainment of present intercourse and the founding of a present friendship with those exalted beings who, once our relatives and companions on earth, have departed from the things which are seen and temporal, to those which are unseen and eternal ;—and over and above all, the halo of a beautiful love which while it will harmonize all apparent discordances, will teach man by truth how to live his very best now, and prepare him to pass away in due time to that state of existence which, as compared with this, is real, substantial, and enduring.

And with this, we close our remarks ; as the main object we have in view is to awaken thought, and lead our fellow beings into such an inquiry as shall place them in possession of all the many advantages which may hereby be attained ; and, which, we venture to feel, we have attained ourselves.

As a further encouragement to this course, we append in three divisions : an account by an impartial witness of a Seance at a long-established Circle in this city, with other facts pertaining to the question : also, a communication written mediumistically by a spirit intelligence, and, a few interrogations proposed to another spirit intelligence, with the answers received : these being brief extract from a volume of such matters. The whole is offered to the reader in the spirit of brotherly love, and, it is trusted, will be received in the same kindly spirit in which it is offered.

H. J. B.

APPENDIX I.*

THE writer of the following is a gentleman of education and position in South Australia, and, withal, a shrewd and an intelligent man. Simply as a witness his evidence may be taken as unimpeachable, for he is a man of honour and integrity. The account is a curious one, and will be read with interest:—

Having from time to time read many wonderful accounts of the phenomena of spiritism, I determined, should an opportunity ever present itself, to give the matter an impartial investigation.

During a recent visit to Victoria I obtained an introduction to Dr. —, one of the leading spiritists in Melbourne, and I propose to give a plain and precise account of what I actually saw and heard. I had some little difficulty in obtaining admission to the circle, which is entirely private, and is composed of persons well known in Melbourne as men of earnestness, integrity, and worth. On presenting my letter of introduction I was most courteously received, and was at once subjected to a sort of examination, tending, on the one hand, rather to deaden my curiosity, and, on the other hand, to show what motives had induced me to seek admission. I was told that I should not see any vulgar manifestations, such as table-lifting, &c., that the whole phenomena were of an intellectual character, and that I should probably be disappointed at the paucity of sensible results. I urged my request with some pertinacity, and was eventually rewarded by an invitation to attend on the following

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evening at half-past seven, when I should have an opportunity of seeing a clairvoyante medium. A few minutes after my arrival the medium—a lady of middle age—entered the room where Dr. — and I were sitting and shortly afterwards the *séance* began. We three were the only persons present. A few mesmeric passes served to put the medium in a state of clairvoyance, whilst I, at the doctor's request, provided myself with writing materials to take down notes at his dictation.

He then asked the medium—"Is J. E. here?" to which she replied, in her natural voice, "He is."

I was informed that J. E. had been a London physician of great skill and reputation, who died some 30 years ago, and that Dr. — is in the habit of consulting him two or three times a week on complicated and difficult cases. He then proceeded to ask him about various patients, somewhat in this style:—

"J., I was sent for this morning to a man at St. Kilda. I wish you would have a look at him, and tell me what you think of him."

After a slight pause the medium began to describe his condition, and a conversation followed, such as two doctors would hold in consultation, the "superior intelligence" advising, arguing, prescribing, and giving reasons for his opinions in language frequently technical but never obscure. The subjects were quite beyond the knowledge of any but professional men. The medium spoke very deliberately, just as one would who was carefully thinking and speaking at the same time. As I said before, I was taking notes for Dr. —, who apologised for the trouble he was giving me, but promised to reward me presently. When his list of cases was exhausted, he invited me to ask any questions. I replied that I felt some delicacy in doing so, as I intended to consult him about my own health on the following morning.

"You had better ask J. E. now," he said, "He will give you better advice than I can, and moreover it will be a source of interest to you to consult him."

This was the reward that had been promised for my clerical help.

The doctor then introduced me to the spirit. "Dr. E., I have a friend here from Adelaide, who would like a little talk with you if he may have it."

"With pleasure," was the immediate reply.

I thanked him, and we had a long conversation. I said I had been unwell for some time, and should be glad if he would have a look at me, and tell me what was wrong. After a brief pause he described my state, gave me minute directions regarding diet, &c., and prescribed medicine for me to take. His account was more full than that given me by my Adelaide doctor; but in no way contradicted it.

A sharp and interesting discussion intervened between Dr. — and the spirit on the virtue of part of his prescription, the latter decidedly getting the best of the argument. I then asked if I might be allowed to consult him on my wife's health, of whose existence Dr. — had been up to this moment entirely ignorant.

"I do not know her," he replied, "and unless you can give me some clue I cannot find her. Have you anything with you belonging to her?"

I had nothing in any way connected with her, except a programme of a concert at which we had been present the previous evening. This was placed in the medium's hand. In about half a minute she said, "He sees her."

He described her personal appearance with great accuracy, and gave me a detailed account of her state of health.

We then entered on a general conversation, in the course of which I asked Dr. — how the spirits were able to know our physical condition. He explained that from every part of our bodies spiritual emanations are constantly rising, and their character is an indication of our state of health.

Here the medium interrupted—"By their colours," he says; "they tell by their colours."

After further conversation I thanked the spirit for his

kindness, and expressed a hope that he would come to see me on my return to Adelaide.

He laughed—i.e., the medium laughed, and said it would first be necessary for me to find a medium through whom he could communicate with me. That being done, it would give him great pleasure to visit me if he could be of any service, for, said he, “our greatest pleasure is found in doing people good; it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

As the medium was getting rather exhausted, the spirit bade us “good night,” to which greeting we heartily responded.

After waiting a few seconds, Dr. — told the medium to say when J. E. had gone. Presently she said, “He’s gone.” A few passes brought her out of the mesmeric trance, and the *séance* was over.

I asked Dr. — whether his departed friend’s advice was always good. He said it had failed in a very few instances; once or twice from an error of transmission through the medium, and occasionally from unforeseen changes in the patients themselves. The prognosis of the spirit doctors is not infallible, though it is valuable as the result of their superior means of detecting and watching disease.

Before leaving I was invited to the circle proper, which met the next evening, when phenomena of another kind would be manifested—a medium in a state of trance would speak under control; that is, a spirit would take possession of him, and speak through him as through one inspired.

SECOND EVENING.

I was a little behind time on this occasion, so that most of the circle had assembled before my arrival. It consisted of three ladies and six gentlemen, besides the medium, a young man of perhaps three or four-and-twenty. During the five minutes that elapsed in making the necessary preliminary arrangements, gentle rappings

on the walls and ceiling were repeatedly heard, but attracted no special notice beyond a remark from the lady of the house—

“We had better begin; they are getting impatient.”

The circle was formed, I sitting out of it, a little behind the medium, by the side of a gentleman who is the medium at alternate *séances*. Every one kept very quiet whilst the spirit-intelligence was taking possession. The progress of the control was marked by a series of momentary magnetic shocks. Presently Dr. — said the following prayer, which had been taught the circle by one of the spirits:—

“God of all power and love, look down on us assembled here; let a ray of Thy Divine Spirit traverse the vastness of space, and illumine the dark places of our material intellects. Give us strength and love to cast off our material clogs, and soar on spiritual wings to a companionship with thy bright angels. Teach us to ever look upwards; let us never cast a lingering look behind to the mean and worthless dross of earthly occupations and sensual desires; for we are born to the higher and better life that awaits all Thy children in the vast infinity of the future. Let this future always shine before us as a guiding star, to which we may look in the darkest night of our spiritual sleep; a pole-star to which our tempest-tossed bark may steer amongst all the shoals and quicksands that beset us in our voyage through material life. Father! look down on us this night; give us Thy Holy Spirit to guide us, and guard us from all spiritual evil. Amen.”

By this time the medium was entirely under spiritual influence, or, as the technical phrase is, “under control.” This phenomenon is expressed thus:—“The communicating spirit enters and takes full possession of the medium’s body, whilst his own spirit stands aside.”

In a clear, distinct voice, without any hesitation, he proceeded to give an address, which professed to be—and, as I was assured, was—a continuation of one given

at a previous circle. The subject was, "The danger of performing duty mechanically." It might have been a chapter from a new "*Ecce Homo*." Its thoughts and language were nervous and beautiful as it spoke of the unmechanical way in which Jesus Christ performed His tasks. I was informed the controlling spirit was Edgar Atheling.

On the conclusion of the address, which lasted some twenty minutes, another influence was exerted. The medium partly turned towards me, and said, "There are spirits interested in you present to-night."

Here the communication became much disturbed, and it was only by great effort the controlling intelligence could communicate with him who wished to speak to me. He said he was not in direct communication with him, but the spirits were, as it were, passing from one to another his greetings to me. I may be pardoned for not speaking at greater length of this incident when I state that the description of the spirit exactly corresponded with the appearance of my long-since-deceased father.

I was invited to ask any questions that occurred to me, and I took advantage of this permission to enquire into the religious bearings of these and similar phenomena. I was assured that they were the work of God, a direct fulfilment of the many promises contained in Holy Scripture of the outpouring of the Spirit; that until recent years the world had not been ripe for such manifestations, as had been proved by the cruel vengeance taken on witchcraft in the darker ages; and that the time would come when direct intercourse with the unseen world would universally obtain.

On the medium's return to his natural state he professed to be, and, I believe, really was, utterly ignorant of all that had been said or done during his trance. On

THE THIRD EVENING

I saw two of the circle writing with the planchette and others transcribing their brain-impressions. Slight

magnetic shocks again marked the process by which the spirits "gained control." One gentleman filled 22 folios with wonderful rapidity, whilst several others wrote more slowly, and with intervals of pause. The communication received by the planchette professed to be from Theobald, a relative of one of the writers. It was a brief exhortation to perseverance in virtue, and contained a welcome to me as a searcher after truth. The most interesting writing, however, was the lengthy essay before-mentioned, which proved to be one of a series on "The Ancient Religions of the World." The style seemed strangely familiar, though I could not for the time name the author, as in highly-polished sentences of marvellous eloquence he traced the growth and decay of the old-world creeds. He several times alluded to the books he had published during his earth-life, and on the conclusion of the chapter I was not at all surprised to hear the author was "Buckle." My instinctive feeling was "it could have been no other."

In reply to my questions as to his sensations whilst writing, this medium informed me that on sitting down he had no idea what kind of impressions he would receive, that they passed through his brain so quickly that if he did not write with corresponding rapidity they would vanish from his mind, and that at the close of the impression he seemed to himself to have been writing incoherent nonsense, as he could only remember a word here and there without their logical connection. Another gentleman told me that he usually wrote in a state of semi-consciousness.

I heard of many wonderful phenomena of various kinds, but I have been careful to state only that which came within my own personal experience. I was much impressed by the great earnestness and reverence of the members of the circle, all of whom evidently believe they enjoy intercourse with the spirits of the departed, whose communications on moral and religious subjects were grouped round the central and most cherished

article of their creed—the universal Fatherhood of God.

The laws of these marvellous phenomena, for marvellous they unquestionably are, have yet to be discovered. The theories of “unconscious cerebration,” of “brain-waves,” &c., are attempts in this direction, but they fail to account for more than a very slight proportion of the facts. Every plain statement of actual occurrences is a contribution to the stock from which men of science and faith will some day educe the underlying laws.

G.

APPENDIX II.*

THERE are springs of comfort available to mitigate the sadness and depression of every crushed heart, for it is in that region, the region of the affections, where the conflict rages ; and at times so fiercely, as to induce a species of despair. It has been well said, that the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith. And burdens of this kind have to be borne often so much in secret, that the frail humanity is thereby crushed into the dust. But let it be known, that although human experience in its upward and onward growth, is thus liable to the trials which are incident to earth-life experience, yet, that there is relief available when those considerations are entertained, which raises the mind above the passing events of the present, and fixes it on the brighter visions of the future.

* Received through writing medium at circle.

Many a child of sorrow would dry its tears, and put away the cloud of social or domestic strife, and personally rise out of the weakness thus induced, if the knowledge of a brighter to-morrow was accepted, not as a possibility but as a certainty. The weary traveller enjoys his rest when the journey is at an end; and so the spirit, beset by mental conflicts as the result of an unfed, or unsatisfied affectional nature, will, when it enters a circle where everything shall contribute to sooth, satisfy, and heal it, be filled with a strange and wonderful experience of rest and satisfaction; that rest and satisfaction made the sweeter, by reason of the trials through which it had passed in its ascent to the higher state. One of old, wrote: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me; hope thou in God for I shall yet praise Him."

Herein lies the secret; it is thus the conflict is to be prosecuted in the acceptance of a full recognition of the fact, that although by devious ways, yet by a straight path, He leadeth His children to a city of habitation, wherein all the wants of their nature shall be fed and nourished in harmony with the outflow and expansion of those faculties of spirit life which all possess. There is much, then, to bear, much to conquer, much to hope for; and, in this respect, when faithful attention is given to the laws by which men are governed on their journey through earth life to the life beyond, there will come the strength which shall prove sufficient to sustain every burden, which the conditions of human life in its elemental state may seem to impose. Faint not, then, but pursue thy course. Heaven's light awaits thee. The clouds are rolling away like the damp mist before the morning's sun. The future, in its grand-reality, stands out unmistakably to the gaze of that child of the Great Father, whose heart is stayed, trusting in His faithfulness. Why shouldst thou weep with such a prospect before thee?

T. & E.

APPENDIX III.*

Q. You told me, that, all who enter the spirit world, were more or less affected by disease, which needs to be cured ; can you describe the nature of these diseases?

—A. They are just as various as the phases of life are.

Q. What do you mean me to understand by that?—

A. It is plain enough ; every life has its peculiarity, just as countenances differ, and, in connection with this, there are angles, crudities, and false developments, which constitute the diseased state.

Q. Are these inherited, or acquired?—A. Somewhat of both ; much of the former, more so than you think for ; as to the latter, none are free from the prevailing weakness.

Q. Why so?—A. Because man's earth state is only an infinitesimal particle of his entire being ; and, consequently, he only displays crude forms of life, which are consistent with that elementary degree of his existence.

Q. But I presume that, in this respect, there are diversities?—A. Certainly, as I have intimated ; some persons are more perfect than others ; in other words, less diseased.

Q. How may spiritual beings, in the spirit world spheres, personally assist their own recovery?—A. It all depends upon *that* ; none recover except as the result of personal exertion.

Q. But are they not assisted?—A. They are, just in the same way as sick persons are assisted in the earth state ; although you know very well, that relief, or cure,

* Conversation between medium and spirit intelligence.

depends very much on the will of the invalid. Here we have remedies; here, we have loving attendants; here, we have all kinds of aids, but in the use thereof, each spirit has to put forth its capacity. As food must be digested before it can be of use to the body, so all these things must be intelligently accepted and dealt with ere disease can be eradicated from the dweller in spirit-land.

Q. Have you learned anything further concerning Jesus, and are you conscious of deriving benefit from His teaching?—A. When men make idols of their teachers, then they fail to profit by their teachings; regard all, including Jesus, as instruments to convey rays of truth to inferior minds, and then you will benefit even as I do here.

Q. What do you mean by inferior minds?—A. I mean what I say; inferior in the sense, first, of being less informed, or less advanced. There are spirit intelligences to whom Jesus Himself is indebted for assistance. And, second, in a more universal sense, that all are dependent on others; thus, the whole is dependent on its parts, and, in this sense, is inferior, except as a unity.

Q. Are you permitted to learn anything from the peculiar, or individual experiences of new arrivals in the spirit-world; for instance, just as students in our hospitals do from the cases of disease which are brought in to be treated?—A. We learn from such cases in this way: if they are below our plane of development, then, while assisting them to rise, we gain much useful knowledge and experience: any good result reaped here, comes alone from such a contact with the needy as is inspired by a desire to aid such to a higher plane; then we learn, and in our acquisition of knowledge, we also gain strength for continuous work.

Q. Do you reflect at all on the future; is such an operation allowed, and in what is it instructive and pleasant?—A. Aspiration is the stretching forth into the future, and this is natural to all, when our aspirations are of an elevated character, then we derive both instruc-

tion and pleasure in the contemplation of the possibility of our being.

Q. Do you ever have such a thought as this: a day may come when I shall cease to exist as an individuality?—A. Such a thought might be cherished by a low and debased spirit, until the struggling into a better state becomes consciously apparent; but, how could the consciously progressing spirit, who realizes life in all its blessed uses and enjoyments, ever be afflicted with such a thought as absorption or annihilation? No, believe me, I have heard of nothing approaching this, fear is not; the conception on your part arises from the want of knowing what real progressive life is.

* * * * *

Q. A question of some importance has been raised respecting the propriety of women teaching, and assuming as the result, many of the functions which have hitherto been confined to man. What is thought of this in your sphere, and does such a custom prevail in your societies?—A. What God has joined together let not man separate. In the beginning God made man male and female, a fact which there can be no controverting: the original idea and intention was, that both these functions should blend and harmonize, but there has been a tendency on the part of human beings to separate and set them at variance. The relative position should be regulated by the aforesaid rule: man, male and female, the two parts of one whole. But until that is understood, realized, and acted on there will be nought but division, variance, and discord. Your question would never have been necessary were it not that this rule is ignored. The confusion imported into society on earth, because of the violation of a simple law, is wide-spread, and will only be removed after man attempts at reformation, and of which the present aspect referred to by you is one. With us harmony produces other results; there is no pre-eminence.

Q. What are the relative duties of man—male and female—then, in your sphere?—A. We do not regard

In this light ; the oneness and union alter the aspect altogether. Male and female are the strength and stability—the one of the other. A perfect man—I mean, as a conscious being capable of fulfilling his destiny—consists of the union of both the constituent forms of existence, male and female.

Q. Do you mean in one person?—A. No, I do not ; but two persons blending into one individuality : the perfect man.

Q. How do they become an individuality?—A. By the harmony which prevails ; a mutual adaptedness of constitution, and a oneness of will. This blends into the one purpose of existence ; and on this principle they grow, and act out the object of existence.

Q. Does this law come into full force when we arrive in the spirit-world state?—A. It does, as soon as full consciousness of capacity and growth is attained.

Q. But, in the meantime, what position do individuals assume?—A. You might call it an embryo state. Until they are fully born into spirit-life, there is an incapacity to fall into the line of growth which perfect spirit-life involves.

Q. Are all alike subject to intervals on arrival?—

A. Some have long periods of preparation ; others come, as I might say, prepared for the conditions of spirit-life. It all depends on the spirit-culture of earth-life.

Q. How may this culture be best attained, then, now ?

—A. Only by a truly harmonious life—a life which has regard to the laws of nature as they affect individual progress and happiness. Let the two functions of nature be regarded as means to ends in their union, and not as unnatural appliances to secure mere sensual gratification. When you consider the high and noble ends which may be attained by a wise union to form the perfect man, you can easily perceive how important it is that the blending should be encouraged only in accordance with the principles of truth and righteousness.

Q. What do you mean by the terms “truth” and

“righteousness” in this connection?—*A.* I mean knowledge of the laws of nature, and a faithful adherence to their operations. Let men study these, and cultivate their lives more unselfishly, and the best results will follow now, and be evolved hereafter.

Q. Thank you. I begin to see a way out of my difficulty; but I will speak of this again.—*A.* Yes, do; and we will make it even more plain to you.

H. T.



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