

**MODERN SPIRITISM;
ITS SCIENCE AND
RELIGION**

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Modern spiritism; its science and religion by A. T. Schofield

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A. T. SCHOFIELD

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BY

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Author of

"The Unconscious Mind,"

"Borderlands of Science,"

"The Goal of the Race"

Πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐκρίζαται.

AUTHORIZED AMERICAN EDITION

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS

Pastor of Plymouth Church.

PHILADELPHIA
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1012 WALNUT STREET
1920



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PREFACE

MODERN custom doubtless suggests that it would be well that a book like this, by an author who has not hitherto written on the subject, should be commended to its readers by a "Foreword" from some well-known authority.

The author may be pardoned if he very briefly states why this preface is written; and, in doing so, he would also recommend that it be read *before* the book, and not, as is now so common, afterwards.

Even previously to entering on a medical career the author began to study psychological problems, with the result that many years ago he wrote the first English book on "The Unconscious Mind." A paper he read on the subject at the Harveian Society was received with howls of derision, and the authorities were rebuked for allowing it to offend the ears of its learned members; all of which shows to our wiser generation the archaic condition of the psychology of that day. It is true I do not regard the unconscious mind as cosmic, as is the subliminal mind of F. W. H. Myers, and to a large extent the subconscious mind of Thomas Jay Hudson, of America; but substantially it is the same.

Professor William James has written scathingly of what was the condition then of psychological science for want of this knowledge.

Once it is recognised that consciousness is not co-extensive with mind, but only reaches less than half the way, it can be readily conceived that the word "subconscious" is the best for that mental region which can at times be brought within the range of consciousness by forced introspection; while "unconscious" is a far better word for that part which never by any effort can be brought within consciousness. If consciousness be called the "eye" of the mind it clears our thoughts, for much exists psychically that is beyond mental vision.

When the reader grasps the fact that the most modern views of Spiritist psychical phenomena show that the medium's trance is very largely, at any rate, a condition of unconscious mental activity, with more or less complete abeyance of consciousness, the relevancy of the above statement to our subject will be readily admitted.

Psychological problems have indeed for over thirty years been to me an absorbing study, including all those connected with Spiritism, many of which, I freely confess, are not yet fully solved.

Borderland questions have always proved a great attraction, and what I call the true Spiritualism of the Divine Revelation has long provided for me what I have ever felt to be the most elevated study of which the human mind is capable.

This book has been written at the very special and earnest request of a friend well known in the medical world, whose views as to the urgency of presenting to the public some fairly comprehensive monograph on the subject at this time coincided with my own.

The recent accession to the ranks of this doubtful cult of such well-known and honoured names as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle has undoubtedly acted as a stimulus to Spiritism.

A more critical view, however, of their work, as given towards the close of this book, seems to throw some doubt on the value of their accession to the deeper interests of this new "Religion."

It is most unfortunate for its success that Spiritism seeks to be both a science and a religion, which is impossible. So long as Sir Oliver Lodge was content to be scientific, which, in this connection, was but a very short time, so long did he advance the scientific status of Spiritism. But when he propounded dogmas, and when Sir A. Conan Doyle asserted *tout court* that "Spiritism is a religion," science was arrayed against both; and Sir William Barrett, in his earnest attempts to confine its objects to scientific investigations, was defeated.

Its present condition is, therefore, undoubtedly chaotic, and the benefit, or otherwise, that it derives from its recent distinguished converts will depend, in the author's estimation, entirely on the light in which one regards Spiritism: whether that in which Sir William Barrett sees it, or that in which it seems to fascinate Sir A. Conan Doyle.

Thirdly, and lastly, to round off this lay sermon, I have been studying for many years what may without offence be termed borderland disease, that is, those conditions which are somewhat casually included under the vague term of "functional nerve disorders." Here conditions allied to the trances of mediums are by no means rare, and their