



THE SPIRITS ARE REAL!

(This is taken from a book published about 80 years ago. it shows how the spirit entities worked in the modern rise of spiritism, to bring people to think of spiritism as a science. Laughing at the foolishness of earlier generations that knew that such things were the work of demon spirits, the scientists set up labs and observed phenomenon they could test and measure. So 'professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' and the fallen angels delight to give them their 'evidence' and laugh at their folly. When man refuses to believe the Word of Truth, he is a sucker for demonic deception.)

THERE are some who seek to explain all spirit manifestations on the basis of trickery or fraud, or on the principle of some yet undiscovered law of nature which they are industriously seeking to discover. They refuse to admit that the raps, tilting of tables, playing of instruments, voices through the mouths of mediums personating different persons who have passed away, automatic writing, levitation, apports, and materializations are produced by the spirits of the dead, or are produced by any other intelligences independent of the medium.

They cannot explain how any of these things are done; they contravene every law of natural physics; they admit that the inexplicable happenings take place, but still hold to the opinion that there must be some law which, when discovered, will yield an explanation. And yet, after years of the most painstaking scientific investigation, they are no nearer a solution than when they began. Such men are pure materialists, and have chained themselves to a hypothesis from which they will not permit themselves to be liberated, though they perish with it.

There are multitudes of spiritistic manifestations which can never be accounted for except upon the basis that they are performed by intelligences or entities entirely separate from and independent of the medium or any other person present. References to a few of these will not be out of place in this chapter. From the "Annals of Psychological Science," Volume VII, pages 175, 176, I take the following:

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"One day Eusapia [Palladino] said to M. R., 'This phantom comes for you.' She then fell at once into a profound trance. A woman of great beauty appeared, who had died two years before; her arm and shoulders were covered by the edge of the curtain, in such a way, however, as to indicate the form. Her head was covered with a very fine veil; she breathed a warm breath against the back of M. R.'s hand, carried his hand up to her hair, and gently bit his fingers. Meanwhile Eusapia was heard uttering prolonged groans, showing painful effort, which ceased when the phantom disappeared. The apparition was perceived by two others, and returned several times. An attempt was made to photograph it. Eusapia and John [the medium's controlling spirit] consented, but the phantom by a sign with the head and hands, indicated to us that she objected, and twice broke the photographic plate.

"The request was then made that a mold of her hands might be obtained, and though Eusapia and John both promised to make her comply with our desire, they did not succeed. In the last séance Eusapia gave a more formal promise; the three usual raps on the table indorsed the consent, and we indeed heard a hand plunged in the liquid in the cabinet. After some seconds R. had in his hands a block of paraffin with a complete mold, but an etheric hand advanced from the curtain and dashed it to pieces. . . .

"It is evident, therefore, . . . that a third will can intervene in spiritistic phenomena, which is neither that of 'John,' nor of Eusapia, nor of those present at the séance, but is opposed to all of them."

At many of Eusapia Palladino's séances, hands seemingly composed of flesh and bones appeared near the medium while her own hands were held by other members of the circle, remained in evidence for a time, and gradually dissolved while grasped by some of the sitters. Concerning one of many such experiences the following is related:

"At a later sitting this same great black hand came out from the curtain, and gently grasped Bottazzi by the nape of the neck. At this séance Dr. Porro, the astronomer, was present. 'Letting go

Professor Porro's hand,' says Bottazzi (Porro was next him in the circle), 'I felt for this ghostly hand and clasped it. It was a left hand, neither hot nor cold, with rough, bony fingers, which dissolved under pressure. It did not retire by producing a sensation of withdrawal; it dissolved, dematerialized, melted.' "--"Are the Dead Alive?" p. 107.

"At another time [says Bottazzi], later on, the same hand was placed on my right forearm -- I saw a human hand, this time of natural color, and I felt with mine the back of a lukewarm hand, rough and nervous. The hand dissolved (I saw it with my own eyes) and retreated as if into Mine. Palladino's body, describing a curve."--"Annals of Psychical Science," Vol. VI, p. 413.

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Concerning another séance we have this record: "A cold wind came from behind the curtain, which suddenly opened as if it had been opened by two hands. A human head came out, with a pale, haggard face, of sinister evil aspect. It lingered a moment and then disappeared."-- Id., Vol. V, p. 305.

At a later sitting Dr. Mucchi became involved in a weird struggle with the invisible entities that seemed to be at work producing these uncanny phenomena. A lump of clay had been placed within the cabinet in the hope that Eusapia might be able to produce impressions of spirit hands in the clay. After a short wait, rappings on the table indicated that the impressions had been made. Dr. Mucchi was eager to observe the result, and arose and went toward the cabinet. He says:

"I was about to enter, . . . but was repelled by two hands made of nothing. I felt them; they were agile and prompt; they seized me and pushed me back. The struggle lasted for some time; the hands seemed to take pleasure in resisting me; they pushed me back if I tried to enter, and pulled me forward if I retired. I ended by seizing the lump of clay," whereupon "they thrust me out with a violent shove that nearly upset everything. There were observable on the clay two or three impressions such as might be made by a closed fist."--Id., p. 309.

What folly to hold that there must be some law of nature, not yet discovered, that will explain such a transaction as this! Here was a strong and active man, a skilled observer of psychic phenomena, repeatedly pushed toward and pulled away from a pair of curtains, and finally hurled out of the cabinet with violence -- by what? A law of nature that had actual invisible hands, and could toss a strong man about as some boisterous giant would do! And this was done, not in the darkness, but in the light.

Some of these scientifically unexplainable phenomena have occurred under most exacting test conditions and before scientists of world-wide repute.

For instance, Sir William Crookes mentioned some striking phenomena in his presidential address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1898. He called his address a "Report on the Investigation of Phenomena Called Spiritual." In that report he stated frankly that the phenomena he had witnessed were so extraordinary that, on recalling the

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details, he finds an antagonism between his reason, which pronounces them scientifically impossible, and his senses, which he is certain were not playing him false.

He states, for instance, that he had observed the movement of heavy bodies, without mechanical exertion; that he had heard during his experiments raps and other noises varying from "delicate ticks as with the point of a pin," to "a cascade of sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work" and "detonations in the air;" that he had seen "movements of heavy bodies when at a distance from the medium; "that he had watched "a chair move slowly up to a table from a far corner when all were watching it;" that he had repeatedly witnessed "the rising of tables and chairs off the ground without contact with any person;" and even "the levitation of human beings;" that he had seen "luminous appearances," not once, but many times, and under the most varied forms; that once, "in the light," he had seen "a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady;" and "on some occasions a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand, and carry small objects about." He adds:

"I have more than once seen, first, an object move, then a luminous cloud appear to form about it, and, lastly, the cloud condense into shape and become a perfectly formed hand. At this stage the hand is visible to all present. It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly lifelike and graceful, the fingers moving and the flesh apparently as human as that of any in the room. . . . I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get it loose, but it gradually seemed to resolve itself into vapor, and faded in that manner from my grasp."

These occurrences took place in Sir William's "own house, in the light, and with only private friends present besides the medium," and they happened scores and hundreds of times, observed by many different witnesses, under every test condition that expert scientific knowledge and trained detective ingenuity could devise.

During one séance, with Mr. D. D. Home as the medium, Sir William states that a lath lying on the table moved across the table without human touch, and rapped out a telegraphic message in the Morse code on his hand, making the dots and dashes so rapidly that he could make out a word only now and then. He said:

"I heard sufficient to convince me that there was a good Morse operator on the other end of the line, wherever that might be. "

It must be admitted, even by Spiritists, that there is a tremendous amount of fraud practised by spirit mediums; and yet, knowing all that, Dr. Elliotson, after long and determined opposition to Spiritism, was finally compelled to make the admission:

"I am now quite satisfied of the reality of the phenomena."--"Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, p. 99.

To admit the reality of the phenomena, and to admit that they are produced by the spirits of the dead, are two vastly different things. Many of the phenomena are indeed real, but they are not produced by the spirits of the dead. The spirits who produce them never lived in human form.

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"No hypothesis of prestidigitation, no matter how cleverly worked out, can, for instance, explain the table-tipping incident mentioned by Professor Morgan. A skeptical friend present at a séance was loudly scoffing at the so-called spirits, and daring them to display their powers. Spontaneously, without contact, the heavy table around which the experimenters were standing broke away from them and pinned the skeptic against the wall with such force that he cried for mercy."--"Are the Dead Alive?" pp. 25, 26.

In 1870 a committee appointed by the London Dialectical Society made an investigation of "alleged spiritual manifestations." The furniture of the rooms in which the experiments were conducted was in every case the ordinary furniture of those rooms, and the experiments were generally conducted under gas light. "There was a minimum chance," the committee stated, "for self-delusion or inadequate observation." The authors of the report say:

"At times we sat under the table when the motions and sounds were most vigorous. We held the hands and feet of the psychic. Our ingenuity was exercised in the invention and application of tests. After trials often repeated we were compelled to confess that imposture was out of the question."-- Report of the Committee on Spiritualism, of the Dialectical Society.

Mr. Edward Cox, F. R. G. S., in the report of the subcommittee, says:

"The smaller furniture of the room is frequently attracted to the place where the psychic sits. Chairs far out of reach and untouched may be seen moving along the floor in a manner singularly resembling the motion that may be observed in pieces of steel attracted by a magnet, which rise a little, fall, move on, stop, until fully within the influence of the magnetic force, and then jump to the magnet with a sudden spring. . . . Nor is this phenomenon at all dubious to the spectator. However it may be done, the fact is indisputable that it is done."-- Ibid.

Then the committee summarizes its report:

"The motions were witnessed simultaneously by all present. They were matters of measurement, and not of opinion or fancy. And they occurred so often, under so many and such various conditions, with such safeguards against error or deception, and with such invariable results, as to satisfy the members of your subcommittee by whom the experiments were tried, wholly skeptical as most of them were when they entered upon the investigation, that there is a force capable of moving bodies without material contact, and which force is in some unknown manner dependent upon the presence of human beings."--Ibid.

The noted astronomer and scientist, Camille Flammarion, gives this testimony concerning the physical phenomena of Spiritism:

"For me, the levitation of objects is no more doubtful than that of a pair of scissors lifted by the aid of a magnet."--"Mysterious Psychic Forces," Flammarion, pp. 5, 6.

Dr. Marion, in his attack, "The Philosophy of Spiritualism," says concerning spiritistic manifestations:

"The phenomena are genuine. The hypothesis which Spiritualists endeavor to build on these phenomena is altogether another thing."

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And so it is. Our admission of the genuineness of the phenomena must not be interpreted as indicating in the slightest degree that we consider it even possible that the phenomena of Spiritism prove that the dead have anything to do with these manifestations, or that the dead are conscious, or that they are even alive. These demonstrations are produced by agencies that were never human, and are in this world for a limited time only, while they await the execution of the decree of the Almighty against the fallen Lucifer and his fallen hosts.

But to return to the manifestations themselves. Sir William Crookes made an exhaustive study of spiritistic phenomena, and has left this testimony:

"On five separate occasions a heavy dining-table rose between a few inches and one and one-half feet off the floor, under special circumstances which rendered trickery impossible. On another occasion a heavy table rose from the floor in full light, while I was holding the medium's hands and feet. On another occasion the table rose from the floor, not only when no person was touching it, but under conditions which I had prearranged so as to assure unquestionable proof of the fact."-- Notes, Quarterly Journal of Science, January, 1874, pages 84, 85.

Count Agénor de Gasparin, a Swiss investigator, has left a record of his investigations of the phenomena of levitation, in which he declares that the energy sometimes displayed in the levitation of furniture was "well-nigh terrifying." [1]

Ps. A. Mahan, first president of Cleveland University, who has stood as stoutly against the deductions of Spiritism as, perhaps, even the redoubtable Frank Podmore himself, makes this admission concerning the genuineness of the phenomena:

"We admit the facts for the all-adequate reason that, after careful inquiry, we have been led to conclude that they are real. We think that no candid inquirer, who carefully investigates the subject, can come to any other conclusion. . . . We have ourselves witnessed physical manifestations which, in our judgment, can be accounted for by no reference to mere muscular action. "--"Modern Mysteries Explained and Exposed," p. 42.

Ps. Mahan further states:

"Our fathers were as familiar with the rapping sounds, the movement of articles of furniture, etc., as we are. They, in their ignorance attributed the manifestations to satanic agency [and they were right]. We, in our wisdom, have attributed them to the interposition of departed spirits. . . . Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to attribute such phenomena to the interposition of disembodied spirits."--Id., p. 98.

Mr. Mahan, in his wisdom, attributes these mysterious manifestations to some hitherto undiscovered or unanalyzed and unnamed force, which he proceeds to name "the odylic force;" and having named it, he has, of course, settled the vexed question as to what it is.

Levitation and rapping are not by any means the only spiritistic phenomena put forth to prove the genuineness of Spiritism. It frequently happens that at séances articles that have been brought from a distance are suddenly dropped on the table, almost as soon as asked for by some member of the circle. On one occasion a fish was asked for, and within a few minutes it was dropped upon the table, still alive and wet from the sea. On another occasion a

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considerable quantity of flowers, consisting of anemones, tulips, chrysanthemums, Chinese primroses, and ferns, all absolutely fresh and covered with a fine cold dew, were dropped upon the table. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace says:

"A friend of mine asked for a sunflower, and one six feet high fell upon the table, having a large mass of earth about its roots."--"The Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism," p. 93.

At one of Dr. Hooper's seances, the spirit control was asked for a shamrock with roots. In a few minutes it was placed on the table, "all wet and glistening, also black mud-like earth with several live worms crawling on the table, and where the clump fell was a dirty patch on the table cover."-- Id., pp. 90. 91. The root was divided among the sitters, and planted.

Dr. Maxwell, another observer, makes this statement: "At certain times, we felt ourselves touched by hands having all the characteristics of those of a living being. We felt the skin, the warmth, the movable fingers. On grasping them, we experienced the sensation of hands dissolving away as though composed of a semifluid substance. They appear of a whitish color, almost transparent, with elongated fingers."-- Quoted in Tweedale's "Man's Survival After Death," page 231.

Prof. E. L. Larkin records the following:

"A hand and forearm appeared above the screen Sometimes an arm appeared, with a sleeve and then without, up to near the shoulder. All were given a handshake. To me the arm seemed to issue from the back or shoulder blade of the girl [the medium]. After shaking hands, the arm and hand vanished each time."--"Science and the Soul," p. 53.

Mr. Frank Podmore, who has opposed the deductions of Spiritists from every material standpoint, makes this frank acknowledgment concerning the phenomena themselves:

"I should, perhaps, state at the outset, as emphatically as possible, that it seems to me incredible that fraud should be the sole explanation of the revelations made in trance and automatic writing. No one who has made a careful study of the records, and is sufficiently free from prepossession to enable him to form an honest opinion, will believe that any imaginable exercise of fraudulent ingenuity, supplemented by whatever opportuneness of coincidence and laxness on the part of investigators, could conceivably explain the whole of the [spirit] communications. And the more intimately they are studied, the more the conviction grows that we must assume supernormal agency of one kind or another. In what follows, then, I shall take it for granted that fraud is not the complete explanation."--"The Newer Spiritualism," p. 146.

And concerning the Spiritistic operations of one C. B. Sanders, Mr. Podmore says:

'There are some marvelous occurrences recorded which cannot be explained either by telepathy, or by any extension of the known senses.'-- Id., p. 151.

The quotations and references given herein to prove that spiritistic phenomena are real, could be added to at an interminable length; but the evidence already given should be sufficient. Of course, all must admit that a tremendous amount of fraud has been connected with Spiritism from the beginning of its revival in America in 1847-48. Unscrupulous persons, for financial reasons, have imitated the phenomena, and have, in many instances, deceived the public for

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years. Shameless frauds have been perpetrated repeatedly; and yet, mingled with it all, there have been the genuine spirit phenomena which human ingenuity cannot produce and which the brightest human intellect cannot explain except on the hypothesis that these phenomena are produced by supernormal or superhuman agencies.

While Spiritist leaders know well enough that much fraud and trickery are practised, yet they know also that fraud and trickery will not explain more than a portion of these mysterious demonstrations. And knowing that, they accept the claims of the spirits that they are the spirits of the dead. No such conclusion is necessary or warranted. To the Christian who believes his Bible it is absolutely indefensible. But it does this: it helps to bolster up the notion, borrowed from ancient paganism, that the soul is immortal, deathless. If that hypothesis were true, it would follow at once that man is not dependent upon Jesus Christ for eternal life, nor helped in his attainments "beyond the veil" by anything that Jesus Christ has done for him or will do. It rules out our Lord as the Saviour of men. It belies the very name He bears, as previously shown.

If Satan can convince the world that mankind has no need of a Saviour, that Jesus Christ is nothing to us but a great teacher, that He was no more the Son of God than we ourselves are, he will have captured the world in his snare of death. It is the great deception, by which Lucifer hopes to sweep away the prospects of the race he has duped and degraded and despoiled, lo, these many generations.

But ever there stands with wounded hands, with nail-pierced feet, with riven side and thorn-scarred brow, one who is described as the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," whose heart, bowed down with the weight of this world's sin, was broken for you and for me. That Man, persecuted by His own people, insulted by those who could win life only through His death, whose peace could be purchased only by His pain,— that Man stands today as He stood then, the only link between earth and heaven, Son of God and Son of man, the purchase price of man's redemption, the Prince of the Restoration, your Saviour and mine, if we will have Him; your Judge and mine, if we trample the sacrifice of His life under proud and thankless feet.