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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

Does the spirit act with man and what are spiritual beings?

We must question the question before we can answer it. Few people stop to think what they mean when they use such terms as spirit and spiritual. If definitions were demanded of these people there are few who would not feel their ignorance of what the terms mean. There is as much confusion in the church as there is out of it. People speak of good spirits and evil spirits, wise spirits and foolish spirits. There is said to be a spirit of God, a spirit of man, a spirit of the devil. Then there are numerous spirits of nature, such as the spirit of the wind, of the water, of the earth, of the fire, and spirit is attributed to alcohol. Each animal is created with a certain spirit and some scriptures speak of other spirits taking possession of the animals. The cult known as Spiritualism, or Spiritism, speaks of guardian spirits, spirit controls and a spirit land. The materialist denies that there is any spirit. The cult known as Christian Science, making liberal use of the term, adds to the confusion and uses it with interchangeable convenience. There is no agreement as to what spirit is or what state or quality the word spiritual applies to. When the word spiritual is used, generally speaking, it is intended to cover qualities, attributes and conditions that are supposed to be not physical, not material, not earthly. Thus we hear of spiritual darkness, spiritual light, spiritual joy, and spiritual sorrow. One is told that people have seen spiritual pictures; one hears of spiritual persons, spiritual expressions, spiritual sentiments and even of spiritual emotions. There is no limit to the indulgence in the use of the words spirit and spiritual. Such confusion will continue so long as people refuse to think definitely of what they mean or what they express in their language. We must use definite terms to represent definite thoughts, so that thereby definite ideas may be known. Only by a definite terminology may we hope to exchange views with each other and find our way through the mental confusion of words. Spirit is the primary and also the ultimate state, quality, or condition, of all things manifested. This first and last state is far removed from physical analysis. It cannot be demonstrated by

chemical analysis, but it may be proved to the mind. It cannot be detected by the physicist, nor by the chemist, because their instruments and tests will not respond, and because these are not on the same plane. But it may be proven to the mind because the mind is of that plane and may go to that state. The mind is akin to spirit and may know it. Spirit is that which begins to move and act apart from a parent substance. The parent substance of spirit is actionless, motionless, passive, quiescent and homogenous, save when a portion of itself departs from itself to pass through a period of manifestation called involution and evolution, and save when that portion which has departed returns again into its parent substance. Between the departure and the return the parent substance is not as above described. At all other times it is inactive and the same throughout itself.

The substance when it is thus put forth is no longer substance, but is matter and is as one great fiery, aethereal sea or globe in rhythmic movement, the whole being made up of particles. Each particle, as is the whole, is dual in its nature and indivisible. It is spirit-matter. Although each particle may and must later pass through all states and conditions, yet it cannot in any way or by any means be cut, separated or divided in itself. This first state is called spiritual and although of a dual, yet inseparable nature, the spirit-matter may be called spirit while in this first or spiritual state, because spirit entirely predominates.

Following the general plan toward involution or manifestation in this universal, spiritual or mind matter, the matter passes into a second and lower state. In this second state the matter is different than in the first. The duality in the matter is now shown plainly. Each particle no longer appears to move without resistance. Each particle is self-moved, but meets with resistance in itself. Each particle in its duality is made up of that which moves and that which is moved, and though dual in its nature, the two aspects are united as one. Each serves a purpose to the other. The stuff may now properly be called spirit-matter, and the state in which the spirit-matter is may be called the life state of spirit-matter. Each particle in this state though called spirit-matter is dominated and controlled by that in itself, which is spirit, and the spirit in each particle of spirit-matter dominates the other part or nature of itself which is matter. In the life state of spirit-matter, spirit is still the preponderating factor. As the particles of spirit-matter continue toward manifestation or involution they become heavier and denser and

slower in their movement until they pass into the form state. In the form state the particles which were free, self-moving, and perpetually active are now retarded in their movements. This retardation is because the matter nature of the particle is dominating the spirit nature of the particle and because particle coalesces with particle and through all, the matter nature of the particles dominate their spirit-nature. As particle coalesces and combines with particle, becoming denser and denser, they finally come to the borderland of the physical world and the matter is then within the reach of science. As the chemist discovers the different characters or methods of the matter they give it the name of element; and so we get the elements, all of which are matter. Each element combining with others under certain laws, condenses, precipitates and is crystallized or centralized as the solid matter around us.

There are physical beings, element beings, life beings, and spiritual beings. The structure of physical beings is of cells; element beings are composed of molecules; life beings are atomic; spiritual beings are of spirit. The chemist may examine physical and experiment with molecular matter, but he has not yet entered the realm of spirit-matter except by hypothesis. Man cannot see nor sense a life being or a spiritual being. Man sees or senses that to which he is attuned. Physical things are contacted through the senses. The elements are sensed through the senses attuned to them. To perceive spirit-matter or beings of spirit-matter, the mind must be able to move freely in itself apart from its senses. When the mind can move freely without the use of its senses it will perceive spirit-matter and life-beings. When the mind is thus able to perceive it will then be able to know spiritual beings. But the spiritual beings or the life beings thus known are not and cannot be those creatures of the senses without physical bodies, which are carelessly and negligently called spirits or spiritual beings, and which long and lust for flesh. The spirit acts with man in proportion as man attunes his mind to the state of spirit. This he does by his thought. Man is in his highest part a spiritual being. In his mental part he is a thinking being. Then in his desire nature he is an animal being. We know him as a physical being of flesh, through whom we often see the animal, frequently come in contact with the thinker, and at rare moments we catch glimpses of him as a spiritual being.

As a spiritual being man is the apex of evolution, the primary and the ultimate manifestation and result of an evolution. Spirit at the beginning of involution or manifestation is indivisible.

As the primary spirit-matter involved gradually, stage by stage, from state to state, and finally that which was spiritual matter is held in bondage and imprisoned by the other side of the nature of itself which is matter, so the spirit gradually, step by step, reasserts its supremacy over the matter of itself, and, overcoming the resistance of the matter of itself, finally redeems that matter step by step from the gross physical, through the world of desire, by long stages at last reaching the world of thought; from this stage it ascends by aspiration toward its final achievement and attainment the world of spirit, the world of knowledge, where it re-becomes itself and knows itself after its long sojourn in the underworld of matter and the senses.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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