

## Chapter 2 — Preparing the Public Mind

from *The Truth About Spiritualism* (1923)

by

William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

© 2013, 2019 Matthew Block

### Sources for Chapter 2, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., "Human Emotions, Instincts, and Sentiments," which first appeared as the Appendix in *How You Can Keep Happy* (Chicago: American Health Book Concern, 1926) but was probably written in 1923.
- (2) William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Physiology of Faith and Fear: Or, The Mind in Health and Disease* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1912)
- (3) William S. Sadler, M.D., *Worry and Nervousness: Or, The Science of Self-Mastery* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1914)
- (4) William S. Sadler, M.D. and Lena K. Sadler, M.D., *The Mother and Her Child* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1916)
- (5) James M. Gray, D.D., *Spiritism and the Fallen Angels in the light of the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920)
- (6) I. M. Haldeman, D.D., *Can the Dead Communicate With the Living?* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920)

### Key

- (a) Green indicates where a source first appears, or where it reappears.
- (b) Yellow highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) Tan highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.

- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.
- (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 an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

Matthew Block  
4 March 2019

Work-in-progress Version 2 June 2013  
© 2013 Matthew Block  
*Revised 4 March 2019*

## II — PREPARING THE PUBLIC MIND

2:0.1 SINCE the desire for immortality is well-nigh universal in the human species, and since there exist numerous well organized and quite well known systems of religious belief and other teachings which definitely assert their ability to place living beings in communication with their dead and departed friends, and since human beings are the most highly curious and investigative of all animals; we must recognize that the stage is ideally set to favor the promulgation and spread of the dogmas of spiritualism, or any other cult which claims to be able to draw aside the veil which separates this life from the next, and thus in a measure to satisfy the combined craving for immortality on the one hand and the curiosity which seeks to penetrate the mysteries of the future and the unseen world, on the other hand.

2:0.2 And so, at this time I want to call your attention to the conspiracy of influences and tendencies which so effectively work, consciously and unconsciously, to prepare the mind of the average individual for favorable disposition toward spiritualism.

### A. THE KINDERGARTEN OF SPIRITUALISM

2:1.1 I have thought best to classify these predisposing tendencies toward spiritualism after the fashion of our public school system, so our first group of spiritistic tendencies will be called the Kindergarten of Spiritism.

## 1. CHILDLIKE CURIOSITY

2:1.2 The very first step in the kindergarten preparation of the human race to be mistaught and deluded by the sophistries of modern spiritualism, consists in that universal human attribute of inquisitiveness. Curiosity is the fundamental and basic psychologic trait which enables the exponents of both theologic and commercial spiritism to gain their first firm and secure hold upon the human mind.

2:1.3 Without credulity, spiritualism would make little headway. It is pathetic—yes, it is even tragic—to see with what childlike innocence strong minded, highly educated men and women will, without question, and almost without reason, swallow the flimsy evidence and accept the unproved pretensions of spiritualistic mediums, clairvoyants, fortune tellers, and other sorts of soothsayers.

2:1.4 Intelligent men and women, who, in their professions and business callings, would require that suitable evidence be offered in support of any and all propositions submitted for their acceptance or endorsement, will, in the presence of alleged spooks and spirits, accept, as satisfactory, evidence which will in no wise stand the least bit of critical scrutiny.

2:1.5 Curiosity, then, we will put down as the chief element in the soil which the spiritualists cultivate, in which they sow the seed that so successfully and fascinatingly misleads so many thousands of honest but illogical and superficial truth seekers.

We must recognize that the average human being does not possess a well trained, disciplined, and logical mind. The majority of mankind are not trained in the science of the laws of evidence, and they are not highly gifted with discriminating judgment and sublime reasoning powers. They, therefore, constitute ready-made, ever-receptive, and easily misled mentalities, which in every way lend themselves to becoming easy victims to the supernatural claims and spectacular phenomena of modern spiritualism.

## 2. SUPERSTITION—FEAR PLUS IGNORANCE

2:2.1 The second, and another universal human trait which the spiritualists utilize in their conscious or unconscious business of preying upon unsophisticated humanity, is that psychologic trait which seems almost second human nature, and which we commonly designate by the term *fear*. Fear is a thing which takes root, springs up and flourishes in the human mind, like a weed does in a garden. Ignorance is the powerful fertilizer of fear in the soil of the human mind, and not only is fear in a measure inherent—

[While fear is instinctive, not all our early fears are inherited. All young infants are frightened by but two things: The fear of falling and the hearing of sudden loud and shrill noises (“Human Instincts, Emotions, and Sentiments”).]

for we find that children are born with the fear of falling and the fear of certain sudden, shrill noises—

but ignorance, comparatively speaking, is also well-nigh universal; and fear plus ignorance equals superstition; and superstition, which is so widespread among the common people, added to the innate curiosity of the race, still further serves to prepare at least ninety per cent of the so-called civilized races for the sophistries and deceptions of spiritualism.

2:2.2 Intelligent and supposedly well educated persons sit down in my office every day and tell me how they will not start a journey on Friday. They also tell me of dozens of other little superstitions, fears, phobias, and obsessions which they indulge, showing that we are a long way from freeing the popular mind of the notion that horseshoes bring good luck, that breaking a looking glass causes seven years of bad luck, or death in the family, not to mention the ill omens of black cats, walking under a ladder, etc., etc.

IX: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 92)

FAITH AND FEAR IN DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 99)

The author well remembers wearing a little bag of asafetida hung around his neck, when a child, “to keep disease away” (PF&F 100-01).

2:2.3 I well remember being reared in an intelligent community in the State of Indiana, and, as a little shaver, wearing about my neck a bag of asafetida and sulphur which was warranted to keep off disease.

And well might it enjoy this reputation, if the bugs themselves possessed an olfactory sense! But it was merely a slight shifting from the superstition of the charms which were worn by some of our not too remote ancestors to drive off devils, which, in their day, were supposed to be the instigators of disease.

2:2.4 As long as the basis of so much of our theologic belief is fear, so long as heredity dooms so many of us to be more or less weak-minded, and modern education does so little to train the brains with which inheritance does endow us;

then must we expect to find prevailing in the average mind a sufficient amount of fear and ignorance which, combined, create that superstitious state of mind which so beautifully prepares the individual of its indwelling to become a willing dupe and ready victim to the curiosity-satisfying and superstitious-appealing delusions of spiritualism.

### 3. HUMAN TRUSTFULNESS

2.3.1 Not only is the human mind innately curious, and the human being naturally superstitious, but strange to record, the average human being is over-trustful. Many individuals, long since attaining their majority, still possess that trustfulness that characterizes the child, particularly when it comes to matters religious and supposedly supernatural. Not only are we curious, fearful and ignorant, all of which conspire to make us more or less superstitious, but we are also dangerously trustful.

2.3.2 We have been taught to believe in those who teach us in the name of religion, those who speak inspired *ex cathedra*, those who are the mouthpiece of God to their day and generation. And so the very trustfulness of religious faith and loyalty to the theologic creed serves to lay the foundation in the minds of the common people for their blind belief in the dogmas of spiritism and for their easy deception by the phenomena of spiritualism.

2:3.3 It does not occur to the average person that the spiritualistic medium might be perpetrating an outrageous fraud upon their unsuspecting minds. It does not occur to the common people that the soothsayers may be practicing deception upon them, and it is still more remote from the cogitations of the man in the street that this self-same spiritualistic medium may be self-deceived. At any rate, there is manifest a widespread disposition, on the part of mankind, to lend themselves as willing, trusting and confiding victims to this whole propaganda that centers itself about the pivotal theme of putting this generation of the living into communication with the souls of those who have passed on into the Great Beyond.

#### 4. IGNORANCE OF NATURAL LAW

2:4.1 One great influence which contributes to the perpetuation of superstition in the minds of young people as they grow up toward maturity, is the inability or unwillingness of their elders properly to instruct them in the domain of natural law—in the realm of Nature's commonplace phenomena.

2:4.2 Every opportunity should be embraced to disabuse the mind of the growing child of the notion that the natural world is jogging along in a haphazard manner, controlled more or less by arbitrary influences. Thunder and lightning, rain and wind, sunshine and vegetation, earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods, should all be accounted for in accordance with the laws of physics and chemistry as they operate in the control and direction of the natural world.



In this way much of the fear on which superstition so largely acts in the case of the primitive peoples, when it still persists in the minds of the so-called civilized races, can be greatly reduced so that the mind of the modern man will come to be dominated more by the notion that he lives in a world of law and order, a realm controlled by the precise laws of physics and chemistry; and thus a mental attitude of self-confidence, assurance, and stability, will take the place of those states of fear, apprehension, and insecurity, all of which, as applied to the problem of spiritism, spell superstition.

2:4.3 Much can be done to antidote the youthful tendency toward credulity and superstition, and subsequently the leanings toward spiritualism, by the proper teaching of physiology, psychology, and heredity, not to mention the physical sciences of physics, chemistry and geology. Both religious and secular teachers have it in their power so to direct the teaching of the rising generation as to render it far less susceptible to the sophistries of spiritualistic propaganda when it shall have grown up to maturity.

2:4.4 We should so educate the rising generation that when it beholds a material phenomenon it will first start in, logically and analytically, to seek to find the explanation in physical laws. Our minds should be so trained in the science of logic and the art of analysis as to refuse to accept a spiritual explanation for a physical phenomenon until every known resource of scientific check has been exhausted under the most fair conditions of experimental control and critical observation.

SOURCE

2: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

Such a state of mind on the part of the observer would preclude the possibility of the commonplace, everyday deceptions now perpetrated by fraudulent mediums by means of their cunning tricks and trumpery.

5. HOBGOBLINS AND OTHER CHILDHOOD FEARS

VIII: CRYSTALIZED FEAR AND DEFINITE DREADS (*Worry and Nervousness* 95)

ANIMALS AND THE DARK (*Worry and Nervousness* 99)

Now this fear of the dark is regarded by many as cowardice, but, in my opinion, it has its origin back in the early childhood days when parents and nurses thoughtlessly frightened the little ones when they said “Boo, Dark” or when they threatened them with the “boogie man,” “hobgoblins,” and “the bad man” (*W&N* 100).

2:5.1 The fears of early childhood are greatly augmented by the careless words of thoughtless parents, who, in their unthinking methods of discipline, and ignorant technique of child-culture,

constantly threaten their little ones with “hobgoblins” and “bogiemen,” as an inducement to improve personal conduct and correct general misbehavior, which is such a natural part of the experience of the earlier developmental periods of childhood. It is a crime to frighten a child by taking it to the window at eventide and exclaiming “boo—dark.”

XXXVII: THE POWER OF POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS (*The Mother and Her Child* 380)

EARLY FEARS (*The Mother and Her Child* 280)

It is unfortunate that this very time of a child's life, when we can do practically anything we choose with him, is the very time when so many parents fill the child's mind with the unhealthful fear-thoughts. "The bogie man'll get you if you don't mind Mamma," or, "I'll get the black man to cut your ears off," or, "the chimney sweep is around the corner to take bad little boys," are familiar threats which are so frequently made to the little folks (*M&HC* 381).

2:5.2 What unnatural and unfortunate states of mind are early initiated in the youthful brain by such unthinking remarks as, "The policeman will cut your ears off,"

"the bogieman will get you if you don't look out," "if you are naughty the Bad Man will come and get you," etc., etc.

These thoughtless remarks by older members of the family not only contribute to the building up of unwholesome and unnatural fear-complexes in the mind of the growing child,

but they also very early suggest to its tender and susceptible soul the idea that things unusual and extraordinary lurk in the dark; that beings inhuman and superhuman stalk about on earth during the night season; that supernatural spirits abound in this realm, and that they are liable to pounce upon us if we depart more or less from the conventional and orthodox pathway of life.

2:5.3 The doctrine of good spirits and evil spirits is very early inculcated into the child's mind, in the average household of civilized peoples, and thus most fittingly is the foundation laid for their subsequent excursions into the realms of supposedly applied spiritualism, in their efforts to communicate with the dead and to tap the intellectual storehouse of the unseen world.

#### 6. GHOSTS—FEAR OF THE DEAD

2:6.1 Hard it would be indeed to find the individual who cannot remember the cold shivers travelling up and down the youthful spine as they sat about the fireside on long winter evenings and listened to "ghost stories," as their young minds had indelibly impressed upon them the narratives of haunted houses; and as the years passed there was added to this ghost-lore the stories of rappings on the bed, shifting of tables, and other hair-raising and heart-agitating tales, all of which were more or less believed by those who told them.

2:6.2 True, the ghost story has sometimes been told as such, but it is a fact that it is all too true that much of this nonsense has been believed by the average citizen; at any rate, these narratives serve to make a profound impression upon the youthful mind and they serve to complete the thorough preparation of the soil and subsoil of the human intellect for subsequent spiritualistic tendencies.

2:6.3 From earliest memory, children recall that their elders manifest a peculiar fear of dead persons. They have so many times heard the statement by some one of the family or their friends that they “would not for anything in the world remain in the room, alone, with a dead person.” The average boy or girl grows up with such an exaggerated fear of death and dead people that they often can hardly be persuaded to touch the body of a dead person. And all this unnatural awe and artificial fear of death and dead bodies which has been cultivated, from time immemorial, serves to develop, in the growing mind of our youth, a basic psychology which most admirably serves the purpose of the spiritistic propagandists. This uncalled for fear of the dead produces that state of mental awe that so readily contributes to that credulity and superstition which is so essential to preparing the mind, in later life, for the deceptions and delusions of spiritualistic phenomena.

2:6.4 The belief in ghosts, then, is the final step in the kindergarten of spiritism. It serves to round out those influences which will invariably tend to make spiritualism attractive to the shallow and unthinking elements of our population. When you believe in ghosts, you are about ready, psychologically speaking, to get out of the kindergarten class of spiritualists, and are qualified to take up your further course in the grades of what might be called the “Common School of Spiritualism.”

## B. THE COMMON SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALISM

2:7.1 Having passed through the kindergarten stage of curiosity, ignorance, superstition, childhood fears, ghosts, and the fear of the dead, the average human being is well qualified to begin the next steps in the commonplace and conventional training of the growing mind to become a believer in, and a victim of, spiritualism.

### 1. MEDICAL SUPERSTITION

2:7.2 Unfortunately, we doctors, in the past, have been unconscious contributors to the credulity of our patients. We have been wont to look wise and act solemn, to write mysterious prescriptions in unknown Latin for supposedly powerful and potent medicines which the patient, without understanding anything of the laws of cause and effect, would swallow in ignorance and with more or less reverent awe, and straightway expect to get well—expect a sudden, mysterious, and almost miraculous change of symptoms.

XXIV: THE DAWN OF SCIENTIFIC HEALING (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 253)

THE EMANCIPATION OF MEDICAL PRACTICE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 253)

The present generation undoubtedly will witness the passing of the old medical authority—that absolute medical authority of the last generation, when the family physician was regarded with almost superstitious awe (*PF&F* 254).

2:7.3 The superstitious awe and reverence with which the family physician, in a passing generation, was held in esteem by the average household,

while beautiful to recall and sublime to contemplate, was, nevertheless, but a perpetuation of that tendency of bygone times in which the common people were priest-ridden, grossly misled, shamefully dominated, by the shrewder and more sagacious elements of their day and generation,

[See *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 311.]

who assumed the prerogatives of religious teacher and medical practitioner, and in these combined roles directed the management of their sufferings on earth and sought to control their spiritual destiny when they had passed on into another world.

2:7.4 The medical profession is just beginning to rid itself of these unfair practices and superstitious tendencies. Today the physician is becoming more of a teacher, instructing his patients in the laws of living, as they pertain to the realms of mind and body, thus pointing the sick toward the stability of natural law as the security and source of cure, leading them away from the tendencies of self-drugging and devotion to patent medicines.

2:7.5 The doctors of this and coming generations can do much to antidote the conventional tendency to produce, in the popular mind, those states of psychology which so easily lend themselves to unfounded and credulous beliefs in spiritualistic phenomena. The doctor can do much to teach his patients a proper understanding of the laws of life,

[It is a trite saying that "pathology is but perverted physiology" (J. H. Cannon, M.D., *Kansas Medical Journal*, 1893).]

to have them understand that pathology is but perverted physiology, that disease is but the phenomenon of health manifesting itself under abnormal or difficult conditions, that death is but a cessation of the forces of life.

2:7.6 Medical men and women owe it to their clients to help them in overcoming this wellnigh universal tendency to look with fear and awe upon death, and with dread and superstition upon the dead. The family physician, when death has appeared in a family or in the neighborhood, could take some abnormal boy or girl, and with five minutes' instruction and by accompanying them into the death chamber, save them lifelong suffering and nervous tendency on the one hand, from the standpoint of their personal physical health; as well as to deliver them, perchance, from that unnatural fear of death which serves to make them such ready victims to some sort of spiritistic propaganda in their later years.

## 2. "MAGNETIC HEALING"

[Compare "Telepathy and Magnetic Healing" in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 463-65.]

2:8.1 If medical superstition, or fear and ignorance regarding ordinary medical practices, constitutes the first grade in the common school of preparation for spiritualism, magnetic healing may be said to constitute the second grade. We commonly hear certain persons spoken of as having a "magnetic personality." Here our ignorance of the laws of psychology and the means by which one person influences other persons, leads to an erroneous belief that certain persons possess some sort of influence which is commonly spoken of as "magnetism."



2:8.2 It is but a step from this belief in “magnetic personality,” as we meet it in ordinary social and commercial intercourse, to the superstitious belief in the ability of certain persons to utilize this possession as a means of healing disease; and in this way there grows up a belief in “magnetic healing”—a notion that certain persons can cure disease by laying hands on the afflicted.

2:8.3 The phenomenon of life, health, healing, and disease, not to say death, must be put upon a simple, plain, and practical basis of natural law. The mysticism and superstition of health and disease must be dissipated as a part of the educational program of rearing our sons and daughters, so that they will grow up comparatively free from those superstitious tendencies which predispose them to spiritualism in their later times of distress and dismay.

### 3. PALMISTRY AND ASTROLOGY

2:9.1 The belief that some extraordinary individual can gaze into the palm of your hand and then proceed to delineate character, diagnose disease, and foretell in detail all the exigencies and emergencies of the future, not to mention the pretension of prophesy relating to business affairs, love, marriage, and divorce—all but serve to indicate the inherent credulity of mankind, and to show just why the average man or woman is so easily imposed upon by the flimsy pretenses and performances of spiritualism.

[Compare “Astrology and Palmistry” in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 458-59.]

2:9.2 The ease with which some apparently intelligent persons are led to believe that their life, career, and eternal destiny are controlled by the juxtaposition of the starry hosts at the time of their birth constitutes still further evidence of human gullibility, and indicates how willing most people are to be deceived and misled by commonplace superstition and the claims of those who make their living by foisting upon the public the delusions of supernatural sophistry.

VIII: SUPERSTITION AS RELATED TO HEALTH AND DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 78)

ASTROLOGY IN HEALTH AND DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 84)

[contd] It is indeed difficult to say just when medicine got mixed up with astrology,

so that the treatment of disease and the preservation of health came to be determined by the flight of the stars through space. There seems to be evidence that astrology existed back in the earliest Chaldean period (*PF&F* 84).

ANCIENT ALMANACS (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 85)

2:9.3 Just when astrology got mixed up with medicine is hard to say,

but it was certainly a prominent part of both the healing art and religious worship, back in the earliest Chaldean periods.

But the peculiar part of the whole belief is its persistence down to the present day. There is sufficient public interest in this thing to lead Metropolitan dailies to carry a regular column devoted to astrology, just as they do one devoted to health, beauty hints, cookery, baseball, etc.

2:9.4 Ancient superstition lingers long in the human mind. In spite of our agricultural colleges,

## SOURCE

We cannot yet regard ourselves as entirely free from the deceptions and delusions of astrology, as long as intelligent farmers continue to plant their potatoes by the light of the moon, and otherwise gauge their agricultural pursuits by the phases of the moon, or the flight of the stars (*PF&F* 86).

[Compare “Clairvoyance and Fortune Telling” in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 459-60.]

## 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

you can still find farmers who are wont to plant their potatoes in the light of the moon,

and we still meet with the sad-eyed, downcast youth who feels that his adventures in either business or matrimony are doomed to failure because he was born under the sway of an adverse starry constellation.

2:9.5 And the net result of all this thing is but to serve the purpose of further preparing the human mind for its continued enslavement to the superstitious fears and dogmas of past ages, and to pave the way for the subsequent appearance of the more colossal spiritistic deceptions and delusions, involving not only the health of man’s body and the peace of his mind, but unsettling his intellectual equilibrium, and even jeopardizing his eternal welfare.

## 4. FORTUNE TELLING

2:10.1 As our youth progress in the modern maze of superstitious deceptions and psychic delusions, they soon arrive at the fourth grade of the common, or preparatory school of spiritism, and find there their teachers, the fortune tellers, all ready further to upbuild and foster these credulous complexes and still further to enslave their ignorant minds to beliefs in mysticism and fears of the supernatural.

## SOURCE

[Just a few weeks ago there came to see me a splendid young woman who was almost a complete nervous wreck as a result of going to consult a palmist,

who had discovered some evil omen crossing her "life line," which she suggested might mean serious trouble in the patient's later life (*Worry and Nervousness* 287).]

## 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

2:10.2 In the practice of my profession, I am constantly meeting with apparently intelligent individuals whose whole careers have been wrecked and ruined by the fears and misgivings generated at some time or other in their lives by contact with a fortune teller,

who predicted that some dire calamity or devastating catastrophe would overtake them at some future time.

2:10.3 The state of mind and emotion that dominates the average person as they go into the presence of the fortune teller, the trumpery of the environment, the dimness of the light, the whole atmosphere of the occasion is such as to appeal to these primitive fears, and arouse the lingering superstition that still pervades the human mind; and thus every influence of this sort serves but to strengthen those latent superstitious leanings of the race, and also to divert these tendencies into those channels of thought and avenues of emotion that tend to make them more and more susceptible to the notion of getting information from a supernatural source, and of securing advice and guidance through extraordinary and unusual channels.

2:10.4 The fortune tellers are all advance agents for spiritualism. They are the forerunners of the medium, and it is but one step from seeking unearned knowledge at the hands of the fortune teller, to crossing the street to get a more dependable and higher class of information from the medium who professes to be able to put us in communication with the savants and sages of a departed age; who claim to be able to bring up for our instruction and guidance, the dead and departed of our own day and generation.

2:10.5 We have been taught, as a part of our theologic upbringing, that in times past the Supreme Being spake to holy men of old. We have been taught to respect and reverence the prophets and to believe their prophecies. What more natural drift of human reasoning, in its superficial channels, than to conclude that if men of ancient times could contact with the supernatural sources of knowledge and communicate with the fount of supernatural wisdom, that perhaps after all there may be some truth in the claims of those who profess to peer into the future, and who will, if their palms are crossed with silver, deign to divulge their vision to us; and thus might we be able to occupy a position of vantage, being in possession of knowledge extra-human and wisdom supernatural.

2:10.6 The fortune telling craze is a very integral part of the life of the common people. It is not merely the quaint, brilliantly-garbed gypsy who indulges in this art, but it is more or less of a serious pastime in many circles of society.

##### 5. CLAIRVOYANCY

[Compare “Clairvoyance and Fortune Telling” in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 459-60.]

2:11.1 But the fortune tellers were but the commonplace preliminary to the next step, the fifth grade of our common school of preparatory training for the deceptions of spiritism—the clairvoyants. These mystic, psychic souls, the seventh daughters of seventh sons, these shrewd and sagacious psychic profiteers, born with a veil over the face, are regarded with superstitious awe by tens of thousands of otherwise seemingly intelligent men and women.

How often we hear a well educated person speak of some other individual as being a “psychic.” How common is the belief of one part of the race that the other possesses some extra-intellectual source of information regarding human affairs in general, and individual destiny in particular.

2:11.2 I have had under my care, at one time or another, many clairvoyants, psychics, and other of these supposedly extraordinary individuals. In most instances I have found them to be mediocre individuals of little education, but who possessed an inherent sagacity, an inborn shrewdness, not to say ability, that conspired to give them a peculiar and sometimes intuitive insight into human nature. They are often good judges of temperament and character,

[A well-known professional palmist some time ago told the author that ... she made her delineations of character by looking at the face, talking with the person, and from her general impressions ... (PF&F 458-59).]

and they, like the palmists, sometimes when looking into the plantar surface of the hand, indulge in frequent and searching glances at the face. As one clairvoyant told me: “We hold the hands but we read the face.”

[Most successful clairvoyants are women who possess a keen sense of discrimination and discernment of character ... (PF&F 459-60).]

2:11.3 It will be observed that most clairvoyants are women,

for it is a well known fact that women usually possess more of this intuitive ability to discern human nature as compared with men.

[Compare: [Scientists have discovered that the pituitary gland] is larger in woman than in man.... Woman is more intuitive than man, and her inner and psychic faculties are more impressionable (Frank H. Randall, *Psychology: The Cultivation and Development of Mind and Will* by Positive and Negative Processes [1904], pp. 53-54).]

Some of the specialists in the study of ductless glands tell us that this is because women have a larger posterior pituitary;

[?]

that man possesses a larger anterior lobe and is therefore more gifted in analytical reason and more reliable in mature judgment; but woman, because of this fact that she has a superior posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, has more ability when it comes to sizing up and prognosticating human character.

At any rate, most of the clairvoyants are women, and the majority who have been under my professional care have been able to offer but little explanation regarding their supposed abilities.

[See 5:2.2.]

Indeed, it is very difficult sometimes, in these clairvoyant cases, to determine and judge between those who are insane and those who are merely victims of some minor dissociation disturbances or some major disorder of personality.

## 6. CRYSTAL GAZING AND SHELL HEARING

[Compare “Crystal-gazing and Shell-hearing” in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 460-61.]

2:12.1 We are wont to smile at the crystal gazers and the shell listeners. But they are still with us.

Just as surely as there are to be found a class of people who are natural born gamblers—and not at all a small class, by the way—persons who still confidently expect to obtain their fortune by chance, who will never be weaned from the idea that you can, if you are shrewd enough, get something for nothing; who will live and die ever risking their fortune on the wheel of chance; so we have a natural born group of men and women, who, instead of subjecting their minds to rigorous training, stern discipline; who, instead of gaining an education by laborious study and long-continued application, still believe that they will in time, through their shrewdness and sagacity,

get in contact with some extraordinary source of information that will enable them instantly to gain riches, happiness, health and fame.

2:12.2 Those superstitious individuals, instead of harnessing up their brain power and utilizing to the full their intellectual capacity, believe that the secrets of business success, the winning of my fair lady's hand, domestic tranquillity, and even health and happiness are to be secured from those vagaries and images which may be caused to fleet across the human brain as the result of eye-strain and long continued, devout gaze into the substance of an inert glass ball.

2:12.3 If we can hope to gain some coveted intelligence by listening at the aperture of a sea-shell, how much more likely are we to gain valuable knowledge if a spiritualistic medium can let us hear the very voice of a dead and departed friend. If crystal gazing can afford us visions or apparitions pleasant to look upon, or able to contribute to our happiness and success, how much more likely are we to be directed aright if we can gaze upon the shadowy, luminous outline—ghost forms—of the departed great men and women of this or another generation, and through their contacts with this real and living world of ours, receive their instructions and guidance, receive their answers to our questions, and feel their benediction rest upon our very soul.



2:12.4 And thus, when we seriously analyze the psychology of all these mystic performances, whose continuance rests upon the credulity and superstition of the popular mind, we see they are but stepping stones which lead us on toward spiritualism as the superior channel and the supreme culmination of these vague tendencies and efforts to secure **unearned knowledge**, and to possess ourselves of supernatural information.

#### 7. RELICS AND SHRINES

2:13.1 As we enter the seventh grade of our preparatory school of spiritualism, we again come in contact with a strong religious atmosphere surrounding our sacred relics and the shrines of miracle-making reputation.

#### VIII: SUPERSTITION AS RELATED TO HEALTH AND DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 78)

[PREAMBLE] (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 78)

In all ages and at all times, there have existed health delusions and healing deceptions, and even the present age is no exception ... (*PF&F* 78).

In all ages and at all times, there have existed health delusions and healing deceptions, and the present age is no exception.

#### RELICS AS A HEALTH DELUSION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 82)

[contd] From time immemorial, relics have been associated with health and disease.

From time immemorial relics have been associated with health and disease.

The bodies of either dead or living saints were supposed to be life-giving and healing to the touch—even to touch the tombs of some of the saints was reputed to cure one's disease (*PF&F* 82).

The bodies of some of the saints have been reputed to possess health-giving properties; even to touch the tomb of some of the saints was reported to cure disease.

## SOURCE

[contd] A concoction made of a piece of the tombstone of a good man was supposed to cure malignant disease when everything else had failed.

For some diseases, it was a sure cure to lick the tombstone of a saint.

To kiss the temple floors whereon saints had trod was also supposed to confer extraordinary healing power (*PF&F* 82-83).

[See William S. Sadler, M.D., *Long Heads and Round Heads* [1918], p. 21; and Henry Fairfield Osborn, *Men of the Old Stone Age* [1915, 1918], p. 291.]

[*Note:* Sadler is referring to a report released in 1921 by the United States Surgeon-General's Office, "Psychological Examining in the United States Army," edited by Robert M. Yerkes.]

## 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

2:13.2 A concoction made from a piece of tombstone of a good man was supposed, at one time, to cure disease when everything else had failed.

For some diseases it is alleged that it is a sure cure to lick the tombstone of a saint—

nothing being said, of course, about the danger of catching the disease of any predecessor, who may have previously deposited the microbes of his malady thereon, while in this same way seeking deliverance.

2:13.3 Our sane and sober ancestors believed that

to kiss the temple floors whereon the saints had trod was supposed to confer extraordinary healing power.

Of course it will be argued that we are more intelligent in this day and generation. But are we?

Ethnologists tell us that the Old Man of Cromagnon had just about as much brain capacity as we have.

[*Sadler's footnote:* The Cro-Magnon type lived in South Western Europe at least 25,000 years ago.]

And while, on the whole, we have made great progress in material skill and mechanical cunning,

the average man, from the recent tests made in the United States Army, is shown to be only about twelve or thirteen years of age, mentally,

and therefore is not possessed of any extraordinary reasoning power or analytical ability which would cause him to stand out as in any way superior to his ancestors of even a remote age.

#### 8. THE MAGICIANS

2:14.1 Who does not enjoy spending an entertaining evening watching, and being fooled by, a master magician? From childhood, we have enjoyed the spectacular, the elusive, the mysterious. From our earliest memory, we recall those moments of keen anticipation and inexpressible joy as we watched the magician pluck coins out of the air or drag forth wriggling rabbits from the coat collars of our embarrassed townsmen.

#### XXIII: PSEUDO-PSYCHOTHERAPY— MENTAL DECEPTION (*Worry and Nervousness* 286)

#### MEDICAL SUPERSTITION (*Worry and Nervousness* 286)

Old Brother Barnum said that people liked to be humbugged, and it seems to me that they sometimes greatly prefer divine-healing humbugs (*W&N* 287).

2:14.2 Barnum spoke the truth when he said, “The people like to be humbugged.”

Now, it is true that our boys and girls, as they grow up, learn that much of what the magician does is by sleight-of-hand technique, by legerdemain. At the same time, the magician always carries about him, by his very personal appearance, his advertising posters, and some of those things which he says and does during his performance—I say, he suggests the idea and portrays the atmosphere of the supernatural. One magician advertises his performance by a poster which shows a little red devil whispering in his ear.

2:14.3 The magicians are unconscious purveyors to credulity, superstition and belief in the possibility of commonplace contact with the supernatural, even though many of them sincerely intend just the opposite. The very fact that our youth are able as they grow up, to duplicate some of the magician's tricks, but cannot duplicate others, tends to raise the question of the possibility of the utilization of some of the unknown or supernatural forces in the perpetration of the more elaborate of the magician's stunts. There are a great many earnest people who will not go, even today, to a magician's performance, because they believe he is in league with devils—that there is something dangerously un-Christian about the whole affair.

2:14.4 The magicians must, of course, keep the technique of their tricks secret, or they would not fascinate and allure the public. We do not enjoy seeing a trick perpetrated upon us if we understand the details of its performance. It is our ignorance of the technique that attracts and entertains us. We are not allured by the obvious and the commonplace.

VIII: SUPERSTITION AS RELATED TO HEALTH AND DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 78)

ANCIENT HEALTH DELUSIONS (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 79)

Later there arose a special class of the priesthood—the *magicians*—

2:14.5 It is interesting, in this connection, to note that the magicians of olden times belonged to the priesthood—

that the modern magician is a sort of secular descendant of the sacerdotal workers of a bygone age.

## SOURCE

who claimed to work miracles by means of some supernatural endowment or some special influence with the gods.

Alexander the Great is reported to have always had one of those medicine-men connected with his personal staff; and Nero was an ardent pupil of the magi (*PF&F* 79).

## 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

These ancient wonder-workers claimed to be able to relieve suffering and cure disease by supernatural methods.

Alexander the Great is said always to have had one of these medicine men connected with his staff, and Nero was an ardent pupil of the Magi of his day.

2:14.6 It must be clear that not one but many—and before we have finished, we shall show still others—influences and agencies are at work which, all taken together, serve to create a mental state easy of approach by the technique employed by spiritualistic mediums. Thus, after having discussed those kindergarten or early influences so basic in the psychology of man, as embraced in fear, superstition, curiosity, and trustfulness, we have come on down through a group of eight commonplace practices which we have called the common, or preparatory school for spiritualism, ending with the magician; and next we will proceed to a further study along these lines, by taking up a group of influences which we may appropriately denominate the “high school of spiritism.”

### C. THE HIGH SCHOOL OF SPIRITISM

2:15.1 Having methodically studied those influences of earlier life which contribute to the mystic tendencies of the human mind, it will next be in order to consider some of the influences of a more advanced nature, which likewise predispose their students and practitioners to the nefarious teachings and tendencies of the occult sects.

## 1. DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

2:15.2 There can be little doubt that, from the earliest dawn of reason the phantasms of the dream world have had much to do with shaping human thought and philosophy in its waking moments. Undoubtedly, the vague symbolism, the mystic atmosphere, and the unreality of many persons and objects recalled from the dream experience, has had a great deal to do on the one hand with the evolution of primitive religion, and has exerted an undoubted influence on the other hand toward predisposing mankind naturally to incline, in his philosophy, toward a belief in the reality and existence of spirit beings who inhabit an invisible world about us; and thus it required but the suggestion subsequently to lead us to believe that these invisible beings might be disembodied spirits of our departed friends and neighbors. And this would not seem altogether new or unnatural, since we commonly dream of seeing persons who have long since died, and we frequently hold converse with our departed friends in our dream experiences—and thus it seems very likely that the basic psychology of spiritualism had its early suggestion and remote origin in the phantasies of the dream life of the race, which were carried over from time to time into a state of consciousness and vividly recalled to memory at the termination of the slumber period.

[Fortune-telling and the use of dream books are other methods of confusing and *confounding the minds of honest people* (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 460.)]

2:15.3 Still further, as we study the subject of dreams, we learn that as far back as historic records are accessible, there early came into existence a cult or priesthood who specialized in the interpretation of dreams. The dream book is as old as the hills. Every symbolism, every fancy and imagination of the dream life was supposed to have a literal significance, and constituted an effort on the part of the invisible world to communicate warnings, advice and information to the living.

It is not always clear just what was the exact philosophy or theology of this belief in dreams. That is, as to whether dreams were controlled by supernatural forces, good demons, angels, or what not—who all the while were trying to make themselves manifest to us during the night season; or whether, as was the belief in more recent times, it was the spirits of the dead and departed who were trying to come back, and through the symbolism of the slumber season, were trying to communicate superior wisdom or impart dire warnings to their loved ones.

2:15.4 Whatever the philosophy of the thing may be, in the last analysis, the net result of this ancient and even modern tendency to attach undue significance to our dreams has been to further the cause of spiritualism—to strengthen our belief in the probability of the existence of spirits, unseen personalities surrounding us and hovering about us as we journey through this vale of tears.

## 2. FUNERAL SERMONS

2:16.1 Not only is the young and growing mind destined to be plagued with the problem of deciphering its dreams, and troubled with the probable interpretation thereof; but for our second year of high school training, preliminary to the college course in spiritualism, we can appropriately consider the suggestive influence and psychologic impression made upon the mind of an adolescent youth who, in the course of human events, is sooner or later called upon to attend an orthodox funeral service, and listen to the conventional funeral sermon.

Now, I am not making flippant criticism of things religious or spiritual. But I feel it incumbent upon me sincerely and critically to analyze every factor in the preliminary psychologic preparation of the minds of men which tends to ripen and prepare them for the deception of spiritism, and therefore, honesty requires that we deal with these things frankly and fearlessly, but kindly withal.

2:16.2 I well remember the first funeral sermon I ever heard—my readers will probably recall a similar experience. What more impressive occasion, when in the presence of our beloved dead, as we listen to the exhortations and admonitions of the shepherd of the faithful flock who endeavors, in his well-meant efforts, to utilize the occasion of sorrow and bereavement and the presence of the dead, to impress upon those present their solemn obligations to righteous conduct and higher living.



The clergyman's motive is above reproach. He is certainly blameless, as regards any conscious guilt that may attach to him for the part he unwittingly plays in furthering spiritualistic tendencies, and administering to those human beliefs which constitute the background and stage in front of which and upon which spiritualism practices and prospers.

2:16.3 The sermon was given by a very devout and sincere clergyman; but I can vividly recall the refrigerant shivers that went up and down my spine during the sermon. Solemn as it was, impressive as it was intended to be, I could almost feel the spirits of the departed relatives hovering over me. I was fearful to look up or to either side, lest my eye should meet an apparition from the spirit world.

2:16.4 Nevertheless, the net result of these popular funeral sermons is to impress upon the young mind very vividly and directly, and under emotional conditions destined to make such impressions indelible and lifelong—I say, the young mind at such times and on such occasions is solemnly taught that our departed friends are not in reality dead; but that they have passed on to a greater sphere; that they have but entered upon an enlarged existence; that even while we mourn their loss they are able to look down in supreme happiness from their heavenly place in the spirit world, and we are told that, as they behold us, they long to comfort our sorrow, and console us in our grief.

[Compare “Telepathy and Magnetic Healing” in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 463-65.]

### 3. TELEPATHY

2:17.1 By the time we reach the junior year of high school in mysticism and spiritism, we are ready to begin our excursions into the higher spheres of cultism, and among the first of these advanced studies we are usually introduced to telepathy. From early youth, we have heard about “mind reading,” and the vast majority of adults have seen presentations, on the stage, of numerous stunts which purported to be exhibitions of mind reading. A person, usually a woman, it will be recalled, sits blindfolded on the stage, while an assistant goes through the audience examining coins, touching objects, and otherwise designating those things which the blindfolded mind reader more or less accurately describes, and the general impression is given to the audience that she is reading their minds, or at least the mind of her working partner. There prevails at the present time a general belief on the part of the common people, that certain individuals are “mind readers.”

2:17.2 It is but a step from this commonplace belief in the existence of “mind readers” to the more refined philosophy of telepathy.

XXXVIII: PSYCHIC FADS AND FAKES (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 457)

TELEPATHY AND MAGNETIC HEALING (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 463)

Telepathy is supposed to be the psychic ability to send and to receive messages independent of the ordinary organs of sense (*PF&F* 463).

Telepathy is the alleged psychic ability to send and to receive messages, independent of the ordinary organs of sense.

Now, it is plain that if one human being, a human entity, can send through the ether a mental message to another materialistic human being, by means of telepathy—then even material beings possess an immaterial, or at least a supersensory mode of communication with each other.

2:17.3 Once granting this, how easy it would be to take the next step, and conceive that the material mind might be utilized merely as a feasible receiving or sending aerial over which the spooks and spirits of the invisible world could initiate and register vibrations which could be picked up by those in tune—*en rapport*—and who would thus be in a position to transcribe these messages of the other world to the open-mouthed spiritual plebeians of the material world, much as the wireless or radio operator would receive the ticks and dashes of the Morse code by a wireless wave and then translate them to the “common herd.”

2:17.4 And the wireless telegraph and telephone, the present day popular radio craze, serve the purpose in many minds of confirming their belief in the fantastic and the mysterious. For they reason that here is a common communication passing right through space from sender to receiver, but they overlook the fact that in wireless and in radio we are dealing with more or less well known physical laws, and that they work irrespective of person and other human influences, being regulated by known laws and favored or hindered by known physical and material conditions.

[See 5:14.15.]

## 4. THE OUIJA BOARD

2:18.1 As the last grade of the high school of spiritism, we may consider the ouija board, that queer little three-legged contrivance, and its table base, that is regarded by some earnest souls as being the mouthpiece of Satan, and by others as being the channel of Divine wisdom for God's erring creatures on earth.

2:18.2 We have witnessed a veritable ouija board craze in the United States in recent years. Drug store windows and notion store counters have exhibited these supposed mediums of communication between this world and the next in endless profusion. As a result of all the philosophic and psychologic preparation and preliminary religious training which serve to foster superstition and favor deception, to which the growing minds of our boys and girls have been subjected, as we have heretofore noted, the time has now come when they are ripe to do a little experimental work on their own account, and a few pennies or some kind neighbor, for this purpose, will supply the ouija board. This contraption, whose name means "Yes, yes Board" appears to have got this name by a corruption of the words which are the equivalent of yes in the French and German languages.

XIII: LET ME WARN YOU NOT TO SEEK THE DEAD FOR INFORMATION (Haldeman 116)

2:18.3 My attention was first directed to the influence of the ouija board several years ago, when I was called upon to attend

A woman of high standing and intellectual culture

a highly nervous, much wrought up patient, an excitable woman

recently gave herself up to the temptation of the ouija board.

The inoffensive thing held her night and day. Again and again she would retire and determine to forget it in sleep. She could not sleep. She would call for the board and give herself up to it through the hours of the night till the wan light of the morning.

She could not escape its claims.

To-day she is in a home for the insane and her calls for that plaything that has chased reason from its throne are heartrending (H 117).

who had recently lost a daughter, her only child,

and who had been experimenting somewhat with spirit mediums, but more with the ouija board,

and who, as the result of her experiments on the frontiers of spiritland, had become unbalanced— had, plainly speaking, gone crazy.

And I have come in contact with no small number of cases since that day in which the ouija board and its associated ideas have contributed much to the overthrow of reason in the mind of some soul predisposed to these things by hereditary nervous and mental instability.

2:18.4 Of course, I well understand that many people take up the ouija board as a diversion, as a means of parlor amusement. They outwardly proclaim their disbelief in the whole spiritualistic proposition, but at the same time they overlook the fact that they have, from the earliest dawn of reason, been unwittingly prepared by their elders, up through a graduated and progressive course of psychic training, which predisposes them, in certain conditions and under favorable circumstances, to be unduly affected by these mystic and spiritistic influences.

2:18.5 And so, while they start out upon their ouija experiments innocently enough, and without the least conscious thought of seriously regarding the messages which may by chance come to them from the manipulation of this harmless-appearing little tripod; nevertheless, credulity, fear and superstition operate with such unerring certainty and with such inherent power, and since they have been so thoroughly prepared by a hundred and one influences, extending from the ghost story of their childhood days down to the philosophic content of a recent touching and solemn funeral sermon, they not infrequently succumb to the psychic treachery of this specious deception.

2:18.6 So we are prepared, in becoming expert and enthusiastic ouija disciples, to graduate from our high school preparation for spiritualism, and can be considered now full-fledged candidates, with proper qualifications, to take up the more advanced studies and adventures which we shall next consider as the college course of spiritism.

#### **D. A COLLEGE EDUCATION IN SPIRITISM**

2:19.1 We have reviewed the experiences of the average civilized youth from childhood up through the kindergarten of spiritism, the common school of superstition and credulity, into the years of the adolescent high school experiences in things occult, mysterious, and supposedly supernatural; and we are now ready to take up the study of what might be called a college course in the occult.

I believe you will agree with me that the pre-college training has been thoroughgoing and adequate, and that by the time the average individual has reached the age of young manhood or young womanhood, they are quite thoroughly grounded in those essentials which are requisite for the making of a good candidate for a college course in spiritism.

#### 1. HYPNOTISM

[Compare "Hypnotism" in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 469-71.]

2:19.2 While, to the psychologist, hypnotism is a science more or less well understood, and one which is, largely at least, based upon the known laws of psychology and physiology; nevertheless, to the man in the street, hypnotism has always stood for the mysterious, and represents a performance that, in the opinion of the average citizen, borders on the supernatural. If you are able to hypnotize your fellows, they are going to look upon you with more or less awe, and feel that you are in possession of powers entirely beyond the range of the average human being.

2:19.3 While it is true that much of the commercial hypnotism exhibited in public stage performances is entirely fraudulent, and the amusing antics of the subject but represent the doings of a confederate for pay, at the same time, there are to be observed a sufficient number of real demonstrations of hypnosis now and then to keep the subject alive in the popular mind, and to contribute directly to the further confirmation of the belief of mankind in the existence of extraordinary human beings who are possessed of unusual powers and who are able to utilize their psychic gifts in such a manner as to exert this peculiar influence over their fellows.

While I distinctly regard the hankering for hypnotism and the undue interest in all of these pseudo-psychic sciences as an indication of that state of the public mind which is bent upon seeking those things which are spectacular and supposedly supernatural, at the same time I recognize that hypnotism is unduly feared in many circles,

[The author has come to recognize hypnotism as having but little or no value in the practice of psychotherapy ... (PF&F 420).]

and I believe that it has little or no value in the treatment of ordinary nervous diseases.

[Compare "Christian Science" in *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 471-73.]

## 2. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THEOSOPHY

2:20.1 Many well-meaning and earnest Christian Scientists will no doubt resent my opinion that the practices and dogmas of the cult tend indirectly to gather recruits for the cause of spiritualism. We do not necessarily mean by this that many who have embraced Christian Science will in turn become spiritualists. That is not always the way in which the influences which make for spiritism work. As we have already seen, there are so many present-day tendencies which unconsciously prepare the minds of average individuals to be favorably inclined toward spiritism, while at the same time such an object was very far from the intents and purposes of those responsible for these various agencies and activities which constitute the conventional and orthodox training of spiritualistic candidates. It is not that so many Christian Scientists are destined to become spiritualists, but rather it is the spiritistic tendency of the whole Christian Science system which exerts that influence upon its immediate communicants and the public in general, that leads them to expect so much from exclusive spirit agencies.



2:20.2 The Christian Scientists are wont to deny the reality of matter, the reality of disease, etc., and they place over-emphasis upon the spirit. It is quite in keeping with the inherent tendency of the race to explain even the material manifestations of nature by ancient spiritistic theories.

[See 1:3.8.]

2:20.3 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; that human suffering is a figment of mortal mind; and that evil and sorrow are but vain imaginations. Now there is a psychologic reflex from all this propaganda, on the public mind, which exerts a pernicious influence upon tens of thousands of individuals who never become formal communicants of the Christian Science cult. They frequently make a joking remark about something that has happened in the neighborhood, saying, “Well, there must be something in Christian Science, after all,” and though they never join the Christian Science church they are directly or indirectly influenced in the belief that the spirit world is able to manipulate the material world; that health and disease of the body are regulated by the mental state and controlled by **spiritual forces**; and the net result of all this psychic drift and mystic tendency is greatly to augment the inherent superstition and credulity of mankind. In other words, Christian Science and Spiritualism both thrive on the same sort of human curiosity, that same sort of willingness to accept as true a host of theological fallacies and unproven pretensions.

2:20.4 As if Christian Science were not enough to have precipitated upon the present age in the nefarious scheme of preliminary spiritistic preparation, we must needs have a revival, in our day and generation, of theosophy and other Hindu mysticism with all their numerous phantasms, ranging from the idealism of Berkleyism to the transmigration of the soul. And these occult and mystic propagandas are cited in this connection only to complete the list—to finish the story of the spiritistic tendencies of modern times—to recite how things old and new are being utilized in the culminating influences of the twentieth century designed to enthrall the minds of men with ancient superstition, and enslave the modern intellect with the dogmas and delusions of witchcraft and necromancy.

### 3. MIRACLE SEEKING—DIVINE HEALING

#### VIII: SUPERSTITION AS RELATED TO HEALTH AND DISEASE (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 78)

##### MODERN MEDICAL SUPERSTITION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 90)

There exists to-day the same willingness on the part of the people to be misled and deceived as was found in the minds and hearts of our forefathers;

and the power of these modern humbugs of healing is found to consist in their ability apparently to cure disease.

Having relieved physical pain and seemingly cured bodily disease, the teachers of these systems force their peculiar religious and ethical views upon their converts as the price of retaining healing and regaining health (*PF&F* 90).

2:21.1 There exists today the same willingness on the part of the people to be misled and deceived as was found in the minds and hearts of our forefathers,

and the power of these modern humbugs of healing is found to consist in their ability apparently to cure disease.

Having relieved physical pain and seemingly cured bodily disease, the teachers of these systems force their religious and ethical views upon their converts as the price of retaining healing, and regaining health.

[See 5:5.4.]

2:21.2 This is certainly the day and generation of miracle seekers, as well as thrill chasers. The thoughtless and frivolous bend every energy and pursuit to diversion and amusement. The solemn and serious go in quest of the spectacular and unusual in theologic lines and in occult circles. In the end we are all looking for the same thing. We want to be startled and thrilled, not to mention amused and entertained. It is the same old inherent human curiosity, the spirit of adventure, the motive of the explorer. We have just about explored the entire face of this planet, well-nigh mastered the physical laws of earth, sea, and sky, and now man's inquisitive nature must turn itself toward the realms of the invisible and the worlds of the supernatural.

#### 4. THE PSYCHIC RESEARCH SOCIETIES

2:22.1 It seems that modern civilization is passing through a psychic age. The psychologists have unwittingly given a tremendous boost to the cause of occultism by the advances which they have caused to be made in the psychologic sciences. Society is beset on all sides with books, magazine articles, and other forms of literature, not to mention popular lectures, special classes, etc., dealing with psychic themes, applied psychology, mental efficiency, new thought, mental science, and so on, ad infinitum.

2:22.2 The psychologist has been occupying the center of the scientific stage for some time, though he is being seriously crowded at the present time by the biochemists with all their recent lore respecting the endocrines of the ductless gland system.

Nevertheless, the psychologist has exerted a master influence over the minds of the public for the past two decades, and no doubt this psychic tendency of modern science has, both directly and indirectly had much to do with helping to focus the attention of the public mind upon the more mystic and occult phases of psychic phenomena.

2:22.3 If the human mind can have such a tremendous influence over health and disease, over happiness and prosperity, the unthinking individual reasons, perhaps the spirits may have a still more powerful influence. A study of true psychology would be the surest preventative, the quickest cure, for spiritualistic tendency, but the study of a good deal of this half-baked pseudo-psychology only tends to foster superstition and increase confidence in the mystic and mysterious. Quack psychologists are in league with the mediums of spiritualism in that they unconsciously lead their students and followers away from a recognition of natural law as the explanation of the phenomena of life, and lead them unduly to lean toward, and depend upon, invisible psychic and fictitious spiritistic explanations to account for commonplace experiences, and ordinary, everyday phenomena.

2:22.4 Too bad that we cannot have more real psychology taught the common people; that we cannot have more of it in the schools. Unfortunate, indeed, that we do not better teach our boys and girls and our college students those principles of psychologic and physical law that would make them largely immune to the sophistries of spiritism.

[Contrast Chap. 7.]

But perhaps it is too much to expect that even such a thorough-going scientific training could prevent certain psychic souls from being attracted by the occult, since **so many men of science, men at least who had a reputation for scientific accuracy, have been led to commit themselves, mind, soul, and body, to the cause of spiritism.**

## II: THE MODERN HISTORY OF SPIRITISM (Gray 16)

2:22.5 And now, if the students of the occult and the “spook seekers” have not been able fully to satisfy their longing for adventure in the psychic realms of mysticism; if perchance they have to some small degree a scientific bent of mind, then they can with more dignity and some feeling of consistency turn themselves to the more pretentious modes of investigation carried on by the various **societies for psychic research.**

At least these organizations go through the form of investigating spiritistic phenomena,

Quoting **Nelson’s Encyclopaedia**, it was the organization of the **Society of Psychical Research** (England, 1882; America, 1888) that **revived recent interest** in the doctrine.

and they have contributed a great deal, among the more intelligent circles, the better educated classes, to **stimulate an interest** in psychic affairs

and directly promote the cause of spiritism.

2:22.6 While these societies for psychic research have done much to eliminate the more palpable frauds, they have at the same time, performed a valuable service to the spiritists, in that they have served the purpose enormously to advertise the more pretentious and high class mediums.

As one encyclopedia says,

Its work has tended to put limits to the claims which have been made for communication with the discarnate,

“Its work has tended to put limits to the claims which have been made for communication with the discarnate,

though it has at the same time strengthened the belief in it by giving it better scientific credentials (G 20).

though it has at the same time tended to strengthen the belief by giving it better scientific credentials than it has heretofore possessed.”

In other words, the society for psychic research has sought to prove itself a sort of Dun and Bradstreet for the whole spiritistic movement, giving the laymen, as it were, a sort of psychic rating on the various classes of mediums and pseudo-mediums.

2:22.7 And so, as we wind up our study in this, what we have for the sake of comparison denominated the senior year in our college course in spiritism, we see that we have had a progressive training in mysticism, credulity and superstition, from the early years and ghost story frights of childhood, up through the quest of the mysterious and the seeking of the supernatural by means of fortune tellers, clairvoyants and the ouija board, to our actual contact with trance mediums, tongues, and the apparent demonstration of the ability to heal disease in answer to prayer and the touch of those who are supposed to be representatives of divine forces.

2:22.8 And now what is the net result of all this? Simply to lead the minds of men away from natural law and the true explanation of the life phenomena of this planet.

To lead honest minds away from a settled and established belief in the orderly procedure of affairs in our world and from the fact that, commonly speaking, matters of health and disease, happiness and prosperity are dominated and controlled by a reign of natural law. The net result of all our repeated excursions into the occult, and our tampering with the mystic, is to make of us potential spiritualists—to educate men and women to look to and depend upon, the unseen for information, comfort, and consolation; and to seek to obtain by **unearned and short-cut extra-human methods,** wisdom, information, and skill.