MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS ITS MISSION? WHAT IS IT TO BE A SPIRITUALIST? AND WHAT OUGHT TO BE EXPECTED OF ONE?

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MODERN SPIRITUALISM is the undenominational gospel of peace and good will from God to men. It involves the purest theology and the most practical, soul-invigorating religion that has ever been revealed to mortal man. It demonstrates the immortality of our spiritual nature and the eternity of the soul.

Life, Love, and Light are the essentials of being, the inheritance of the soul, and our individual expectancies. We are rich or poor in proportion to the goods and uses we possess, occupy and utilize.

It is our mission to eliminate ignorance and abolish spiritual poverty, disease and crime; to glorify the good, to reveal and personify the perfect. What we judiciously spend or bestow, we have; what we keep, we lose.

It is understood and agreed that to be a Modern Spiritualist, one must believe in the spiritual department of nature, which supposes man to be a triune being, composed of body, spirit and soul. That the body is spiritual as well as physical; that the spiritual body in which the soul obtains its
progressive expression, survives the death of the physical body (the husk which protects and aids the soul in its evolution), and under favorable circumstances may and does communicate with mortals here on earth, is a demonstrated fact, and constitutes the basis of the doctrine of communion with saints and angels, and even with God himself.

All persons accepting the essentials of this statement are, in the acceptation of modern terms, Spiritualists.

Modern Spiritualism, as defined, and especially mediumship, has its commercial or material—as well as its spiritual or divine value—which blend and interblend with each other as colors blend in the rainbow. They are objective and subjective, positive and negative, and may be called light or dark, good or evil; they shade off and on, and open up as night unto day, so as to evolve the good, the better, and the best, in such a manner as to express a perfect Providence, controlling or overruling all things for good.

With the enlightened, loving soul that through consistent, persevering endeavor has obtained its birthright, it is always day; the sun in substance always shines; clouds may occasionally obscure the light, but it is doing its perfect work. To the Spiritualist, in the love of "goods and use," in the spiritual department of nature, "there is no evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it." He recognizes the doctrine of evolution as the means to an end, and as the progressive unfoldment of eternal good. Howbeit, absolute goodness on the animal plane in the sphere of self-love does not yet appear to the unenlightened. With our present idea of self, there is but little or no demand for it. It has no marketable value, and as the spiritual or divine value is not sufficiently appreciated, it does not manifest itself.

It is the mission of Modern Spiritualism to enlighten, enlarge, beautify and perfect each one's self and surroundings. We can never outgrow self, but we may perfect it; we may cease self-seeking, and increase our usefulness. It is by practicing the Golden Rule that we find our own good in the good of others. Enlightened self-love is right and proper, and should be cultivated. It is the small, selfish self of the Adamic man that is to be depreciated, and the larger enlightened self-love of the inner man, the second Adam or Lord of heaven, that personifies the Christ, that is to be appreciated.

The commercial value of Modern Spiritualism and mediumship is small in comparison to its spiritual and divine use. There are spiritual mediums who can see and describe
the past, present and future; describing correctly persons, places and things which they have never seen or known of, and, though being what the world calls ignorant, will discourse in an eloquent, profound and exhaustive manner upon the most scientific, philosophic and religious subjects that can be proposed; and in addition thereto, elucidate and harmonize science and religion by the truths of a theology worthy of a god. This seemingly god-given right to teach, if the motive is good, is orderly, and it is blessed so to do; God, good men and angels keep and help them in the perfect way. But if they prostitute their God-given, spiritual gifts, for commercial considerations, unworthy and selfish ends, and continue so to do to any considerable extent, the gift is transformed from light and spiritual life to darkness and spiritual death; and the gift, ceasing to be a blessing, becomes worse than useless. If spiritual gifts could be used for selfish ends or unworthy objects without such results, Modern Spiritualism and mediumship would be a curse; but thanks to God and good angels it cannot be so used to any considerable extent and be of service. Grace is a divine gift judiciously bestowed; God and good angels are no respecters of persons; gifts are given in accordance with the law of love; the more enlightened, the greater the gift. "Seek earnestly the best gifts."

There are persons who have education, culture, and are endowed with a modicum of spiritual gifts, of whom, if you should tell me they were guilty of mean, underhanded or wicked acts, I should tell you, because I know them, and know what is to be expected of them, that probably it was so—it was just like them; though they are labelled spiritual, they are a disgrace to Spiritualism and the nineteenth century. Such persons should be let severely alone. There are other persons of whom if you should say they were guilty of a mean thing and propose to prove it, I should not believe it, because I knew them and knew they were above doing designedly a mean thing.

I would utilize the unprogressed condition of animal men, in the sphere of self-love, by placing them in all their deformities in bold relief, to be seen and known. I would so elucidate the truth and enlighten the mind as to eliminate the evil; so subdue the animal and dispel the brutish as to give the spiritual and divine department in our nature a chance to grow. This barbaric, ostentatious and hypocritical exhibition of "goods and uses," virtue or virtues not our own, is fraudulent, contemptible, and ought not to be tolerated by any well-meaning, earnest seeker after the
highest order of good. Cultured animalism, selfishness, superstition, hypocrisy and deceit are the bane of civilization. There are crimes for which no amount of vicarious suffering can atone. The sympathy and commiseration of good men and angels may be a help to the truly penitent, but it is attuned at-onement with the will and love of God, the execution of law, and the evolution of justice, mercy and truth that open up our spiritual mansion, and unfold the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

The doctrine of vicarious atonement, as taught by the literal church, is a maltreatment of the truth which we will not stop here to elucidate or discuss. That we suffer each for the other, and all for the good of the human race, is a fact not to be denied; but this divine chancery, this man-conceived bankrupt act, which makes spiritual paupers of us all, without inspiring conditions or unfolding motives worthy of a better end, is contemptible in the extreme, and should be buried with the dead. What we need, and what the doctrine of attuned at-onement properly elucidated is calculated to unfold, is a love for genuine goodness, for goodness' sake, which the wayfaring man, though a fool, so far as external education is concerned, may understand, and without which repentance is of little or no avail.

The crime is in the desire to do, to have done; the motive that prompts, the objects sought to be attained, rather than in the act itself. We would distinguish the act from the actor; the crime from the criminal. We would kill the crime that the criminal might be awakened into a higher life, "spheres of goods and uses" that he now knows little or nothing about. We die to the old as we are born to the new. There may be criminals below us as well as great hosts of saints and angels above us. It is our privilege, as well as duty, to treat all below us as we would like to be treated by all above. Such is the solidarity of society—such the self-adjusting ladder of progress, its compensating power—that if we would get up ourselves we must lift all others with us. If the Christ be lifted up it will draw all mankind that will be drawn unto itself. We do not expect to gather figs from thistles, or get spiritual truths from the Tree of Life before it has had time to bud, blossom and grow. We do not look for spiritual fruit out of season. To the great majority of Modern Spiritualists the time of spiritual fruitage has not come. Human minds, springs of thought, are bottomed in the Eternal, the uncreated fountain of spiritual life. There is surface as well as spring water, there is intellectual and scientific thought (and its
corollaries) as well as inspirational aspiration, prophecies and poetry. There are bitter as well as sweet waters—springs of thought in the River of Life.

Thoughts are things of life; they range all along the discrete degrees of "goods and use," from the criminally depraved up through the angelic and divine to the Christ-principle or God himself. They come and go, as it were, unbidden and sometimes unwanted. We may not always prevent carrion-birds from flying over our heads, but we may cease to entertain them, and if we are not in the love of slander, and too independent or bombastic, we may, by persistent endeavor, outgrow the conditions and environments that make our presence desirable to them. An evil thought, unconsciously evolved, is an illusion, without life; such are tares sown when men sleep, or are unawakened. An evil thought brought into existence with malice becomes malicious, and if embodied in an act recoils as a boomerang to the injury of the actor. Good thoughts, embodied in acts, uplift the world and glorify God in both thought and action. "As a man thinketh, so is he." We look as we feel. I think, because I am; I am, because I know and think. We know the truth by being true.

Thought is to the thinker what walking is to the walker—it moves him from where he stood. All religions that have obtained have something of truth adapted to their day and generation; all Bibles, as Dr. Hitchcock says, "are panoramic or pictorial exhibitions of truth. If we read them as poetry they are expressive of truth adapting itself to every conceivable condition the human mind can be placed in. If we read them as prose we materially injure or entirely destroy their meaning." Going up the river of life toward the fountain is like going up a hill: the higher you go the further you can see.

The history of civilization and philosophy, as well as the history of science and religion, is a gradual and self-disclosing revelation of the absolute, the perfect cause and Providence which we believe in, worship, and call God. No religious belief ever obtained among honest men that had not in it some genuine, sustaining element. Every belief which has been earnestly held, has been the result of an effort toward truth. It has attained something, but has come short of much. The way to remedy this deficiency is to give higher truth upon the same line. Instead of wrenching from men's grasp the imperfect belief they hold, we should offer them a nobler; we should not violently uproot error, but plant truth so vital, so divine, that it will absorb
all feeble expressions into itself, and thus causatively lift receptive inquirers into higher life.

Whoever would bring men into clearer light must not content himself with a protest against old error; he must get hold of the spiritual truth which gave the error its stronghold, and by getting deeper into the same, supersede the partial truth by eliminating the ignorance that allowed the error to obtain. The correction of any system of theology or religion lies not so much in the denial of the principle involved, as it does in the further unfoldment and harmonious elucidation of the same, its corollaries, and all states and conditions pertaining thereto.

Is not this modern theology based upon fundamental truth? Do we not inherit our Father's nature and attributes? Are not love, justice, mercy and truth hereditary? Was there not a point—a condition—in the endless chain of causation, in which the Infinite and the finite came into such a conjoined at-one-ment as to conceptively beget the finite child with inhering spiritual capacity to become the son of God? And does not such conceptive begetment bespeak spiritual gestation, travail and birth? Are we not spiritual, as well as physical beings—dualities—sons and daughters of father God and mother Nature? Did we not on our father's side inherit eternal life? Is it not within us an expectancy? Did we not on our mother's side obtain states, conditions, environments, through which this eternal life is to be evolved? For aught we know, may there not be millions upon millions of unfolding spiritual entities occupying every conceivable standpoint in the discrete degrees of spiritual evolution, from the lowest all along up the spiral stairway, in the spiritual sonship of the living God?

As differentiated outbirths of the divine, with inhering divinity seeking personification through us, must not the distinguishing differences that constitute our different identities remain? Can any amount of soul-growth or spiritual culture obliterate or extinguish them? May we not go on and on in spiritual culture, improving, perfecting and progressively opening up these distinctions, and through them our inhering personality, and by so doing continue to demonstrate over and over again that we are the same individuals we used to be, with this exception, we have been converted to the doctrine of a perfect Cause, its spiritual evolution, and are now in the transitional condition of regenerative transformation from the animal through the human into the divine department of eternal life?
Modern Spiritualism is a gladsome, joyous study; it has to do with our affectional nature, the receptivities of the soul; it unfolds the subjective world, its exhaustless energy, and demonstrates the personal existence and all-controlling power of God in the transformation of the human race.

It is believed that in the light of the New Dispensation, its inhering divinity, the essential Christ, our Saviour, will so obtain in the love, will and wisdom of the race, that depravity, with ignorance its occasion, will be dispelled as mist before the rising sun; and children, because of their spiritual heredity and environments, be born preëminently divine, God-like in their nature and tendencies. Then will the essential Christ of Christianity be seen and known to be the uncreated and indwelling Saviour of the race.

Is it not necessary, in order to unfold the kingdom of heaven here on earth, that we should do more and better for others who are less enlightened or spiritual, than we would want or allow them to do by or for us? When the kingdom of heaven is opened up in the heart and conscience of the race, may it not be seen and known that self-denial or sacrifice may consist more in not doing, in not suffering for others, than it does in going without what we really need for ourselves?

Does it not appear to professors of science, as well as to professors of religion, "that the earlier stages of human progress have been characterized by a struggle for existence like that through which all lower forms of life have been developed"; and that "the action of natural selection upon man is coming to an end, and that his future development will be accomplished through the direct adaptation of his wonderfully plastic intelligence to the circumstances in which he is placed"? that "war and all forms of strife have ceased to discharge their normal functions, and, having thus become unnecessary, will slowly die out"? that "the feelings and habits adapted to ages of strife will ultimately perish from disuse"? and that a "stage of civilization will be reached in which human sympathy shall be all in all, and the spirit of Christ shall reign supreme throughout the length and breadth of the earth"?

To many politicians or strategic commanders of military on the animal plane, fighting for self is a pleasant occupation; serving with the truth for the good of all is a different matter. The highest gifts of knowledge, the prophet's inspiration, the hero's courage, find their right place only when they are used in the service of love.
Zoologists tell us that the chambered nautilus, while growing, vacates successively the lower apartments of its shell. It has been said that "creeds are but the skins of truth, stuffed and set up," shells to be outgrown. So would we say in the language of the poet:

"Build thee more stately mansions, oh! my soul,
As the swift seasons roll;
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell
By life's unresting sea."

Belief in the truth of Modern Spiritualism is not a virtue, neither is disbelief a crime, except and in so far as we give or do not give the subject its proper consideration. Belief is the judicial exercise of the faculties of the mind; it tips as the scales of justice tip toward the side on which the evidence predominates. As "necessity is the mother of invention," so the truth of Modern Spiritualism, also a necessity, may be the basis of a well-spent and godlike life.

It is the mission of Modern Spiritualism to enlighten the mind, to eliminate spiritual ignorance and materialistic literalism—the occasion of sin, spiritual poverty and crime; to abolish wrong and render the kingdom of heaven possible here on earth.

Light has no communion with darkness. Oil and water will not mix; light and darkness cannot. There may be twilight, but as light appears, day dawns and darkness is dispelled. It is a state, a condition of the soul, to be regeneratively transformed. The bearing time of spiritual truth begins to dawn. The most advanced souls are opening up to the kingdom of heaven, and are comparatively free. Figuratively speaking, twelve manner of fruits are seen and felt and known to be the products of Modern Spiritualism. The present growing, budding and blossoming condition of our cause bespeaks frutage. It is the John the Baptist phase of mediumship—of reeds shaken with the wind. The springtime of spirituality cometh, the summer is nigh. Spiritual fruitage in many individual cases has already begun. The knowledge of eternal life, the quality of love and affection, the substance of charity, the principle of the risen Christ, have in many cases begun to materialize. Some have already obtained their spiritual expectancy, and know, by a blessed experience, that true riches are eternal; that spiritual goods and uses constitute and evolve divine life.
There are discrete degrees of love and affection extending all the way from the uncreated fountain, the perfect cause, down through the spheres to the most degraded Adamic souls, which, if penitent, God, good men and angels helping, they ascend to higher life. The principle that shakes the reeds, voices the truth of the individual Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

True religion, spirituality and eternal life are sure things. Getting and doing good is the only occupation that all can be successfully engaged in. With earnest endeavor and ennobling motives, having all places, persons and things to teach us, and all eternity to be taught in, there can be no such thing as failure. Growing under the sunshine of a perfect cause and perfect providence, we must ripen perfect fruit. We may be checkmated only to learn that our checkmate is but our inmost, our uncreated eternal self.

There are many well-advanced Spiritualists in the fruitage of Modern Spiritualism scattered all over the country, genial, loving souls in the sphere of good; they breathe the atmosphere of heaven; they possess that charity and spirituality upon which you can rely; you can trust them because they are always reliable; they are not arrogant, have not an inordinate amount of self-love, or indomitable, brutish will; are not supercilious, hypocritical, dogmatic or vindictive; they have a quiet, peaceful, ennobling presence; their features bespeak a "merry Christmas" that lasts all the year round; you can see and feel divinity in them. Capacity to appreciate such people is, as it were, an everlasting Thanksgiving. They believe in eliminating ignorance, the occasion of sin, and forgiving as they would be forgiven. They have given the spiritual department of nature and mediumship their most profound attention, and advise others to do the same.

When we consider that man, "the crowning work of creation," came after all the lower departments of the animal kingdom had obtained, and that he is an epitome of all else, and that because of hereditary tendency there are within him, seeking expression, not only the lion and the lamb, but also the monkey and the mule, the jackass and the tiger, the rattlesnake, the copperhead and the adder, and that the lowest, most disagreeable, obtain first, and consequently are liable to dominate: I say, in consideration of the foregoing, is not the animal man, even in his worst estate, about what, considering his environments, we should have expected him to be? Have we not reason to be thankful mankind is not more depraved than it is, and that Spiritualism is as well organized and officered as it is? Sup-
posing things are not as the good, better and best among us would like to have them, are we to give up the idea of perfection as the ultimatum of earnest endeavor? Are we to be saved in squads or by societies? Is not salvation an individual matter? Is there any mortal that is not worth saving? Is not the Golden Age—the millennium—about to dawn? Is there not in the immediate future to be a great spiritual awakening and soul-growth? Are not prayer, praise and adoration, as well as work and spiritual contemplation, essential to soul-growth? May not the soul be considered a divine plant, receiving its substance from God? And if we allow trials, cares, frivolities and speculations to en gross our whole time, and as rocks to prevent the tendrils of our hearts from taking hold of Him, or as choking weeds to hinder the leaves of desire from expanding in the sunlight of his countenance, ought we to expect a vigorous growth? If we cut off the tender fibrils which crowd the roots, should we look for beauteous blossoms? May we not as well hide the material plant from the natural sun and expect to gather the luscious fruit, as to deprive the soul of spiritual communion and religious associations, and hope a glorious development of love, joy and peace?

We are microcosms, epitomes of all else including life and its giver, gods in embryo, and can never die.

Can the hatched chicken ever get, or be put back, into its broken shell? If we are embryotic substance existing from all eternity in the unconscious consciousness of the uncreated cause, and have obtained persistent verifiable entities, and still survive growing stronger and more god-like every day, are we not among the survival of the fittest? Who, or what, can prevent us from living on and on, as conscious entities in the eternal and never ending now? If we are to live on, is there not a history being written by the finger of time on the tablet of the soul, concerning each and every one of us? Are not these histories to constitute in each his own identity, by and through which he is to judge himself and others in proportion to his enlightenment? Is not the Christ-principle the metaphysical substance of justice, mercy and truth, that has been evolved through the unfolding sonship of God within us to be the judge? If so, is there not a sense in which the day of judgment has come? The motive found, finding where it is attached, may we not trace each step the soul has trod, so that divers mazes, unnatural wanderings and inexplicable contradictions may be seen to be the clear and necessary results of easily-defined law, the law of love, its perfect providence, that is univer-
sal to the utmost, including the most extreme detail of all particulars? If as embryotic substance we have existed from all eternity in the bosom of the uncreated father and mother God, we in them and they in us, we are, so to speak, bride and bridegroom, cause and effect. We came from him unconscious embodiments. He was subjectively within us, we return to him through soul-growth, embodied conscious beings, divine entities, individual drops of the universal ocean of all good; and as the ocean is composed of innumerable drops, each drop fulfilling its mission, so also may we: no large, no small, each a perfected spirit, a living, polished stone, in the spiritual temple of eternal life.

Law is said to be a statement of conditions, a mode of divine action, an eternal standing stool encircling and enforcing the evolution of life. Conscience is said to be the divine sight of the soul. Its function is to prick and pain us except we stand a wreck, or move onward in accordance with the higher law. Conscience is a matter of education. It is not infallible except as means to the end. If persistently obeyed, in conformity to the higher law—spiritual illumination, the essential Christ, that enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world—that quality of love and affection that saves by uplifting, through ennobling motives and persistent endeavor, is evolved. This inspired illumination or fruitage of the soul is the materialization of charity, the personification of the Christ-principle, its judgment-seat; in brief, that state or condition of being, called the Day of Judgment, in which all the different parts, faculties and functions of our triune being serve their proper use as judge, jury and criminal, or otherwise, at the bar of justice, mercy and truth! Here is where attuned at-one-ment (its essential good and use) is seen and felt and known as it otherwise cannot be. It is illustrated as the higher law or will of God, marvelous, wonderful to behold! In "Transcendental Physics" it is called the fourth dimension of space; the height and depth of metaphysical power; it supposes the potential presence of the higher law and its giver.

There is an exact standard of absolute justice, mercy and truth. It exists in the uncreated Cause of all Causation, the Infinite Soul of the Universe, the Fountain of Eternal Life. It inheres in our finite begetment; it is now subjectively within us, seeking semi-consciously to evolve and express itself. Absolute justice is to be given and received in such a manner as not to admit of doubt, discrepancy or demur.
In consideration of the foregoing and its corollaries may we Modern Spiritualists, growing under the sunshine of the perfect Cause, budding and blossoming in harmony with the perfect Providence, not be expected to ripen perfected fruit? Is not perfect rest perfect action? the home of the soul our Nirvana? What of the fruitage? "What shall the harvest be?" When shall we go home?

Yes, there is a glorious prospect; 'T is the light of life we see; It awakes within us mortals Hopes of what we are to be.

Has not Thomas L. Harris profoundly said:

"Man is the State, the Church is God in Man. The end of Government is to unfold The social into harmony, and give Complete expression to the laboring thought Of universal genius; first to feed The body, then the mind, and then the heart. The Church is God’s eternal life in man, Which human creeds but limit and restrain. Its rites, its customs, and its usages Are inward breathings of inspiring truth, In the cathedral silences of mind And presence chambers, deep within the breast, Where the Eternal Splendor bodies forth His thought in workings of unbounded love. Oh! man alone is holy; God within Man dwelleth as he doth not in the world; And God through man, re-harmonized and made The type and image of the Infinite, Shall yet reveal Himself as ne’er before. The renovation of the race through love, The renovation of the world through love, The renovation of the State through love, Is the great purpose of the Father-Soul! For this, all laws together move in one; For this, all heaven-born spirits act as one; For this, all streams of thought converge in one; For this, the seraphim in glory wait, As once to greet Messiah manger-born."

PUBLISHED BY COLBY & RICH,
NO. 9 Bosworth STREET, Boston, MASS.