

The Progressive Thinker

SPIRITUALISM—Progress, the Universal Law of Nature; Thought, the Solvent of Her Problems—SPIRITUALISM

VOLUME 64

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL 28, 1923

NUMBER 1744

EDITOR OF THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN ADMITS SEANCE Baffles Him

J. Malcolm Bird Came Away from Europe Convinced That He Had Observed Phenomena

Elusive psychic phenomena seen by J. Malcolm Bird, associate editor of the Scientific American, on his recent visits to European mediums, have been described by him in the May number of the magazine. The article covers two of the seances, and Mr. Bird came away convinced that he had observed phenomena which hardly could be explained by any known natural cause.

His trip to Europe was at the invitation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He wished to acquaint himself with the atmosphere of these European seances, which are taken much more as a matter of fact than in this country, before conducting tests here. He tried to ascertain, so far as his eyes and ears and sense of touch would permit, if there were any physical connection between the medium or the spectators and the phenomena, but could discover none.

He heard noises produced in a way which defied his efforts to establish a natural cause, took part in discussions with alleged spirits in which he was told things which could not have been known to any one in London, and saw the mysterious self-luminous lights, attributed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to ectoplasm.

Mr. Bird was not fortunate enough to see the ectoplasm, which Doyle has referred to as the link between the natural and spiritual world, and which seances declare is a deception practiced by the medium. But he saw everything else.

The first medium Mr. Bird saw in action was a Scotch laborer, taciturn and with a decided burr in his speech. "He was an altogether common place person in every detail of appearance, and so far as I could judge, would grade fairly low in education and general intelligence," Mr. Bird said. "I make these complimentary remarks for what they may be worth in connection with the performance followed."

"My best judgment would be that both in direction and subject matter, much of the 'communicated' material of the seance would be quite beyond the normal ability of the medium."

There were two sitters including Mr. Bird, who was introduced to the medium, and the others as a friend of Sir Arthur's "from the States." No cabinet was used by the medium, who sat as one of a circle in a chair opposite that first occupied by Mr. Bird. Later Mr. Bird moved next to the medium and held one of his hands during a large part of the seance.

As an apparent coincidence, he said that the next day he felt rather tired, a condition complained of by the person who sat on the other side of the medium, and which was explained by the drains upon their systems in support of the medium, who was always much exhausted after the seances.

The medium moved about the room at first, the sitters sang hymns rather perfunctorily, and after a few moments the medium made his way to his seat, the signal that his "control," White Feather, had, taken possession of him.

"This personality—whatever we believe, I think it fair to call it that—proceeded to speak broken English, that improved as the seance went on," wrote Mr. Bird. "He complained that his 'box'—that is, the medium to whom he thus referred throughout the seance—was not working well tonight. He ordered the red light out, and when this request had been met, he complained about the light from the fire-place."

"After considerable fumbling in the dark, which did not appear to disturb whatever condition of trance the medium may have been in, a large screen was placed in front of the grate, to 'White's' intense and audible satisfaction. "While the screen continued to be raised, speaking always in the same voice, a which had been left unfinished."

He phenomena observed by Mr. Bird were seen. These were the luminous patches of light.

"Phosphorescent lights began to appear here, there, somewhere else," he said. "In each case such a light appeared in the immediate vicinity of the person to whom the message under way at the moment was addressed. At first I was puzzled by the fact that usually they were seen by some of the sitters and not by others. Shortly, however, I learned that the reason for this was the obvious one that the medium is opaque. "Most of the lights were approximately round, though perhaps a bit longer one way than the other. They gave definitely the impression of phosphorescence rather than of flame or filament. One of these lights stood out above all the rest. It came when the medium was almost to my certain knowledge holding the hands of the lady opposite me while delivering a message to her. It was a long, snaky affair."

Mr. Bird also observed that the trumpet from which the voices came did a good deal of traveling about, in and out of the circle, faster than he believed it could have been moved by hands. "It then moved about the face, touching each sifter on the face or head. On one occasion the trumpet also led in a conversation with the medium to help him in a trance—Chicago Tribune.

When you have read this issue of The Progressive Thinker, pass it on to one of your friends.

CONAN DOYLE'S LECTURES SUCCESSFUL EVERYWHERE

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose investigations of life after death have aroused world-wide interest, is revisiting this country for a lecture tour, which will take him from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. He has arranged to speak in most of the larger cities, when he will discuss "Death and the Hereafter," and "The New Revelation."

All who have heard this brilliant English author and scientist have been profoundly impressed by his attitude toward the "occult" and "mystical" career. Before achieving fame by producing his wonderful Sherlock Holmes stories, Sir Conan had entered the field of science, having made a name in the medical profession and gained the degree of LL.D. from Edinburgh University. He was a favorite student of the late Dr. Joseph Bell, a well known professor of clinical surgery, whose penetrating observational and deductive methods suggested the character of Sherlock Holmes, the detector of bewildering crimes.

About thirty years ago Sir Conan, who is now in his 64th year, became interested in psychical research. He studied the evidence and personally experimented with Spiritualism long before he proclaimed himself convinced of its truths. The remarkable qualities of observation and deduction displayed in his Sherlock Holmes stories fitted him admirably for the work of a psychic investigator. Such a man, it is obvious, could not be easily imposed upon by Spiritualistic frauds.

One of Sir Conan's first investigations in the early days was a haunted manor house in Lancashire, which he visited with two members of the Psychic Research Society. The mansion was inhabited by a widow, her daughter and only son. Curious noises were heard, and on the second night Doyle got to work.

After the household had retired, he searched the house carefully, and with his usual thoroughness, sprinkled floor on the floors to catch footstep, tied fine black thread across the stairs, looked up communicating doors, and then posted his two companions in convenient places for observation. He himself sat in a kitchen doorway and looked out into the hall. About five minutes after midnight the whole house shook with a gigantic crash. Sir Conan says it was as if someone had dropped a cement barrel from the roof into the central hall. In an instant the watchers darted off to find nothing. It remained an inexplicable mystery.

Since that time Sir Conan has had many such experiences, his investigations having taken him to all quarters of the globe. He has traveled from the Arctic to the Equator, through South Africa, America and Australia. From the beginning he has been an earnest inquirer along scientific lines.

During his present lecture tour Sir Conan is discussing all the important phases of spirit phenomena, and is presenting a remarkable series of photographs which show the results of recent investigations. Among these are pictures of the much discussed ectoplasm, emitted by certain mediums, which occasionally takes human forms. Automatic writing, crystal gazing, spirit photography,

and a number of other topics serve to make these lectures wonderfully fascinating, added to which, Sir Conan's gifts as a public speaker enable him to hold the interest of every audience.

EVOLUTION

By Wm. J. Bryan, M.D.
FROM (SPIRIT) THOMAS CARLYLE

In the beginning, when the earth was void of all animate life, there appeared on the earth in the form of mankind, a people that resembled the order of Mammalia, and yet partook not of the species.

But later mankind proper inhabited the globe, and from that time it can be said that Spiritualism had its inception.

But this antiquity is directly traceable to God as the Creator, and so civilization commenced and has continued ever since in its slow, progressive way. Much can be learned from antiquity, and much can be learned from the present condition of mankind.

But, while antiquity dates back to unknown periods, the present occupies our attention, because visibly present, and so the wisdom of the ages commingles with the present state of humanity.

We have no argument for the question of the so-called evolution of species, because there is nothing beside conjecture to found any belief or knowledge concerning so-called evolution. However, be that as it may, we rest on the simple assertion that humanity is progressive, and once created, never dies. Change of so-called death occurs to every person, but this is transition and re-creation, as scientific demonstrations of spirit return fully attest.

We realize the importance of the knowledge of Spiritualism, and of all great revelations it is the greatest, the most natural and the most convincing to reasonable minds.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

Ancient translations have been suppressed as they came from unauthorized so-called leather sources. There is no adulterated truth. It is from God. There nothing misleading in truth. The Babylonian Tablet.

carved in Babylon, the queen of cities, gives a wonderful truth:

"We are male and female, yet not male and female. Two in one and one in two. Spirit ego is dual nature. The sex of nature makes us reborn in one reincarnation as female and in another as male, to become as perfect spirits of God."

The people of India, who gave us our Bible, believed, but were not quite sure, in one God. They called that a divine conception. A long time afterwards the trinity of three gods came into vogue. Oriental Script, Calcutta, give a golden rule for all times:

"There is one theomantic god. Our mortal conception is a pantheon of many gods. Bring your mind of this and the spirit world, and help your neighbor to work out his destiny by inculcating love in his heart, that he may be able to converse with angels." There is nothing higher or more sacred than Hindu philosophy. Its precepts are the Bible of Spiritualism; its truth the cradle of civilization. The Sama Veda, Singapore, gives a test for an excellent sermon: "Do not smother your sacred impulses. They are emanations of the gods. To sin in their sight by your selfish, miserly ways, is contemptible, unworthy of your life. Lift this load of sin from you. The sacred feeling of your prayer will then be felt in heaven where dwell your affectionate ministering spirits."—William H. Watson.

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

By Frederick A. Wiggins, D.D.
Infinite spirit!
Thou art the all of life: I live in thee.

I would be made fully conscious that my life is thy life.

I now open my mind and whole being to thy healing power.

I am now feeling thy love and healing forces flowing into and through my whole body.

I thank and praise thee for flooding and illuminating my soul, purifying my mind, and healing my body.

I am thy holy temple. Glorify me with thy perfect health, that I may glorify thee with a perfect health, which shall radiate thy healing love and wisdom to all.

"Every one that asketh receiveth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Communion

By OLLAN TOPH

Angels and archangels, and a shining throne somewhere, And a host of bright Immortals in the robes the ransomed wear; Yes! but not the glory of heaven, were it mine, could compensate For the Lost Road, and you on it, waiting desolate.

You! that have walked beside me, lead to my heart and dear; You! that the Lord-God gave me—that I held when death drew near

And folded his mantle about you, and drew you on into night For the little sleep and forgetting, after folded hands—the light?

For if all the angels in heaven should shine me a path to Him, And constellations choir me and seraphs and cherubim, I should say: Little shadows, come, show me the road to the earth again, For they have not need of me here as they have in the world of men.

Here, somewhere, is perfection, but there is sorrow and sin. Friendly shadows, help me . . . somehow . . . to enter in, To leave but a thread of the glory that brooders my garment's hem; Little shadows, help me! to go back to comfort them.

No work of the Lord is higher, no Word more precious than this: I come from the Land of Immortals, through the gate of eternal bliss, To say that I live, I love you! I love you, though apart, And I jewel you forever on my remembering heart.

No work of the Lord is higher, no Word more needed than this, For the earth is blinded with crying, for touch of loved hands, love's kiss, And music of feet returning to the door at end of the day, And laughter, and dance, and singing, and none of the household away.

So, angels and arch-angels, and a shining throne somewhere Arc naught beside the beauty of the road, 'twixt here and there— The little Lost Road and narrow, the strange, dim road, where tread Arisen hosts returning to say they are not dead.

And You, dear You! among them. I will set a little light In my window that you may find me, shut the door on night, And here in my soul's remembrance hold you for a joyous breath, In communion that has conquered the silences of death!

SPIRITUALISM: CHRISTIANITY OR A THEORY?

The Great Cause of Spiritualism is Growing Fast Into the Hearts and Minds of the Human Family, Bringing Them in Touch With the Unseen World

Trance Lecture Given by Mrs. Grandquist

O, divine spirit of truth, once more we are gathered together for the purpose of coming closer in touch with Thee; and O, heavenly Father, we realize that we need Thee every hour; we need Thee to give to each of us tonight this divine truth, that we must come closer into Thy divine law. And we realize and understand that Thou art in our midst, knowing all our needs and wants, and giving us strength to bear our burdens along life's road: We thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for the good Thou hast bestowed upon us. We must come in touch with Thee to be able to taste of the great truths of life. We ask it all in the name of divine truth. Amen!

Friends, once more I come into your presence, and as I come this evening I come with those divine blessings; and I hope that I will be able to give you something to help you on the way. My subject is, "Is Spiritualism a Christianity or a Theory?"

We find today the lack and the need of more spiritual food for humanity. How are you going to obtain this spiritual food if you do not obtain it through the great science of Spiritualism? You may call it whatever you like, but it is simply Spiritualism.

Today you are living in an age in which it has been prophesied and foretold by the prophets of the past that the world would come to a time when there would be no more thoughts and creeds among humanity. The prophets said, "Beware of false prophets." Are you not living in that age today? We find that Spiritualism is not only the greatest of teachings in which to lead man into the great spiritual field of thought; but we find that it brings happiness and strength to those who are suffering from the loss of those who have passed beyond. One does not need to have any spirit to come back and to have any spirit to your loved ones are. We do not come back and tell you; your own instinct will give you the satisfaction that they are some place and still live. You feel their presence. We find these things to be the same true religion that Christ taught in the past, and the great prophets of the past also taught these things.

We again find as we go down the line, they say that Spiritualism is not a religion, that it is simply a cult led by fanatics or superstitious people who are seeking to satisfy the hallucinations they have created from their own diseased minds or a mind which is built upon superstition and false ideas. My friends, today when you seek down deep into the depths of your inner soul, it means to live spiritually and to seek for spiritual things.

Spiritualism is a religion, because it is progressive. When you take up the cause of Spiritualism and seek in the depths of the inner self, you are trying to live a better life; you are seeking to bring the best that is within you; you are realizing and understanding that this is but the beginning of real true living in the physical form.

The great theosophists came before you and tell you that you will return time and again until you have purified yourself. I have not found it so. I do not dispute that idea because I am not one who knows all things. I am searching into the great realms of thought to search out those divine truths and bring to you facts. I do not and cannot commit myself and say that no spirit ever returns into a physical form—I am not in a position to make that announcement and stand back of it.

Spiritualism is a Christianity, because man finds that when he takes up its cause he has come in touch with what? He has come in touch with the unseen world; he has come in touch with that great divine source which is universal power. Call it the universal power or the God-power, it is that great divine power which man and science has never been able to analyze—a power which has been from the beginning of man's records upon this physical plane of yours.

The great cause of Spiritualism is growing fast into the hearts and minds of the human family. Seeds of the great divine truth came and were sown among you and these

seeds have taken root and are bringing forth fruit. The great leaders and followers of Spiritualism have been greatly persecuted. You who live in this little western country do not realize and understand the persecution the cause of Spiritualism is going through. It is constantly and steadily growing. Why? Because man does not need to ask his brother whether he is his keeper. When he goes secretly into his conscience, he realizes that there is a power beyond him and he is answered, "Seek and ye shall find." And it has come to that period of time when man does not ask, but he simply calls to that great inner self and comes in touch with that great God-power; and he realizes and understands that he can come in touch with the Master as well as with his brother and others who have passed along the path of history.

Man has not been able to survive upon the old dogmas of the past. He has not been able to survive upon such food, because it was of materialistic conscience and not the food from the great divine Master, which is God. And so today, when Spiritualists seek ever higher into the divine truth and live if according to its word, you will realize and understand that even in this the twentieth century Spiritualism is persecuted. Nevertheless it shall bear fruit and shall stand forever.

Men of science have proven that spirit do return; and the barbarous races will realize and understand that they can come into contact with that great and wonderful Master, which is God. These great divine truths are founded upon God's law; and the time is coming when the world will recognize that Spiritualism is a religion, because they cannot set it aside.

The Christ love is born in you and the forefathers back of you, and Spiritualism has brought to the world the Christ love, and when man comes to that age and stage of unfoldment, when he loves his neighbor, he is living up to the commandments of God. I do not say the commandments of the prophets of the past but God's commands.

If you will consider the word that is termed God, you will find that it means all things that are good, and all good is God. How are you going to get by with it when you say that Spiritualism is only an illusion? It is the true religion which God taught. Those great prophets of the past were influenced and controlled just as I am using this instrument. You will find the great prophet, Jesus Christ, said that he and the Father were one.

This great physical plane of yours is advancing in what way? In the great movement of spiritual awakening. These great theories which are coming up among humanity may be termed one branch of the great tree of knowledge, but there is another springing out and bringing forth fruit, a great and wonderfully wide movement along the so-called teachings of man. I do not call it a religion because it is not founded upon the principles of Christ. It is founded upon the physical and the mental conditions of man. It does not reach out into God's realms. This movement is termed applied psychology. We find that psychology is not detrimental, because it only broadens out the mind; it teaches man how to take care of his physical temple.

You have heard it said that some Spiritualists denounce this movement. The true Spiritualist does not denounce anything which is for the betterment of man and woman. They have their work, they have their voice, they have their harvest; and when the harvest is over, but there is something else for man. But you will find no change in the great cause of Spiritualism. In the beginning of Adam and Eve to the present day Spiritualism has been founded upon the same principles. After you have passed from this plane you will still find that same cause; that divine truth which is called Spiritualism will be standing upon the solid foundation, because it is the truth which God gave to man.

Never before or since has a prophet dared to get up and say that he was equal with God. Christ is part of God. Jesus was the man in whom Christ demonstrated those wonderful gifts and gave to the world these

196 Loomis Street - Chicago, Ill.

editions of present conditions of thought and feeling. Price, Postpaid, \$1.40

