

**MAN IS A SPIRIT; A  
COLLECTION OF  
SPONTANEOUS CASES OF  
DREAM, VISION AND ECSTASY**

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Man is a spirit; a collection of spontaneous cases of dream, vision and ecstasy by J. Arthur Hill

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OF DREAM, VISION AND ECSTASY

BY

J. ARTHUR HILL

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## PREFACE

**F**ACTS differ in importance, but it is a fundamental article of the faith of science that all facts are important in some degree. The import of some of them may not be clear at first, but continued collection brings about the possibility of valuable inferences. An orbit cannot be computed from one or two points given; many are necessary. Similarly a number of facts—the more the better—may be required before we see their meaning. But there is a meaning, and it is worth our while to amass details patiently. This is the modern spirit—to inquire of Nature instead of building philosophic word-structures into the blue. Observation and record are the watchwords. “A large acquaintance with particulars often makes us wiser than the possession of abstract formulas, however deep,” says William James in the preface to his “Varieties of Religious Experience.” And “particulars” may be either subjective or objective. A dream is as much of a “fact” as a bomb is. It

is a psychological fact; the other is a physical fact. Collection of psychological facts is a late development in science, and we have not got far yet, particularly as regards facts of "psychical research" kind. But they will turn out important, if we study them carefully.

The present volume, in the selection of its facts, may seem to start out from an assumption: namely, that human personality is more than a collection of material particles, or, crudely and popularly put, that there is a spirit in man. But it is not an assumption. It is an inference, cautiously made after years of observation, from another range of facts, some of which are described in an earlier volume called "Psychical Investigations." This present book, therefore, does not stand alone, even as regards its author. And its general tendency is supported by a huge mass of literature, of which the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research furnish the best illustration from the scientific viewpoint. The Society, of course, has no creed. It exists for investigation. But in the opinion of most investigators its results are strongly suggestive of the scheme presented by F. W. H. Myers in his great work, "Human Personality and its



Survival of Bodily Death"; and that scheme my own researches have led me to accept.

It is difficult to give in few words any idea of such a large subject, but the following may help.

Telepathy, or transference of ideas from mind to mind through channels other than the known sensory ones, suggests but does not prove super-physical action.

Clairvoyance, automatic writing, and trance speech often produce true matter unknown to the sensitive and sometimes unknown to anyone present. The supposition of telepathy from distant people, who do not know and are not known to the sensitive, is a reasonable guess in default of anything better, but it does not seem likely and in some cases it is unacceptable. And a few cases are on record—one in the following pages—of information being given which was possessed by no living mind, but which was possessed by the person purporting to communicate. Swedenborg describes an experience of this kind, which was taken seriously even by the sceptical Kant.

Apparitions are sometimes seen by sane and healthy people, at or after the time of death of a person not known to be ill or in danger. Vol-

ume X. of the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. contains the result of many years' investigation of this phase, and the "chance" explanation is mathematically ruled out.

Many curious physical phenomena, such as movement of objects without contact, occur without the conscious will of those present, and information is given, sometimes going beyond the knowledge of the sitters.

Other phenomena occur or are alleged to occur. The scientific study of them has only just begun, and no certainty is yet attainable regarding some of them. Suspense of judgment is in many cases the correct attitude, but the result of an individual's experience may be sufficient to justify his acceptance of the spiritist explanation at least as a working hypothesis. As for me, I am always ready to change, if a more reasonable explanation can be given.

J. A. H.

*Bradford.*

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