

Chapter 25 — Spiritualistic Mediums

*of The Mind at Mischief:
Tricks and Deceptions of the Subconscious and How to Cope with Them*
(1929)

by
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Sources for Chapter 25, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Wilfred **Lay**, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (2) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., *The Truth About Spiritualism* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1923)
- (3) Rev. Samuel **McComb**, *The Future Life in the Light of Modern Inquiry* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919)
- (4) Horatio W. **Dresser**, Ph.D., *The Open Vision: A Study of Psychic Phenomena* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1920)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (other than Sadler) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Magenta** indicates an earlier Sadler book.
- (c) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (d) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (e) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.

- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (h) **Red** indicates either: (1) an obvious error on Sadler's part, brought about, in most cases, by miscopying or misinterpreting his source, or (2) Sadler's use of an earlier text of his that contained time-bound information which he didn't revise when presenting it in *The Mind at Mischief*, resulting in a historical impossibility, or (3) Sadler's use of an earlier text of his which he revised in such a way as to contradict that earlier text.
- (i) **Gold** highlights key words or themes which will be discussed in the analysis of the chapter.

Matthew Block
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XXV — SPIRITUAL- ISTIC MEDIUMS

X: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS (Lay 300)

§3. *Belief a Wish* (Lay 307)

We all believe what we unconsciously wish.

The belief expressed consciously in word or deed is the perceptible expression of the imperceptible impulse (L 307-08).

VIII: KNOWLEDGE ABOVE BELIEF (Lay 265)

§9. *Belief is not Knowledge* (Lay 284)

[contd] So it is appropriate to consider the nature of the motives which impel men to believe in survival and in communication with those personalities who, as they believe, in some spiritual or other state, survive death (L 284).

In the waves of spiritism which periodically break over society what instincts are followed and what unconscious wishes are gratified, is the real question in any consideration of the social aspect of spiritism (L 284).

25:0.1 THE psychologist tells us that

“we tend to believe in those things which we desire.”

Belief is said to be merely the expression of our deep-seated and instinctive desires.

As one author says:

“It is appropriate to consider the nature of the motives which impel men to believe in survival and in communication with those personalities who, as they believe, in some spiritual or other state, survive death.”

25:0.2 The waves of spiritism which periodically sweep over society are concerned in the gratification of certain deeply rooted instincts and unconscious wishes.

X: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS
(Lay 300)

§3. *Belief a Wish* (Lay 307)

[contd from four rows up] For our beliefs we do not need and do not want any scientific proof no matter how much we may happen to say we do, or say that we cannot believe what is not proved or patent to the senses (L 308).

We do not need scientific proof for a thing we wish to believe—

we just naturally believe it.

LOOKING BEYOND THE GRAVE

I: WHY IS SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

4. LOOKING BEYOND THE GRAVE (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 10)

[contd] It is difficult for us to give up our loved ones.

We become attached to our fellow mortals, and we dislike forever to part company with our earthly companions.

The spiritualists are endeavoring to live over again the life-companionship of their departed friends and loved ones.

In their phantasies and dreams they see them again about the house, and with them again they traverse the old familiar paths and roads, while in imagination they hear their voices, and feel the handclasp and embrace of those long since departed.

They resurrect the love letters of former days and read and re-read them.

25:1.1 It is difficult for us to give up our loved ones.

We become attached to our fellow mortals, and we shrink from the very thought of parting company with them forever.

The spiritualists are endeavoring to live over again the life companionship of their departed friends and loved ones.

In their fantasies and dreams they see them again about the house, and with them traverse the old familiar paths and roads, while in imagination they hear their voices, and feel the handclasp and embrace of those long since departed.

They resurrect the love letters of former days and read and reread them.

SOURCE

After our loved ones leave us, we, in our own concept of their characteristics, endow them with many beautiful things which they but faintly possessed when on earth, and we allow to fade out of our memories those disagreeable things we were wont to recognize as a part of their personality when they were with us (*TTAS* 10).

[contd] After our friends have left us, we collect their photographs, place them on our dressers and hang them on our walls, and thus we seek to keep the memory of these dear ones alive in our minds.

When we are thus able to visualize the departed, it does not seem strange that the human mind with its creative imagination, should dare to go one step further, and seek actually to hear the voices—actually to communicate with the supposed spirits of those who have left us (*TTAS* 10-11).

[contd] There is a persistent determination, on the part of most people, to cling to their dead—they simply will not let them go.

This state of mind is reflected in the actual behavior of many persons who throw their arms about the departed at the last funeral rites with violent weeping, clinging to their lifeless forms to the very last moment.

It is not strange, then, that after the form of clay has been laid away in the cemetery, intelligent beings begin to ask, concerning their deceased loved ones:

“Where are they? What are they doing? Can they come back? Do they come back to our world?”

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

After our loved ones leave us, we, in our own concept of their characteristics, endow them with many beautiful qualities which they but faintly possessed when on earth, and we allow to fade out of our memories those disagreeable traits which we were wont to recognize as a part of their personality when they were with us.

We collect their photographs, place them on our dressers and walls, and thus seek to keep the memory of these dear ones alive in our minds.

When we are thus able to visualize the departed, it does not seem strange that the human mind, with its creative imagination, should dare to go one step farther, and seek actually to hear the voices—actually to communicate with the spirits—of those who have left us.

25:1.2 There is a persistent determination, on the part of most people, to cling to their dead; they simply will not let them go.

This state of mind is reflected in the behavior of many persons who throw their arms about the departed ones at the funeral rites with violent weeping, clinging to their lifeless forms to the very last moment.

It is not strange, then, that after the form of clay has been laid away in the cemetery, intelligent beings begin to ask concerning their deceased loved ones:

“Where are they? What are they doing? Can they come back to this world? Do they come back?”

SOURCE

Are they cognizant of what we are doing? Are they conscious of our sorrow for them? Do they know how much we miss them?" (*TTAS* 11)

[contd] It is only natural that a curious and speculative human brain should indulge such thoughts.

And as the world of today asks itself these questions concerning the dead and departed, the answer seems to be coming back in a flood of spiritistic literature and a deluge of spiritualistic performances (*TTAS* 11).

If it is not our favorite medium we attend upon, then it is the ouija board that we experiment with.

If it is not clairvoyance that we dabble with, then it is through the avenue of psychology that we seek to attain to telepathic communication between the minds of the living (*TTAS* 12).

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Do they know what we are doing? Do they know how much we miss them?"

25:1.3 It is only natural that a curious and speculative human brain should indulge such thoughts.

And as the world of to-day asks itself these questions concerning the departed, the answer seems to be coming back in a flood of spiritistic literature and a deluge of spiritualistic performances.

25:1.4 The shelves of the bookshops are heavy with the writings of those who claim to have been in communication with the spirits of the dead. Serious claims, even preposterous pretensions, are made by the mediums, the high priests of modern spiritualism.

If we do not attend the séances of our favorite medium, we experiment with the ouija board.

If it is not clairvoyance that we dabble in, then it is through the avenue of psychology that we seek telepathic communication between the minds of the living.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD

5. COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 12)

[contd] Unquestionably, the vast majority of the common people indulge the desire or curiosity for communicating with the dead. The average person, having passed through some sorrowful bereavement, craves for satisfying assurance that his loved ones have only passed on to enjoy the pleasures of a better world.

The bereaved soul is tortured by anxiety and uncertainty, and craves those things which will demonstrate and prove that his loved ones survive death—that they enjoy consciousness beyond the vale (*TTAS* 12).

[contd] How eager is the bereaved human to catch a glimpse—to discern even the faintest glimmer—of the light that would testify to life beyond the tomb.

This is not strange, since we recognize the almost universal belief in a future life.

Why should not those of us who remain behind desire to know where our loved ones are, what they are doing, whether they are in this world or another world?

And the answer to these questions can only be found in the guidebooks of the revealed religions or in the messages of the seance room (*TTAS* 12).

[contd] Science today offers us no proof of existence beyond the grave (*TTAS* 13).

25:2.1 The average person, having passed through some sorrowful bereavement, craves satisfying assurance that his loved one has only passed on to enjoy the pleasures of a better world.

The bereaved soul is tortured by anxiety and uncertainty, and craves that which will demonstrate and prove that his loved ones have survived death—that they enjoy consciousness beyond the vale.

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The answer to these questions can be found only in the guidebooks of the revealed religions or in the messages of the séance room.

Science offers us no proof of existence beyond the grave.

SOURCE

Therefore, proportionately as the dogma of revealed religion weakens in its hold upon the human mind, to just the extent that men and women drift away from their belief in the theologic teachings and dogmas of their family church connections, they become—if they do not meanwhile develop an independent philosophy concerning such matters—ready and willing candidates for experimenting with spiritualism in their effort to solve the problems of an unseen world and a future life (*TTAS* 13).

II: IMMORTALITY AND THE MODERN MAN (McComb 13)

Shall there be a meeting between loved ones again and mutual recognition or will not those who have passed over first have advanced to higher planes where the weakness or immaturity of those who come later may not reach?

What kind of a sphere is it into which has gone that tender and loving spirit so dear to us on earth? Will there be friendly faces to offer a welcome to the newcomer?

Or is it an infinite void where in utter loneliness the spirit lives out its life shut up with the memories of its past? (McC 21)

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

25:2.2 To just the extent, therefore, that men and women drift away from their belief in the theologic teachings and dogmas of their family church connections, they are likely—if they do not meanwhile develop an independent philosophy concerning such matters—to become ready and willing experimenters with spiritualism in their effort to solve the problems of an unseen world and a future life.

25:2.3 We are all desirous of knowing whether we shall meet and recognize our friends and loved ones on the other side.

We would like to know if there is a social life and a communistic enjoyment among those who have departed this sphere.

Are they joyful and happy in their inter-association, after the fashion of beings on earth,

or are they lonely and engaged—in some segregated portion of the universe—in atoning for their misdeeds here,

or in efforts to attain new heights of spiritual development?

When, through some painful bereavement, the soul is awakened to the need for certainty, for some satisfying conception of the world into which the loved one has passed, nothing offers that can stand the scrutiny of the anxious heart, beset, as it is, with a host of questions that now clamour for an answer (McC 20).

There are others who while not indifferent to the life beyond the grave are content to say: "I do not know." Huxley, who invented the word "agnostic" to describe this mental attitude, maintained that as a scientific man he was unable either to affirm or to deny immortality (McC 24).

Huxley himself could not carry his doctrine through amid the sad realities of experience.

In reply to a letter of Charles Kingsley, who wrote him words of comfort on the loss of a dear child, the man of science flung over his agnostic doctrine and took refuge in a wondrous faith. "The ledger of the Almighty," he wrote, "is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence" (McC 24).

These and many other questions throng the minds of mortals and clamor for an answer;

and as long as they are there, spiritualism will have an excuse for existence—and an opportunity to deceive and to delude.

25:2.4 Of course, certain stoic minds of long scientific training may, like Huxley, assume the "agnostic" attitude, and manifest but a minimum of interest in what is going on in the world beyond.

But even so great a mind as Huxley's wavered in the presence of that sorrow which attended the loss of his child.

In replying to a letter from Charles Kingsley, Huxley sought comfort by indulging in faith and hope to such an extent as to express belief in the "ledger of the Almighty."

SOURCE

I: WHY IS SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

5. COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 12)

[contd from 2:2.2] Then are, then, three sources from which we can look for an answer to our desire to communicate with the dead. They are:

a. *Science*. Science today in noncommittal. It has nothing to offer.

To science the dead are dead. Science offers no hope beyond the grave.

It stands ready to investigate anything having to do with the material universe and the physical laws of nature, but today science, as such, offers no technique by which the living may communicate with the dead (*ITAS* 13).

[contd] b. *Revealed religion*. The revealed religions such as Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, offer little teaching that would encourage us to believe that surviving mortals could hope to communicate with the spirits of departed friends and relatives.

Buddhism certainly holds out no such hope, while it is doubtful even that the teaching of Confucius, with all its burden of ancestor worship as believed by the Chinese, offers any great assurance of the living being able to communicate with the dead (*ITAS* 13-14).

[contd] c. *Spiritualism*. Spiritualism is the only system of religious belief or occult pretension which claims to be able to put the living in communication with the dead, and therein is the secret of its widespread diffusion.

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

25:2.5 There are, then, three sources from which we can look for an answer to our desire to communicate with the dead. They are:

25:2.6 1. *Science*—Science to-day is noncommittal.

To science the dead are dead. Science offers no hope beyond the grave.

It stands ready to investigate anything having to do with the material universe and the physical laws of Nature; but it has found no technique by which the living may communicate with the dead.

25:2.7 2. *Revealed religion*—The revealed religions, such as Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, offer little teaching that would encourage us to believe that surviving mortals may hope to communicate with the spirits of departed friends and relatives.

Buddhism certainly holds out no such hope, while it is doubtful even that the teachings of Confucius, with all their burden of ancestor worship, offer any great assurance of the living being able to communicate with the dead.

25:2.8 3. *Spiritualism*—Spiritualism is the only system of religious belief or occult pretension which claims to be able to put the living in communication with the dead, and therein is the secret of its widespread diffusion.

SOURCE

Human beings would like to communicate with the dead.

Science provides no way, and revealed religion offers no help; therefore they turn to the seance and the medium;

but what foolish conduct on the part of intelligent human beings to expect the Witch of Endor to supply us with those realities with which to satisfy our curiosity and quench our spiritual thirst when both religion and science have failed to help us (*TTAS* 14).

3. THE REACTION TO MATERIALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 7)

[contd] We cannot close our eyes to the fact that during the past fifty years materialistic tendencies have made great progress in the minds of the more intelligent and thinking elements of society (*TTAS* 7).

The channels of religious consolation patronized by the last generation have been more or less blocked to the thirsty souls of today.

This change in the spiritual complexion of the people is probably due to three distinct causes:

a. A general breakdown in the religious tendencies and authority of former generations (*TTAS* 7).

[contd] b. The spread of socialism and kindred teachings which are devoid of a spiritual background and setting; and

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Human beings would like to communicate with the dead.

Science provides no way and revealed religion offers little or no help; therefore they turn to the séance and the medium.

But how foolish for intelligent human beings to expect the Witch of Endor to supply us with something which both religion and science refuse us!

THE REACTION TO MATERIALISM

25:3.1 We cannot close our eyes to the fact that during the past fifty years materialistic tendencies have made great progress in the minds of the more intelligent elements of society.

The channels of religious consolation patronized by the last generation have been more or less blocked to the thirsty souls of to-day.

This change in the spiritual complexion of the people is probably due to three distinct causes:

25:3.2 1. A general breakdown in the religious tenets and authority of former generations.

25:3.3 2. The spread of socialism and kindred teachings, which are devoid of a spiritual background and setting.

SOURCE

c. The rapid spread of materialistic tendencies, due to the enormous development of the physical sciences (*TTAS* 7).

[contd] Science starts out with the theory that the mind has nothing in it except that which enters through the physical senses; but sooner or later even the scientist himself is brought face to face with intellectual phenomena which it is difficult to explain on the theory that thinking can only have its origin in sensory feeling.

There is an uncanny creative element in the human mind; there is a phantasy of imagination that tends to assert itself over and above that residue of mind and memory which we conceive as having had its origin in the physical impressions of the special senses.

And so even the physical scientists and the psychologists tend sooner or later to gravitate to that place where they are willing to admit the possibility, if not the probability, of the existence of spiritual forces in connection and contact with the human mind.

And thus, without suitable principles for guidance, the way is wide open for the intrusion of some phase of spiritualism (*TTAS* 7-8).

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

25:3.4 3. The rapid spread of materialistic tendencies, due to the enormous development of the physical sciences.

25:3.5 Science starts out with the theory that the mind has nothing in it except that which enters through the physical senses; but sooner or later even the scientist is brought face to face with intellectual phenomena which it is difficult to explain on the theory that thinking can have its origin only in sensory feeling.

There is an uncanny creative element in the human mind; there is a power of imagination that tends to assert itself over and above that residue of mind and memory which we conceive as having had origin in the physical impressions of the special senses.

Even the physical scientists and psychologists tend sooner or later to gravitate to that place where they are willing to admit the possibility, if not the probability, of the existence of spiritual forces in connection and contact with the human mind.

And thus, without suitable principles for guidance, the way is wide open for the intrusion of some phase of spiritualism or spiritistic doctrine.

IV: HINDRANCES TO BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY (McComb 55)

II. THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM (McComb 65)

[The scientific materialist] is not concerned about the nature of knowledge; such a problem he hands over to the metaphysician. What concerns him is to frame an hypothesis, in harmony with scientific method, which will render intelligible the relation of mind to the bodily organism. And this hypothesis can be expressed in a sentence—*consciousness is a function of the brain.*

It cannot be denied that the normal facts are on the materialistic side. Universal experience testifies that consciousness is always associated with a physical organism,

weakens when the organism weakens, is impaired when the organism is impaired,

and finally disappears when the organism perishes under the stroke of death.

25:3.6 The scientist of purely materialistic tendencies still maintains that “consciousness is a function of the brain,”

but in most cases he is willing to grant the possible existence of super-physical agencies, tho he relegates their study and discussion to the province of the metaphysician.

He does, however, insist that, as we know and understand consciousness on this planet,

it is always strictly associated with the material organism—the physical brain;

that it is strengthened or weakened directly in proportion to the strengthening or weakening of the physical machine,

and that it disappears, from a scientific standpoint, when the organism succumbs,—when the body is stricken down by the hand of death.

SOURCE

It is true that the materialist cannot prove that consciousness is destroyed by death, but why, he asks, should consciousness persist when the **other functions**, the various chemistries of the body, are stilled forever? (McC 72)

VIII: THE ARGUMENT FROM PSYCHICAL RESEARCH (McComb 140)

2. The spiritistic hypothesis.

This view has the advantages of simplicity, ability to explain, and agreement with what we know of the powers of consciousness. On the other hand, there are obstacles to its unreserved acceptance. To begin with, the silence or apparent silence of **all the ages** as to any **authentic message** from the world beyond raises a powerful presumption that the spirit-messages of today are to be explained by some mysterious forces of the receiver's psychic organism.

To this it is replied that such silence is a mere **assumption**, that on the contrary the experience of the race testifies to the reality of communication with the other world, but that prejudice, preconceptions, and a materialistic bias have dulled the minds of the majority, and prevented them from impartially weighing the facts (McC 162-63).

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

True, the scientist does not undertake to prove that death destroys consciousness; but he does prove that it destroys all **other functions** of the organism,

and he assumes that the burden of proof for the existence of consciousness after death rests upon the metaphysician and theologian.

25:3.7 The scientist further calls attention to the fact that **all down through the ages** no universally accepted and **authentic message** has come to us from over the Great Divide.

He is inclined, therefore, very strongly to presume that the spirits, if there be such, have not been able habitually to communicate with living mortals.

True, the unprejudiced scientist grants that science can only **assume** this to be a fact,

[contd] Then, again, in many of the phenomena there is a curious mixture of truth and error.

It was this perplexing fact that led William James now to a favourable and now to an unfavourable judgment (McC 163).

Just at the point when the correct answer to a test-question is of vital importance, the supposed communicator is silent or finds it convenient to plead an engagement elsewhere, or in some instances makes a reply which turns out to be incorrect (McC 164).

Perhaps the objection which weighs most heavily with the average man is the assumed triviality of the messages. Even admitting, he says, the reality of the communications, of what use are they? What do they tell us which we do not know? Is it not passing strange that these intelligences have nothing to tell us of the conditions of the sphere which they inhabit?

while he stands ready to examine anew any sincere claims which may be put forth on the part of those who believe in spiritual forces and spiritual communications between the living and the dead.*
[*See Appendix.]

25:3.8 All honest attempts to investigate spiritism have been greatly hindered by the discovery of much that is ungenue or brazenly fraudulent.

So persistent is this element of fraud, that the high-minded scientist is tempted early to relinquish his research in disgust and wash his hands of the whole sordid mess.

Such was the experience of the late William James, the psychologist, who, in his declining years, turned his thoughts toward an investigation of spiritualism.

25:3.9 My experience has been, when seeking communications through spiritualistic mediums,

that the "control" of the communicating spirit finds himself called elsewhere every time it is brought up to the place where I am going to get some real information—or subject it to a bona fide test.

This, in connection with the triviality of the communications alleged to have their origin with departed spirits,

SOURCE

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

has compelled my own reason fundamentally to doubt the genuineness of these communications.

25:3.10 Again I must record that I have come in contact with a few individuals of psychic peculiarity, who were the channel of communication for numerous messages

The psychic researcher replies: All the messages are not trivial, and even the trivial have their value as marks of identification. But the non-trivial messages such as those recorded, for example, in Miss Cameron's *Seven Purposes*, are not open to verification, and may by the critic be explained as subconscious fabrications. It is hard to see how this difficulty can be overcome (McC 164-65).

that were not of a trivial nature;

but in no instance did these messages lay claim to have had their origin with deceased human beings. They always claimed an origin separate and apart from the realm of departed spirits.

SPIRITISTIC PHILOSOPHY

I: WHY IS SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

3. THE REACTION TO MATERIALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 7)

[contd from 25:3.5] *Recurring Waves of Spiritism*. As already intimated a perusal of the philosophic tendencies of mankind serves to show that the race tends to oscillate, in generation cycles, from one extreme to the other in its philosophic beliefs.

25:4.1 As already intimated, the history of human thought indicates that mankind tends to oscillate, in generation cycles, from one extreme to the other in its philosophic beliefs.

SOURCE

A period of superstition and credulity is usually followed by a period of materialistic reaction.

The spiritism and mysticism of the dark ages culminated in the rank infidelity and materialism of the French Revolution.

On the other hand the materialistic tendencies of the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the great expansion and development of the physical sciences and the increasing tendency of science to lean toward materialism and fatalism, led to an inevitable outbreak of mystic cultism at the dawn of the twentieth century, as outlined in the teachings of Christian Science, and still further and more recently in the unprecedented tendencies and leanings toward spiritualism and other efforts to communicate with the dead and otherwise to get in touch with the invisible world beyond the grave (*TTAS* 8-9).

[contd] I believe that our present dilemma, the spiritualistic maze into which so many earnest souls are creeping, has been brought about by a failure to recognize the proper provinces of science and religion.

Each has its own sphere, and the failure of the one to recognize the domain and function of the other, has done much to bring confusion to the popular mind, and to twist and distort the philosophy of common sense in the souls of the common people (*TTAS* 9).

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

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25:4.2 I believe that our present dilemma, the spiritualistic maze into which so many earnest souls are creeping, has been brought about by a failure to recognize the proper provinces of science and religion.

Each has its own sphere, and the failure of the one to recognize the domain and function of the other has done much to bring confusion to the popular mind.

SOURCE

[contd] Just about the time the scientists succeed in convincing the people that there is no spirit, that all is material; the average individual having fed on these dry husks of materialism and finding an ever-present spiritual thirst which is not quenched by such scientific dogma, soon accumulates such a desire for comfort, as the result of the sorrows of living,

that when he contemplates the future and feels that when he dies he is going to be but like the cats and dogs and beasts of the earth, to rot in the ground and be no more;

in a time of stress or strain, during a season of great sorrow or other severe disappointment—these mentally distraught and spiritually famished individuals settle their philosophic difficulties by suddenly abandoning the ship of scientific materialism, and they startle us by taking one grand plunge into the sophistries and delusions of Christian Science, Spiritualism, or some other mystic, metaphysical cult (*TTAS* 9-10).

[The very fact that, let us say, a million people are willing to believe that **all is spirit and nothing is matter**—and I presume there are many more who lean toward this sort of philosophy—this very fact serves to impress the subconscious public mind with the notion that, after all, the important thing in life is spirit and spirit connections ... (*TTAS* 58).]

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

25:4.3 Just about the time when the scientists succeed in convincing the people that there is no spirit, that all is material, the average individual, having found the dry husks of materialism useless for the quenching of an ever-present spiritual thirst,

turns in revolt to some creed at the other extreme of credulity.

Refusing to believe that when he dies he is merely going, like the cats and dogs and other beasts, to rot in the ground and be no more,

the distraught and spiritually famished individual settles his philosophic difficulties by suddenly abandoning the ship of scientific materialism, and startles us by **taking one grand plunge** into the sophistries and delusions of Christian Science, spiritism, or some other mystic, metaphysical cult.

25:4.4 The prevalence of Christian Science to-day is but a reaction to the scientific materialism of the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

Tens of thousands of people find it more comforting to indulge the belief that **“all is spirit and nothing is matter,”** than to believe that all is material and nothing is spirit.

This confusion is the result of the tendency of dogmatic theologians to combat the demonstrated teachings of science, and the tendency of dogmatic scientists to destroy the foundations of religious faith and hope by their discoveries and demonstrations. The theologians refuse to accept new scientific truth, and the scientists refuse to recognize the necessity for, and reality of, the spiritual domain of human thought.

[Man is an animal; but he is an animal plus something else. He is the mythic earth tree, whose roots are in the ground, but whose topmost branches may blossom in the heavens! (Henry George).][*Note*: This quote is included in *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, from which most of the “twenty-eight statements of human philosophy” in Paper 48 were drawn .]

25:4.5 Scientists have largely failed to recognize that while man is an animal, he is an animal plus—

plus something which science has nothing to do with, and which scientists can never prove or disprove by laboratory methods.

Religionists, scientists, and philosophers must learn to function in their own spheres, and to allow their contemporaries to do likewise.

INSTINCTIVE LONGINGS

1. IMMORTALITY—A UNIVERSAL HOPE (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

In this connection it is interesting to note that we do not find any great and dominant instinct, any universal appetite or longing, hunger or thirst, which has become a part of human life, without at the same time discovering that means have been provided for the satisfaction of these natural longings and biologic instincts.

25:5.1 We do not find any great and dominant instinct, any universal appetite or longing, which has become a part of human life, without at the same time discovering that means have been provided for the satisfaction of such biologic instinct.

SOURCE

We find at hand the means to satisfy our physical, social, and sex cravings, those longings which have become a part of men's lives;

and so, no matter what may be the real origin of our spiritual instinct and the desire to survive death—I say, no matter what may be the real beginning of these beliefs in a future existence,

it would seem but philosophic consistency to believe that the all-wise spiritual forces of the universe must, in all consistency, have made some adequate provision for the satisfaction of these spiritual longings which are so deeply implanted in the hearts of mankind (*TTAS* 2-3).

I must freely admit my belief in the existence of invisible and spiritual forces,

though I realize that the frontiers of science are being constantly advanced—

that many things which we once regarded as spiritual we now regard as natural (*TTAS* 3).

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Hunger for food, thirst for water, social or sexual cravings, which are a part of men's lives, are all susceptible of being gratified more or less.

Whatever may be argued as to the origin of this so-called worshiping instinct in the human race, and the well-nigh universal belief in a future existence,

it would seem but philosophic consistency to expect that the spiritual forces of the universe must have made some adequate provision for the satisfaction of these spiritual longings which are so uniformly implanted in the hearts of mankind,

or which have arisen in the human breast—as some would have us believe—by gradual evolutionary processes.

I am perfectly willing to recognize that invisible and spiritual forces may be in working coordination with the visible and material energies of the realm.

On the other hand, many things which we call spiritual may, after all, be purely psychologic, and in their ultimate analysis, even physiologic.

25:5.2 The frontiers of science are being constantly advanced.

Gradually the borderlands of superstition and mysticism are being pushed back.

That which was supernatural in one age is recognized as perfectly natural in the next.

Many of those things which struck terror to the soul of the barbarian are now looked upon as natural phenomena, and the laws governing them are more or less well understood. Year by year science is narrowing and limiting the sphere of superstition; but at no time can or will science ever destroy or eliminate those higher realms of spiritual experience, with their instinct of worship and desire for immortality.

IS SPIRITISM BIOLOGIC?

III: THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY (McComb 39)

[contd] There is a very popular belief, fostered by much of our hymnology and preaching, that everybody is intensely desirous of living on after death;

and that even the few who have abandoned hope of doing so, cannot wholly suppress the wish that it were otherwise.

Hence,—so the argument runs,—a desire so universal cannot but imply the existence of a corresponding reality.

“The heart has reasons which the Reason cannot understand.

The philosopher in rummaging through the treasure-house of the soul finds the idea of immortality and also the desire for it.

25:6.1 Popular religious belief, encouraged by much of our hymnology and preaching, inculcates the idea that everybody is intensely desirous of living on after death;

and that “even the few who have abandoned hope of doing so, cannot wholly suppress the wish that it were otherwise.”

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“The heart has reasons which the reason cannot understand.”

As one popular writer says:

25:6.2 The philosopher in rummaging through the treasure-house of the soul finds the idea of immortality and also the desire for it.

SOURCE

He cannot help asking if this desire for immortality may not be evidence of man's capacity for it.

If there is an appetite for life everlasting, the chances are that the appetite will not go unsatisfied. If the heart's aspirations keep leading toward eternity, it is not unlikely that eternity has some blessed thing in store." [Footnote: C.E. Jefferson: *Why We May Believe in Life After Death*, pp. 137, 138.] (M 39)

But it may be well to say first a few words about the primary assertion that the desire for immortality is universal. All men, we are told, long for personal continuance after death.

Do they?

It is true that the majority of religions have held up the hope of immortality before the eyes of men,

yet the Hebrew faith, as the prophets proclaimed it, and the religion of Buddha in its purest form renounced the thought, the one teaching that man's real destiny was limited by the grave, the other promising as the prize to be won, Nirvana, in which consciousness shall be "as a blown-out lamp."

The pessimism of the East, which looks forward to sheer annihilation, has invaded the West,

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

He cannot help asking if this desire for immortality may not be evidence of man's capacity for it.

If there is an appetite for life everlasting, the chances are that the appetite will not go unsatisfied.

25:6.3 But someone has asked,

"Do all men really want to live after death?"

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SOURCE

and philosophers like Schopenhauer and poets like Thomson and Swinburne have glorified death as the last and highest word of the universe to its creature, man (McC 40-41).

Professor J. H. Leuba informs us that of the highly educated men of scientific temper to whom he put the question whether they desired immortality, 27 per cent. did not desire it at all, 39 per cent. desired it moderately, and only 34 per cent. admitted that they desired it intensely (McC 41-42).

Or take the testimony of Dr. Felix Adler, the honored head of the Ethical Culture Movement, who certainly is not biased by any theological motive:

“As for myself I admit that I do not so much desire immortality as that I do not see how I can escape it.

If I as an individual am actually under obligation to achieve perfection, if the command, ‘Be ye therefore perfect,’ is addressed, not only to the human race in general, but to every single member of it (and it is thus that I must interpret the moral imperative), then on moral grounds I do not see how my being can stop short of the attainment marked out for it, of the goal set up for it” [Footnote: *Life and Destiny*, pp. 38-39.] (McC 47).

[contd] Even in the case of those unhappy souls for whom life has lost its savour and who turn from it in disgust, it may well be questioned whether in every instance the passion for death is the hope of or belief in extinction.

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25:6.7 Even in the case of “those unhappy souls for whom life has lost its savor and who turn from it in disgust,” it may well be questioned whether in every instance the passion for death is the hope of, or belief in, extinction.

Many a suicide has left behind him a pathetic prayer for forgiveness, not from man only, but still more from God, because of the motive of the deed, perhaps unbearable mental or physical pain; perhaps overstrained remorse for some shameful memory, some “rooted sorrow,” which no healing hand could “pluck from the brain” (McC 47).

I: WHY IS SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

1. IMMORTALITY—A UNIVERSAL HOPE (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

“If a man die, shall he live again?” is a question as old as Job.

Great minds in all the past have tugged away to demonstrate the immortality of the soul.

From the days when the Egyptian priests consulted the oracles of Isis, and the Greeks sought truth from Eleusis, there has been a belief in the evocation of the spirits of the dead (*TTAS* 5).

VI: THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 167)

7. THE BIBLICAL ESTIMATE OF SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 182)

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We do not have to look for it in mythology, for numerous examples are given in the Old Testament.

SOURCE

It is certain that Moses ... was familiar with occult doctrines, for he left on record for the guidance of the ancient Israelites, the following admonition: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth **divination**, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a **witch**, or a **necromancer**. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deut. 18:10-12 (*TTAS* 182-83).

[See *TTAS* 21.]

[Even primitive, prehistoric men were more or less religious, and indulged in the **hope for immortality**, as we discover when we dig up their skeletons and note that many of them **practiced some sort of burial ceremonial**, indicative of their belief in a future existence (*TTAS* 6).]

[A RACE OF ARTISTS AND ARTISANS]

It was the **Cro-Magnon** artists who painted the wonderful pictures that are now to be found on the walls of the many caves and grottoes in central and western Europe (William S. Sadler, M.D., *Long Heads and Round Heads: Or, What's the Matter with Germany* [1918] 22.)

[See Henry Fairfield Osborn, *Men of the Old Stone Age* [1917], pp. 305, 379.]

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

It was known as **necromancy**, **witchcraft**, **divination**, and magic, but the last issue is spiritualism.

THE DESIRE OF THE AGES

25:7.1 A careful study of the ancient peoples,

even the prehistoric races, shows that very early in the development of the human species there appeared a tendency to recognize and worship supernatural beings and forces, and along with this we find definite evidence of the belief in, and **hope for, immortality**.

There exists abundant evidence that even that prehistoric **race of artists and artisans**, the **Cro-Magnons**, whose **wonderful polychrome paintings** have been uncovered in recent years in the caves of France, **practised the ceremonial burial of the dead**.

The finding of ochre in their burying places, and their custom of burying various implements with their dead—much after the practise of the North American Indian—leads to the belief that these ancient people, among their numerous intellectual accomplishments, entertained a belief in life beyond the grave.

SOURCE

[The early Samaritans *[sic]* and Babylonians were steeped in mysticism, ranging from astrology to their numerous attempts by various methods to communicate with the supernatural spirits of the invisible world, as well as with the spirits of departed humans (*TTAS* 20).]

[In all my professional career I have never witnessed what might be called a Godless deathbed scene. [Etc.] (*TTAS* 3).]

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

25:7.2 A study of the later races, which usher in the historic period of human kind, such as the Sumerians, the predecessors of the Babylonians and Assyrians, also shows unmistakable evidence of a definite system of religious belief and worship, and a profound confidence in the teaching of human survival—the doctrine of life beyond the grave.

25:7.3 In whatever age we study the human species, in whatever state of barbarism or civilization we examine man's spiritual beliefs and religious tendencies, we invariably find, as the very center of the religions of barbaric fear or the theology of the highest civilization, the hope for life—a belief in immortality, natural or conditional.

25:7.4 For many years it has been the practise, as a part of the psychologic analysis of all my patients undergoing a research examination, in the effort to ascertain the behavior of the emotional life of the individual, to inquire into his or her religious status, to find out to what extent the emotional life has found expression through the religious channels of worship, meditation, and activities more or less of a spiritual nature.

Throughout my whole professional career, I have scarcely found a single person who did not indulge some sort of belief, hope, expectation, or anticipation, as regards life after death.

Many disturbed souls who are more or less skeptical about a personal God, who entertain many doubts about a **supreme centralized Deity** in control of all the visible and invisible forces of the universe, who are more or less skeptical of all the tenets of orthodox theology, still believe in some sort of survival beyond the grave.

[Contrast 25:6.4.]

25:7.5 **I have found that education and training, not to mention the inherent bent of certain types of mind, serve to influence the expression of this well-nigh universal tendency to believe in a future life—but only to modify its expression; it is still there, altho sometimes almost covered up by the accumulations of a college course or of other intellectual training. When these individuals become confidential in the privacy of the doctor’s consulting room, where they feel free to express their inmost thought, they almost unfailingly admit their belief in, and confess their hope for, something beyond the grave.**

I: WHY IS SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 1)

2. SPIRITUALISM LIKE FALLING IN LOVE (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 5)

The instinct to live is so intense, is so biologic and innate, that it extends over and beyond the span of our natural life on earth, and seeks to lay hold of another life beyond—seeks to merge life on this earth with that of a future existence.

And I have found this desire existing in varying form in all classes of my patients, from the humblest and most ignorant patient found in the dispensary to the most highly educated and intellectual men and women of private practice (*TTAS* 6).

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SPIRITUALISTIC FASHIONS

VI: THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 167)

6. NATIONAL TENDENCIES (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 181)

[contd] In our study of mediums and spiritualistic phenomena, it is very interesting to note that not only waves of fashion—epochs of characteristic behavior—have dominated spiritualism from decade to decade, but the further fact is observed that spiritualism is directed in its performance, and tends to crystallize its dogmas, differently among different peoples.

There is a nationalistic tendency to spirit manifestations (*TTAS* 181).

[contd] It seems that spiritualistic manifestations are liable to take on the current color of the time and place in which they take origin.

It is easy to suppose that a writer might receive from his subconscious centers certain ideas which he believes to be of spiritistic origin, and since they would be quite likely to harmonize more or less with his theories of life in general, and his spiritualistic philosophy in particular, it is easy to imagine that his mind—thus aroused by these ebullitions of the subconscious—would continue to develop it.

Now, suppose such an author has theosophical leanings. It is quite likely that the whole spiritualistic message will evolve into a theosophical dissertation.

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SOURCE

Such a spirit communication would have special influence with the devotees of the theosophical cult (*TTAS* 181-82).

[contd] We observe that spiritualism in Germany, France, Great Britain and America, tends to run in entirely different channels.

Spirits, apparently, are not in possession of a working program and a universal propaganda.

Apparently, they are limited in communicating with the living to the beliefs, tendencies and other influences which are in vogue among the different peoples and nations through which they operate.

All of which suggests the purely fallible nature and human origin of the whole phenomenon (*TTAS* 182).

VII: RECENT LITERATURE (Dresser 91)

Each book takes us into the world of its own theoretical construction.

There are types of belief, even national beliefs expressed in books claiming to contain wisdom from beyond.

Thus a writer on spiritism, J. Arthur Hill, calls attention to the fact that spiritism in France is reincarnationist, while in England and the United States on the whole it is not.

The reason in the case of France is found in the fact that an early writer on spiritism, Allen Kordec, taught reincarnation.

25: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

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SOURCE

So, he assures us, spirits communicating in France, regularly teach reincarnation, while spirits speaking in England as regularly deny it (D 93).

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