

CHAPTER NINE Sordid Spiritualism

P.865 - But it should be made clear that the midway creatures are not involved in the sordid performances taking place under the general designation of "spiritualism." The midwayers at present on Urantia, all of whom are of honorable standing, are not connected with the phenomena of so-called "mediumship"; and they do not, ordinarily, permit humans to witness their sometimes necessary physical activities or other contacts with the material world, as they are perceived by human senses.

The word "sordid" has been understood at two levels:

- a) the performances of spiritualism which produce ectoplasm, and other assorted disgusting phenomena, and
- b) the fact that spirits invade the mind to corrupt it. Any invasion of the human mind by spirit beings is truly sordid, for the human mind is the seat of will and of choice. When the spirits enter they effectively deprive that human mortal of those God-given prerogatives.

Furthermore, the "general designation of spiritualism" is not restricted to spiritualist performances, but includes all those psychic phenomena under the more general designation of "spiritism."

Therefore, all psychic phenomena involving Spirits can be included under those general classifications. Loyal spirit beings do not engage in those performances.

On the evening of October 19, 1994, PBS, the Public Broadcasting System, ran a television program on Spiritualism. The program reviewed the history of spiritualism in the nineteenth century, noting the sudden rise in popular interest after the phenomenon of the Fox sisters in Hydesville, NY in 1848. Public interest became avid. Abraham Lincoln did not practice a formal religion nor attend church. His wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, after the loss of three sons, sought out mediums in attempt to "communicate" with those sons. Other outstanding individuals who became deeply interested, and believers, included Sir Oliver Lodge, English physicist and author, Dr. Ozora S. Davis, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, A. Conan Doyle, famous for his Sherlock Holmes stories, and Sir William Crooks, inventor of the Crooks' tube and discoverer of thallium. Others famous believers included James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, Daniel Webster, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Horace Greeley. The intellectual world of those days was rapt with attention to spirit communications and psychic performances.

Unfortunately, the television program was self-serving. It presented Margaret Fox as fraudulent, recanting her psychic performances after converting to Roman Catholicism and publishing an expose in *New York World*. The program did not say that before Margaret died she reversed herself and insisted that undefiled communication with the spirits was and would ever be the only explanation for what she, her sister Katie, and other mediums demonstrated. In spite of the witness of many scientific minds and objective investigators, the program concentrated on the fraudulent without considering the evidence which indicated a real phenomenon. Many outstanding personalities gave testimony to a vivid reality. Obviously motivated to debunk spiritist phenomena, the program was not designed to present the truth about spiritism. It failed to discuss the continuation of spiritualism to the present day, as well as the general phenomena of Spirit communications, and the widespread activities which now absorb the interest of so many people.

In order to show the deadly nature of spiritist phenomena, and the impact upon our decisions, I shall illustrate several case histories. These will run the gamut from pure spiritualism to the more recent spirit communications which have now become the basis of religious belief for so many people. I shall begin with Marcus Bach and his investigations into the "cults."

CASE HISTORY, #1

MARCUS BACH AND *THEY HAVE FOUND A FAITH*

Bach was born in 1906 and raised in a mildly divided, but religious, Wisconsin family. His father was a member of the Presbyterian church; his mother of the Reformed faith, (now United Church of Christ). Bach's father had an interest in fundamental religionists and their soul-filled worship practices. He would take young Bach with him to holy-roller tent revivals and camp meetings in the years following World War I. With the strong interest of his parents in religious life Bach was initially persuaded to attend Mission House College and Seminary near Sheboygan, Wisconsin. At the end of his third year he moved on to the secular environment of a state university. He obtained a graduate fellowship which took him to various parts of the country and encounters with a wide spectrum of religious faiths. Bach received a PhD degree and went on to make a study, not, as he said, "*in the theological or doctrinal sense, but what religion is and what it does in the lives of people.*" He later wrote a number of books on the religious practices of people, including *They Have Found A Faith*, Bobbs-Merrill Company, New York, 1946, *Major Religions of the World*, 1959, *Strange Sects and Cults*, 1961, and *Spiritual Breakthroughs For Our Time*, 1965.

I use Bach as a source because of his clear objectivity, his fine sense of balance in treating religious issues, and his plain honesty. Furthermore, he was an excellent writer; it is a pleasure to read his materials. By the time of World War II he had experience with many different religions and contacts with widely assorted

cults and sects. Those contacts led him to Ralph G. Pressing, then editor of the *Psychic Observer*. After attending a séance and mind-reading session in Hollywood, which was obviously fraudulent, he expressed a strong desire to learn more about true spiritualist performances. Pressing suggested they travel to Chesterfield, Indiana and the spiritualist center located in that town. The center is still operating today. Bach found a bucolic vacation land, with two large hotels and cottages looking out on a grass-carpeted amphitheater and a grotto in a “garden of prayer.”

After registering at the Sunflower Hotel Bach found himself surrounded by an astonishing assortment of about two hundred students of spiritualist science. They were a mixture of young and old, with qualities distinctively different from the shifty, evasive types he had found behind curtained rooms in office buildings and in metropolitan areas. They did not have the gleam of the cults in their eyes which he had experienced in so many different religious settings. *“The hefty double-cheeked medium with bulging bosom and a dab of rouge on her cheeks was conspicuously absent. The students at Camp Chesterfield could have passed as delegates of any professional convention.”*

In conversation with one woman, a school superintendent from suburban Milwaukee, he found the religious justifications which spiritualists placed on their practices. She was a medium who received messages through spirit voices, but her chief interest was in the theology of spiritualism. She felt that people were losing the deeper meaning and truths of the science because of the spectacular aspects of the phenomena. It was the relation of spiritualism to Christianity which seemed so wonderful to her.

She went on to a long list of quotations from Genesis to Revelation which she felt proved her views. The voice from heaven in Matt 3:16-17 was a Spirit voice. Daniel was a medium. Of course, Jesus was the greatest medium of all. He was clairvoyant and clairaudient. From John 4:17-19 she demonstrated that Jesus was telepathic. From Luke 9:28-30 she was convinced that Jesus materialized Moses and Elijah.

In the following days Bach attended three different performances at the Chesterfield center. The first was a private session which only he and Pressing had with a trumpet medium, a slightly built young man about thirty years of age. The second was a meeting with a male mind-reader attended by a large audience. The third was with a materializing medium, a small older woman, and a circle of seven observers. I quote in full from Bach for the first and last performances.

The first session was in a bare room in a small cottage, containing only a desk and chair for the medium, two chairs for Bach and Pressing, and two aluminum tubes, one about four feet in length made up of sections, and the other about two feet in length made up of a single piece. The tubes were flared slightly at one end to form the trumpet shape. Both were standing upright on the flared end and placed between the medium and the observers. A door leading elsewhere to the cottage was locked. Two windows in the room were shaded with blinds.

The third session was in a basement room surrounded by cement block walls. Again, a door led to another part of the basement but Bach requested that it be locked during the performance. Other than the circle of chairs for the observers, there was a spotlight and a small curtained section against one wall, about three by four feet, containing only a chair for the medium. Overhead lights were turned off during the performance, while a red spotlight was turned on. It was dim but bright enough to see the room, objects and people. The medium sat behind the curtain.

The following accounts are repeated from the words by Bach.

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**Séance #1**

The moments passed. My eyes became accustomed to the dark and I could make out the vague outline of Pressing next to me. He leaned over and whispered somberly, "Well, when's something going to happen?"

Before I could answer —

"How do you do, Dr. Bach! How do you do, Mr. Pressing!" came to us out of the darkness. It was a tantalizing, childish voice with a slightly roguish touch. It might have been a winsome little prodigy stepping out in debut. It might have been a tiny actress in a puppet show.

"Good afternoon," responded Mr. Pressing.

"Who are you?" I asked.

With a friendly lilt the answer came.

"I'm Sylvia. . . . We are glad you are here, Dr. Bach," she said with a neat curtsy in her voice. "This is going to be a good séance. There are good vibrations. Look!"

The small trumpet was slowly rising from the floor. It stopped slightly above the larger one and hovered uncertainly . . .

"But who are you?" I insisted.

"Sylvia!" said the voice emphatically. "Didn't I tell you? I am Sylvia? . . . I can get other spirits for you, if you want me to."

"How?" I demanded. "With millions of spirits in the spirit world, how do you get them? Call Bob Whitehand for me."

"Bob Whitehand?" The voice seemed to drift from us for a moment. "Bob Whitehand?" it returned reflectively. "I'll try. It is done by vibrations . . . I'll try to get Bob Whitehand after while. But look at the trumpet now, Dr. Bach!"

It had risen to five or six feet above the floor and was slowly floating in space . . .

"Where would you like the trumpet to go?" asked Sylvia

"Bring it close to me," I told her.

Outlined by the luminous bands, the trumpet floated toward me. It stopped close to my right ear.

"Put it in my hands, Sylvia," I said.

“Hold them out!”

I extended my hands and the trumpet came to rest in them. Now, I thought, here’s my chance to find those strings. Balancing the feather-like tube in my left hand, I passed my right hand completely around it. No strings.

“Put your hands on each end of the trumpet,” Sylvia directed.

I did, holding the trumpet about elbow’s length from my body.

“Now I’ll talk to you from inside the trumpet.”

A whispered voice — Sylvia’s — came from within the trumpet. I put it to my right ear — the voice was there; to my left ear — Sylvia speaking.

“Well,” I admitted, “that’s interesting.” Then I withdrew both hands quickly. Unaided, the trumpet remained fixed in space.

A conversation between Sylvia and Pressing was lost in my amazement upon seeing the other trumpet begin a slow take-off. Without stopping, it ascended to a point near the ceiling. It hung there, then started a slow swinging motion, round and round, like the retarded movement of a helicopter.

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Bach goes on to describe a fifteen or twenty-minute conversation with Dr. William James, famous philosopher and scholar, then deceased, who had been conjured up by the medium. At the end of the conversation the large trumpet crashed into the wall behind him. Then —

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“I think I have Bob Whitehand for you.”

“Good!” I said, in a tone of co-operation. “Bob? Bob? Can you hear me?”

A luminous head appeared levitated about four feet from the floor. It was not materialized in the way that materializations are usually described. It simply appeared out of nothingness. It was like a blurred flashlight reflected on a human face. I made out the unmistakable features of my friend who had been killed in France. This apparition hovered in the room for only a few seconds and then blacked out. How should I explain it? If it were actually a human face illuminated by a flashlight, it must have been shrouded in a curtain in the center of the room. But I knew there had been no curtain. Besides, why would the flashlight diffuse over no other single part of the room, curtain or apparatus — if apparatus were used? And if it were someone impersonating Bob Whitehand, how could he make up such a marked resemblance to Bob, inasmuch as no one knew that I would request Bob’s appearance? It was an inexplicable happening and remained the most vivid of the afternoon’s demonstration.

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Before going on to Bach’s report of the third performance (2nd séance) it may be helpful to consider aspects of the one just described.

- The voice has the timbre and tone of a young girl which leaves a distinct impression of the actual presence of the girl within the room, although no form is visible.
- The voice reflects a personality. It had a “roguish touch.” It was given “with a neat curtsy.” The implication is that the personality behind the performance recognizes Bach’s personality and is responding to it in playful interchange.
- The voice relocates within the room. It could emanate from the trumpet or any other location. Important to our understanding is the fact that, for Bach to hear a voice, modulation of the air must take place. Physical control of a gaseous substance is required.
- The source of the voice takes a momentary pause, while it apparently searches memory for Bob Whitehand. It returns reflectively.
- The voice states that the presentation of an image of the dead friend is done through vibrations. The source of the voice then produces a visual image, apparently out of nothing. In order for Bach to perceive that image optical vibrations had to be created. Even more significantly, the image was manipulated as though it were an actual face. The source was able to create an incorporeal image that resembled Bach’s dead friend.
- The mechanical movement of the trumpets was levitation, manipulation of physical matter against gravity, and with control of physical position. Bach could detect no mechanical connections to the trumpets.

These elements summarize to highly significant information.

If we were to propose that the voice came from the medium, however skillfully modulated to imitate that of a young girl, and however adroitly projected around the room, even to location within the trumpet, two other phenomena go far beyond proposed origin within the medium. How were the two aluminum tubes manipulated to defy gravity and with no visible propulsive mechanism? How was the image of a dead friend conjured into a visible display? By someone who never heard of him, never had seen him, and did not know that Bach would request him?

No ordinary, familiar, or scientific explanations exist. We naturally seek scientific answers because we have become accustomed to recourse in methods which can provide reliable answers. We feel safe in an environment which can be trusted to repeat time after time, ad infinitum. But these phenomena are beyond the pale of scientific investigative techniques.

- They cannot be repeated through laboratory control. “Objective science” does not know the parameters necessary to establish such control.
- An “objective” environment would destroy the conditions necessary for their existence. Their production is conditioned by the friendly environment of those who believe.

- They depend upon personality interaction, not upon the reaction of inanimate physical objects subject to clinical conditions. The personality on one side is human; on the other it is “Spirit.”

Therefore, objective science is not adequate to an evaluation. These phenomena are beyond the realm of safe and trustworthy human affairs; they deserve extraordinary explanations.

However, if we assume origin in a spirit personality who is invisible we arrive at unnerving dimensions to the query. It would mean that —

- Some invisible source of power is responsible for the production of spiritualist phenomena.
- That invisible source exhibits personality. It reacts with human beings in personality interplay. It expresses personal will and choice in the conduct and exhibition of the performances.
- It can fully interact with and produce results in the physical world.
- The invisible personality knows each and everyone of us intimately. A “roguish touch” and “neat curtsy” indicated reaction to the presence and personality of Bach.
- The Spirit has tremendous memory, of the kind which knows every moment of every human life which ever existed — within the purview of ITS existence. If it was able to reproduce an image of Bach’s friend, from a distant moment familiar to Bach, it had to retain the memory of that human being and know the relationship between the two. Bach’s random request had to be a surprise to even that personality. The delay in bringing the memory into focus, displayed by “drifting for a moment” shows a search within its memory files. Then, again, a moments hesitation of reflection in bringing the image into play shows an effort at assembling the elements of the image necessary to impress Bach. Both personalities were able to remember the friend, in intimate detail, one human and one Spirit.
- The range of physical control appears to be limited to the séance. There must be a condition imposed on the performance which prevents such phenomena from occurring randomly or unexpectedly in our everyday lives. This means that the spirit personality cannot arbitrarily manipulate the physical world. The spirit personality is under undefined constraint.
- The required condition is that the Spirit must work through a human medium, through human mind.
- Although this séance was with a trumpet medium the performance included a materialization. The next séance will show this phenomenon in greater detail.

**Séance #2**

Bach inquired as to the reason for the placement of the medium behind a curtain.

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“The reason for concealing the medium,” I was informed, “is because a red light is used during a materialization séance. Even a dim light interferes with the generation of the ectoplasm necessary in building spirit forms. The cabinet shields the medium during the time this force is being assembled and then, when complete, the form can stand the light rays long enough to be seen outside the cabinet by the sitters — from thirty seconds to three or four minutes. The medium entranced is also sometimes disturbing to the spectators. It is not a pleasingly aesthetic sight — especially during the materialization, for ectoplasm exudes from her mouth and body in the nature of a gauzy, foggy, smoke like substance from which figures are formed by the spirit chemists.”

Since there was no way for anyone to enter or leave the cabinet without coming through the room, I accepted it as part of the required setting.

“But what about the light?” I inquired.

“The bright lights will be turned off,” we were told. “Ectoplasm, with its quality of luminosity, shows up best in dark or semidarkness. The séance will take place in a red light, which will not detract from the materialized forms. It will be bright enough for you to discern one another all the while and to see me standing near the cabinet.”

About this time Mrs. Harwood rapped at the inside door and was admitted. The door was relocked. Mrs. Harwood was diminutive, gentle, and refined. She greeted us in a cordial, forthright manner. But as she stepped inside the cabinet, I reminded myself that “true art is the ability to conceal art.”

The assistant took her place beside the cabinet.

“Let us enter the séance reverently,” she instructed, and there followed a brief word of prayer. Then she continued: “I have these requests to make. Be sincere. You can assist very much in the success of the séance. Please do not speak among yourselves. If however, a spirit appears and indicates he wants to speak to you, if he calls you by name or motions to you to come, get up and speak to him. I only ask that you will please not touch the spirits. Are there any questions.

“Why shouldn’t we touch the spirits?” I asked.

“There is a connection between the spirits and the medium,” the assistant explained. “When you touch the spirit you are really touching the medium and disturbing the conditions of the trance. Do you remember the words of Jesus when He said to Mary in the garden after His resurrection, “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father?”

I had further questions but, convinced that the success of the séance depended as much on us who sat in the circle as upon the medium, I put myself in a receptive though not credulous state of mind. I was determined today to fight against hallucinations or hypnotism or whatever might intrude under the guise of psychical demonstration.

When the assistant turned out the bright lights, the room was illuminated with a deep red glow which came from a spot light directly over my shoulder. I turned to examine it. It was a theatrical spotlight covered by a thickness of gelatin (plastic). In its light I could easily see Pressing at my left and the doctor from Texas at my right. The others in the group, sitting in a half circle on folding chairs, were also always discernible.

After perhaps five minutes of silent waiting, the assistant suggested we sing a song. Someone started, "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say." We sang one verse and were about to begin another when a voice spoke.

"How are you, everyone?" It sounded like Sylvia. But I knew that Clifford Bias was at this same hour giving his demonstration of trumpet mediumship.

"I am Twilight," said the voice.

At this everyone responded, "Hello, Twilight. How are you?"

"I'm just fine," said Twilight, "and how are you Dr. Bach?"

"I'm fine, too," I replied, piqued at having been singled out just because I hadn't chimed in with the others. It struck me that a spirit should think of something more profound in the way of getting attention than the old earth-worn phrases.

Twilight was chatty. "Everybody happy? You happy, Mr. Pressing? You happy, Mrs. Daiches? I think this will be a good séance. Oh, a very good séance, I think for sure. It is a good circle. Oh, it's a good day for a séance. Nice and sunny. Atmospheric conditions have a lot to do with séances. When the atmosphere is heavy, it is hard for the spirits to manifest. Materialization is hard then. Oh, yes it is. And we must have materializations! We just must have!" This last was said with an ironic twist.

"All religions must have phenomen-, how do you say it — phenomena — or phenomenon — or phenomenons! I never can pronounce it." Twilight laughed.

A good séance? I wondered.

A light flickered near the floor, close to where the assistant stood. It was a luminous glow, like the quick beam of a flashlight shining up through a cloth. It came suddenly, tarried a moment, and faded reluctantly. Twilight's disconnected talk persisted as the mirage of light loomed again. This time it mounted higher like silver smoke curling around a light bulb. Then the light went out, but the silver smoke continued to hover. I can describe it best as a bright, shimmering vapor, struggling for expression. Slowly it began to take form. Something like shoulders — then a face appeared. It developed into a bodily form and spoke. It called for Mrs. Daiches. She got up, took a few steps, and said, "Yes, Mother?"

"How are you?" the figure asked in a low, hushed whisper.

"I'm fine, Mother. Why didn't you bring Father with you?"

Immediately a man's voice spoke. "She did." And hovering beside the figure of a little woman was a somewhat larger figure of a man. They had form and mask like features. For a moment I thought they might be two actors dressed in luminescent costumes and wearing paper-mâché masks. Where had they come from? How had they entered the room? I felt sure I would know before the séance was over. Houdini once said that he could duplicate any such manifestation.

Then a third figure appeared. Let us say, "materialized," for it is the best description. It seemed to come out of the floor — an inchoate mass of ectoplasmic stuff — growing, taking form, speaking. I made out the semblance of a young boy.

"Mother," he said, "do you remember the walks we used to take?"

"I sure do," said the mother.

He took his mother's arm and they moved back and forth across the room, coming so close to where I sat that I pulled back my feet.

Throughout these doings the whisperings continued — sometimes simultaneously. Twilight was still chatting. And there was spirit laughter, low and pleased. I was seeing the *raison d'être* of spiritualism: demonstration and proof of the continuity of life, coupled with the comforting assurance that that life is good.

Here was the reunion of a family — a son telling his mother that life "over there" was just a continuation of life on earth. There were not two worlds at all; there was but one interblended world closely interwoven by memory and the love of life. Consciousness could not die. Personality could not be destroyed. The spirit of man was, indeed, eternal.

I drew my attention from the Daiches' reunion and touched Pressing's arm.

"What do you think?" I asked.

"I have been to many séances," he replied. "This promises to be one of the very best.

I analyzed the possibilities of fraud and deception. The room was sufficiently illuminated that I would have seen holes in the floor, or shifting walls. And if it were "done with mirrors" how would one explain three figures speaking at once, gliding across the room, touching "arms," brushing past my feet?

This was the séance. The implausibility injected into the first ten minutes carried through the entire demonstration. For an hour new figures materialized and disappeared. Once Twilight cautioned, "It is getting very bright. Too bright to see. Fix the red light."

"I will, Twilight," said the assistant, coming over to put another thin sheet of gelatin over the spotlight.

I was making minute mental notations of all that was happening — hovering, swaying motion of the "spirits," the rhythm of life, like the rise and fall of a tide, as many as four speaking simultaneously in whispered voices, excited, hurried, persuasive. Suddenly the galaxy of spirits melted away. For a long still moment nothing happened. Then the swirling ectoplasmic effluvia glowed from the floor and quickly took on the form of a girl. Before the figure was complete, it spoke.

"Marc, dear — Marc, dear — Marc, dear.

Those who know me well call me Marc; those who know me better call me Marc, dear, so I knew this must be a “familiar spirit.” I got up and walked over until there was a space of less than four feet between us. “Yes?” I said, “Who are you?”

The answer was fraught with disappointment. “Don’t you know me?”

I did not. I had no idea who this might be. I had really been too absorbed to think very much about personal contact with the spirits. . . . Nor did I propose to offer any hint of whom I thought she *might represent*. No leads, I determined.

“I do not know you. Who are you?”

“Paula,” came the answer.

The name and soft manner in which it was uttered brought the sudden unfolding of a forgotten drama. Twenty years ago my sister Paula had died at the age of twenty-three. Her child Janette had died shortly before. These deaths had been among the deep sorrows of our family, but time and travel reduce the past into forgetfulness. No medium or spirit had plucked this name out of my mind because I wasn’t thinking of Paula. I had not thought of her even once during the séance.

I looked at the presence before me closely.

“How do I look?” she asked.

“You look fine,” I replied.

“The right height?” she whispered. “Do you think I should be taller?”

“No. You are about the height I remember.”

“I wanted to do a good job,” she told me earnestly. “Do I look all right?”

“Yes,” I assured her, recalling that one theory of materialization is that the spirit “takes” the ectoplasm and fashions according to its memory the human form which clothed it on earth. . . . Did this form and these features resemble Paula? I must admit they did. Very much. The outline of the figure was recognizable and convincing. It was like a “false front,” a flat, two-dimensional body with the semblance of arms clothed in a shadowy gray-white film. The face, though typically mask like, was strikingly reminiscent. There was an illusion of long blond hair. I cannot say whether the voice was Paula’s or not. After twenty years I would not remember. Just now, however, it was Paula returned.

But why shouldn’t it be? I asked myself as I stood there. The spiritualists at Chesterfield knew I was coming. If, as some people say, they have a well-laid system of espionage they could easily have traced my family and got Paula’s description. If this was someone “dressed up,” play-acting, if this was a marionette using the voice of ventriloquist, naturally it would be constructed as to represent Paula. This thought haunted me more than the presence. I wished I could convince myself some way. The impulse to reach out and touch the figure became stronger. I moved closer, I moved slightly to one side so that the red light would strike the spirit’s face more directly. We were about three feet apart now. Paula was talking about life in the spirit world. I was asking hasty questions: Have you seen Jesus? What is heaven like? What about the element of time? Can you be everywhere at once? Are terms like Methodist, Reformed, Presbyterian, Catholic ever used where you are?

Her voice seemed to laugh. She answered, “No, no,” to all questions save the one about heaven. It was like speaking to a living person secretly, clandestinely, knowing that time was running out. Her features seemed to become clearer. Perhaps it was my mind playing tricks.

And then the thought came to me. “Paula,” I said, “do you remember the catechism we learned at home?”

“Of course.”

“Paula, do you remember the first question in that catechism?”

“I remember.”

“What was it,” I asked almost fearfully.

The answer came at once. “What is your chief comfort in life and in death?”

“Go on,” I urged.

“That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death am not my own — “

She interrupted herself. “Here where we are the words have a greater meaning!”

Then quickly, breathlessly, she told me that serving God meant personal development. Life on the spirit plane is an evolvment. Like the breaking of a chrysalis. Like the ascent in a spiral. Like the growth of moral affection to higher and higher “heavens.” Several times she interrupted herself with “Do you understand? Is that clear?” as if she felt her message was vital, all-absorbing. Death, she insisted, was not a violent result of sin. It has no sting. It was neither friend nor enemy. It was part of the divine purpose, a purpose without beginning or end.

The whisper grew fainter. “I can stay no longer, I must go now.”

“Paula, one more thing. Can you put your arms around me?”

“I’ll give you a kiss,” she said. “Come closer.”

“You come closer to me.” I wanted her to come nearer the red light. She did. There was now scarcely a foot between us. The face was luminous, seemingly transparent, and without depth.

I leaned forward and lowered my head. The weblike texture of ectoplasmic arms encircled my neck. Something soft and flaxen brushed my forehead. Then Paula vanished — into the floor, it seemed.

I walked back to my chair and sat down.

“Was that all right,” Twilight was asking. “What do you think.”

I did not reply.

What did I think?

A few minutes later the lights were turned on. The cabinet assistant called to Mrs. Harwood, “Are you alright?” From within the curtain the medium announced that she was.

The séance was ended.

DISCUSSION

This séance offers greater insights into the performances of the Spirit, and the limitations he certainly must feel.

- The gauze-like, foggy substance called ectoplasm has no specific definition. No human mortal knows exactly what composes ectoplasm.
- It has similarity to the substance which formed the head of Bob Whitehand. However, the full deployment demonstrated in this séance indicates attachment to the medium as a necessary condition for formulation. The “creation” of Bob Whitehand without connection to a medium was momentary. Or the connection was not visible to Bach.
- A phenomenon of “light” is associated with the formation of the ectoplasm.
- The formation of ectoplasm from the body of the medium is repulsive to most people. It is truly sordid.
- Again we find the playfulness demonstrated at the first seance. Here “Twilight” will not let Bach remain silent; “she” pulls him into the activity. The Spirit knows Bach’s skeptical reluctance to greet a “spirit entity,” or a possible “stage” personality.
- The Spirit turns a point of sarcasm, in derision of human kind who must have “materializations.” It fully recognizes that many human minds do not have true spiritual faith; they must have phenomena which convince them of the validity of their faith.
This is the identical need of the spiritists. They must have phenomena to convince them of the reality of “God.” That phenomena is in their heads. They are not faith Sons of God. This point was emphasized in the Internet exchange among Jim Cleveland, Nancy Bigelow, and myself.
- The Spirit could produce sound vibrations which imitated multiple voices, as many as four speaking simultaneously — whispering, excited, hurried, persuasive.
- The Spirit was able to form multiple figures. Mrs. Daiches saw both her father and mother, and a dead son. She had no trouble believing they were those specific dead relatives.
- For those who believe, the performances are convincing evidence that the dead are not dead, that they can return to demonstrate their life “on the other side.” But since the images, the voices, and the behavior are nothing more than reproductions from this Spirit’s memory the deception is exceedingly cruel. It shows a complete disregard for what it is doing to human emotions. It also shows the extreme depth to which the Spirit is reduced to gain attention. The Spirit will resort to any device. How very debased, indeed!

- In conversing with human beings he must resort to familiar human personality traits to communicate his own feelings or emotions. He is reduced to the human level to carry on this cross-personality interchange. His response is “fraught with disappointment,” or he “wanted to do a good job.” He was concerned that he make a favorable impression.
- How degrading it must truly be to such Spirit to be conditioned by the limitations of human perception, or belief, in order to carry on such intercourse. This is vividly illustrated when Paula quickly and breathlessly goes into a discourse of the other side, and the purpose of life. Not only does the spirit introduce an urgency in the message; he is also frustrated by these techniques.
- The Spirit knew the importance of making an impression upon Bach; he singles him out in both sessions. Bach would record the sessions and publish them to the world.
- Note how the Spirit is concerned that its reproduction of Paula be faithful to the original. It expressed a strong desire, not only to win acceptance from Bach, but that its performance be authentic.
- The technical human explanation of such close resemblance to the long-dead sister is given as the ectoplasmic memory from the dead sister. Apparently no one, in all the millennia of apparitions, recognized that the visible faithfulness to reproduction of the dead person came out of the memory banks of that despicable Spirit.
- Could Bach have been more convinced when he was able to devise a memory incident in the catechism that only he and his dead sister knew?

An essential argument is the ability of the Spirit to remember all persons who ever lived on this planet in intimate detail. Would the Prince of this World have such powers? Not only form and appearance at different, and all stages of life, but also in personality, experience, and expression.

Even more, if there are many séance sessions going on all around our planet simultaneously, at any odd hour of the day and night, how could he create such performances simultaneously? It boggles the mind.

It also offers some estimate of what is meant in the Bible about the power of God. We have used the phrases in mystical attitude without delineating what that power might mean.

We are about to find out. God certainly has tremendous power; that loathsome Prince does also.