

# Spiritualism

IT may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that superstitions which would have been a joke to an intelligent cave man of the rough stone age are not only tolerated, but are actually taken seriously by many supposedly intelligent people in these so-called enlightened times.

One can hardly pick up a capitalist newspaper or magazine these days without finding a page or two filled with testimonials written by spiritualists and other mystics telling all about what is happening over "on the other side," "in the beyond," on the "astral plane," or in some other imaginary locality of very little interest, to people with common sense.

Coupled with this, we find many of our more orthodox spiritual advisers worrying about what may happen to the morals of the children if we allow Darwinism to be taught in the public schools. They base their opposition on the theory that if the children are given to understand that the human species is closely related to the lower animals, they will be likely to discard the morality of Christian civilization and adopt that of the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. If we are to judge Christian morality from the reports we get of it on the front page of every capitalist newspaper, it is doubtful if such a change would be for the worse even if it did take place. It is worthy of note, however, that those people who do understand and accept the Darwinism law of organic evolution compare very favorably indeed, as far as morality is concerned, with the average preacher, even from a preacher's point of view.

But let us get back to spiritualism.

Not long ago Mr. James Douglas, editor of the London (Sunday) "Express," being a gentleman of an enquiring turn of mind and having more than his share of curiosity, that most valuable of all the virtues which we have inherited from our monkey-like ancestors, decided he would like to have a little first hand information on the subject of spiritualism. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, one of the high priests of the cult, and "imperial wizard" of the temple of "powwow," kindly undertook to act as guide and to introduce him to all the mysteries of the occult, and if possible persuade him to take the "royal bumper degree."

Then commenced a period of investigation, during which Mr. Douglas saw the ghosts smile and heard them tell, in many tongues, how happy they were over "on the other side." There were times when he listened to the most blood-curdling moans and groans, and other times when the very tables danced for joy. There were lights where there should have been darkness, and darkness where light should have prevailed. He saw photos taken of people who were not there, and heard the dogs barking in the celestial kennels of the blest. After having witnessed and heard many such weird and curious sights and sounds Mr. Douglas pilgrimed back to his editorial watch-tower, seized his trusty quill, and delivered himself of the opinion that spiritualism was "the bunk," or words to that effect. Naturally, such ingratitude on the part of Mr. Douglas sizzled on Sir Arthur's sixth sense like a hand-full of "liberty" steak on a hot griddle. A horrible suspicion that Mr. Douglas had his doubts of the sincerity of the spiritualists arose in the mind of the great ghost herder. In his exasperation he demands, "Are we all liars?" He opens his reply to Mr. Douglas in the form of a letter through the press thus:

"My Dear Mr. Douglas: I admit that I am disappointed at the results of that quest in which you asked me to be your guide. When we set forth upon it I had hopes that we might add your brilliant abilities to that small band whom I call 'God's Own Forlorn Hope.' Our ambition is to devote our lives to the destruction of that materialism which we believe to be at the root of the world's troubles, and at the same time to infuse fresh vitality into all religions by showing that those spiritual forces upon which

they rest are not far-away dead things, but are operative at the present moment. It is not an ignoble ambition. But we have failed to convince you, and we must take our failure as good humoredly as we may."

"God's Own Forlorn Hope." Who would suppose that a God who could create a whole universe out of nothing in six days could have a "forlorn hope"? Who would suppose that a God who is all wise, all powerful and supreme, who is supposed to know everything that has taken place in the past, and everything that is to take place in the future, from everlasting to everlasting, would require a "small band" of ghost herders to help him run the universe? It is not so surprising, however, when we consider that man has been a kind of an outlaw right from the start. It would appear that the human animal never could be persuaded to act according to Hoyle. In the sixth chapter of Genesis we read:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Evidently God did not know how contrary the hombre was going to be before he made him, otherwise there would have been no occasion for disappointment and repentance. And just as God's supreme wisdom failed before he made man so did his supreme power fail afterward. He could not control the situation then, and never has since done so. It is no wonder therefore, that God decided to establish a "forlorn hope" with Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and a few other intellectual giants, at the head of it, to help him to save the world.

Anyhow, the tom cat is out of the basket at last, and a ferocious brute he is since he has appeared in broad day light. Sir Arthur tells us that the ambition of the spiritualists is to destroy that materialism which they believe to be at the root of the world's troubles, and at the same time to infuse fresh vitality into all religions. It is to be regretted that he has not seen fit to explain just what kind of materialism it is that the spiritualists wish to destroy. Could it, by any chance, be the materialism that is based on the slavery and exploitation of man by man, which has been at the root of the world's troubles for many thousands of years? If it is, I agree with Sir Arthur it must be destroyed, but herding ghosts will not help to destroy it. On the other hand, if it is the materialism which has for its object the abolition of all forms of slavery and robbery, as well as superstition and hypocrisy, then spiritualism is indeed a "forlorn hope." And the admission that the object of the spiritualists is to "infuse fresh vitality into all religions" would imply that this last is the materialism that is meant. For religion, in all its forms, and throughout all ages has been the champion of slavery, oppression and ignorance, and the opponent of science and progress. All history reeks with the blood of the victims of religion, butchered either as sacrifice to the gods or because they were suspected of witchcraft, because they had made some scientific discovery, or exploded some superstition. And this is the thing which the spiritualists wish to infuse fresh vitality into. This is their noble aim; at least, Sir Arthur tells us, "it is not an ignoble ambition."

But what else can we expect? Religion always has been and always will be used by the parasitic class of every slave society to help to keep its slaves servile and obedient. The precepts of Christianity in particular prove it to be a slave's creed. "Servants obey your masters." "Love your enemies," "If any man slaps you on one side of the head, turn around and let him wallop the other side as well." "Whosoever shall take away your overalls, give him your shirt also." And so forth. Be content

with your lot in life, and obey the commands of the pastors and masters whom it has pleased God in his infinite wisdom and mercy to place in authority over you, and you shall receive a mansion over "on the other side" after you are dead. The more poverty and misery you put up with in this world, the greater will be your reward in heaven. Thus, it is not hard to understand why capitalist newspapers and magazines devote so much space to the testimony of the famous spiritualists who are trying to "infuse fresh vitality into all religions." And so long as the workers are influenced by such propaganda we may expect to see it continued.

There is, however, another angle to the proposition. This "noble ambition" of the spiritualists is likely to defeat its own end, and that is why it is opposed by the more intelligent capitalists. The drive peddled by the spiritualists is so rotten and so raw that, instead of "infusing fresh vitality into all religions" it is helping to discredit all religion, by making all religion ridiculous. And when we consider the proposition from this dialectical point of view, it is possible there may be some good even in spiritualism.

F. J. McNEY.

## HERE AND NOW.

We don't quite know how to approach the subject of our meditations in financial grief, this issue. Kirk has shamelessly abandoned our cause in this department and has cut his acquaintance with Buddy, his quondam friend. Now he's demonstrating to the Allies that it's as impossible for them to get reparations as it is for us to get those ten thousand subs. right away quick. Take a look at the figures here below, then at the bad dream in arithmetic the Allies had (see Kirk's page, this issue), and then proceed to improve our appearances. Here and Now.

We set out to be brief though, this issue; to tell our troubles, state our need, and then buy a whole new pencil to add up the columns that are sure to come by next issue.

But the printer! Are we realists? The printer is! He has a fine eye for a certified cheque and has no ear for our apologies. That is to say, we're "broke." We need every possible dollar that can be mobilized now.

Enter the "shock" troops. They're dying with debility, unhappy, forlorn, worn, and emaciated, clothed in "rags and tatters, shreds and patches"; they are (not to put too fine a point on it) in need of support. Are they to get it, or is it to be a case of R.I.P.?

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