

Spiritism

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WITH this issue, SCIENCE AND INVENTION embarks upon a far-reaching campaign to enliven the public on Spritism in general. SCIENCE AND INVENTION takes the stand that practically all spiritualistic phenomena that have been exhibited so far rest upon a foundation of either pure fraud or deceit or, to be more charitable, upon self-deceit of certain investigators. Every so-called spiritistic phenomenon that has been produced so far by mediums, or by other investigators, can be performed by ordinary scientific means, without the spiritistic “hocus pocus.”

Let it be said right here that we are not total disbelievers, for there are many phenomena that cannot be explained satisfactorily today. These, however, are not supernatural, and certainly have nothing to do with the souls or spirits of the deceased.

For instance, science can not explain satisfactorily how the homing pigeon returns; also it seems to be an established fact that there is such a thing as telepathy. Moreover, the human body has a mysterious aura which can be seen under certain conditions. All of these things, however, have scientific facts as an underlying basis, although they are often confused with spiritistic nonsense.

We do not believe that up to this date a means has been found whereby dead persons can communicate in any manner, shape or form with the living. We repeat that we sincerely believe that all manifestations, said to be spiritistic, are based upon either fraud or self-deceit. There is, and will be, no effort on our part to confound religion with spiritism, as is now the vogue. SCIENCE AND INVENTION does not question the hereafter.

We do not wish to question anyone’s religious beliefs, but we DO wish to take an emphatic stand against all unscientific demonstrations and all spiritistic “hocus pocus” which, as a rule, is designed only to prey upon trusting and believing

people, either to extract money from them directly or indirectly, or otherwise to obtain publicity for certain individuals, be they mediums or investigators.

In making our \$1,000.00 challenge, which will be found elsewhere in this issue, we are doing this because we believe that it is our duty to uncover all spiritistic frauds that have been perpetrated too long upon a gullible public.

Of course, not everything is fraud. Much is self-deception, which may go as far as self-hypnosis. If you sit in a darkened room, and are keyed up sufficiently well, and your nervous system is receptive, your senses will play you all sort of tricks, which would not happen to the investigator in broad daylight under normal conditions.

The psychic investigator understands this phase thoroughly, and also knows how self-hypnosis under such circumstances works, particularly when the spiritistic investigator is anxious to believe the most incredible things that are going to be enacted in front of him.

The subconscious mind is a wonderful machine, as anyone who has read Coué can testify. If you are in the right frame of mind, you can make yourself believe almost anything.

Furthermore, it may be noted right here that nearly all of the distinguished converts to spiritualism are, without exception, old men, well past 50 and 60, and some of them are much older than this. Their senses are certainly not as sharp as would be those of a younger man, and this phase alone is significant to those who are looking for the bare unvarnished truth.

This condition of elderly investigators is not at all mysterious, and we do not wish to imply that these gentlemen are senile and that their minds have become affected—not at all!

In the first place, physical impressions by older men are not as well defined as those of young men. Furthermore, and most important, is the fact that the older the individual the more the chances are that he has had some great bereavement during the latter part of his life, which loss he may feel keenly. It may be his wife, it may be a grown son, a brother or a sister, which loss is felt much more keenly by the older than by the younger persons.

Furthermore, the older a man becomes, the more he is apt to think of death, when death is a remote possibility with the younger man.

All these things make the older individual a much better subject for spiritism than the younger. His frame of mind is such that he is far more easily impressed, and he would rather believe than disbelieve comforting thoughts.

The fundamental trouble with spiritism is that it confounds psychic phenomena with manifestations from spirits, although the two are about as closely connected as radio telephony is with thought-transference.

It is a scientific fact that there is such a thing as a medium, which we do not deny. There is also such a thing as hypnosis. It is well known that you can throw a

subject into a hypnotic trance, under which the body and mind take on entirely different functions from those related to a normal condition. In a trance the medium will readily do, under suggestion, what the hypnotizer orders. These are facts which no scientific authority questions. But the connection between a hypnotic trance and departed spirits through such mediums is a far cry. There is no connection whatsoever that science knows of. But any strange action of a medium in a trance is immediately interpreted to be a sign of a communication from a deceased person, for no reason whatsoever. We do not question mediums as such in trances or when under an hypnotic spell, but we find no scientific basis for any connection between such a medium and a departed spirit.

Why must the spiritists have recourse to darkened rooms and to all sorts of other mummary in order to get their table-rockings and other manifestations? If the spirits are genuine, there is no question that they would just as readily give manifestations in the daytime as in the night—in the light as in the dark.

We believe that it is the height of cruelty to deceive well-meaning people with the present-day spiritistic hokum, and we do not believe that any good can ever come of it.

SCIENCE AND INVENTION, from month to month, will show the facts as they exist, but on the other hand it will be the first to report accurately the communications or signals from the dead, *whenever it can be proven that there exists an actual scientific basis for such a phenomenon.*

As long as the so-called sprits of Napoleon, Alexander the Great, and hosts of other great historic personages are made to rattle dish-pans, lift chairs, upset tables, and are supposed to be made to do all sorts of such childish nonsense, SCIENCE AND INVENTION will have nothing but ridicule for such rubbish as it exists today.