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THE  
SATANIC ORIGIN AND CHARACTER  
OF  
SPIRITUALISM.

BY  
H. A. H.

“Try the spirits, whether they are of God.”  
“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

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Is Spiritualism a gross imposture, or is it a great truth? and, if the latter, to what agency may its results be attributed?

To these questions the following lines attempt to give an answer.

The subject will be viewed, however, from one point, and from that alone,—the scientific question, and the many analogies from profane history will be carefully excluded, whilst the Biblical evidence only will be adduced. This little pamphlet is addressed to those who “know . . . their Bible true,” who are content to test everything by the standard which the Bible offers, who are willing with regard to Spiritualism, as with regard to everything else, to ask the question “what saith the Scripture?” and who are prepared to abide by the answer—whatever it may be.

Spiritualism professes to bring about certain "manifestations:" granting, for the present, that it really does so, to what agency may we scripturally attribute these results?

Spiritualists maintain that it is through disembodied spirits, *i.e.*, the souls of those who have departed hence, that they are enabled to cause these phenomena: can we, as believers in the Word of God, credit this statement?

Disembodied spirits must belong to one of two classes:—

- (a) The "blessed dead."
- (b) Those who are lost.

(a) We read of the "blessed dead" that they "rest from their labours" (Rev. xiv. 13), they "sleep in Jesus" (I Thess. iv. 14), they are "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest" (Job iii. 17); it is as unscriptural as it is repulsive and incredible to suppose that those who have fought the good fight here below, who have finished their course and kept the faith, who being banished from the body have gone home to be with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8),—that these should at any moment be liable to a summons from foolish, inquisitive, and mercenary men and women.

(b) And the spirits of those who are lost—what of them? Some, at any rate, are "in prison" (I Pet. iii. 19), and clearly cannot assist at spirit séances. But our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus

(Luke xvi. 19, etc.), is decisive upon this point: we have therein a picture, sketched by the Son of God Himself, of the state after death—but previous to the Resurrection—of two persons, the one belonging to the first class above mentioned, the other to the second. Lazarus is in “Abraham’s bosom” and “is comforted,” Dives is “in hell” and is “tormented in this flame:” neither of them, however, is at liberty to leave his abode for the purpose of warning those whom they have left behind; and this being so, we shall be unable to consider it possible for them to return to earth in order to take part in the exhibitions of modern spiritualists.

With the exception of the appearance of Samuel at Endor\*—a case which will be noticed further on—Scriptural authority absolutely negatives the theory that it is possible for disembodied spirits to revisit the scenes of their life, or even, as sentimentality loves to suggest, to hover invisibly around us, and we shall therefore probably conclude that the Bible will not support us in the belief that the “manifestations” referred to are, as it is asserted, to be ascribed to them.

Neither are they the work of the Holy Spirit. We dare not for a moment suppose that the Comforter,

\* It will be remembered that at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elias were present in *bodily form*, and that Peter suggested the propriety of erecting shelter for them (Matt. xvii. 3, 4). At our Lord’s Resurrection “many *bodies* of the saints arose” (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). These are not instances of the appearance of *disembodied spirits*.

“the Spirit of Truth,” whose office it is to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,” and to “guide us into all truth”—that He would lend His aid to such absurd and meaningless performances, or that He would condescend to place His power at the beck and call of a spiritualist for the purpose of amusing, astonishing, or alarming the unlearned, the careless, or the profane.

These phenomena—which, if they exist at all, are certainly super-human—proceed then neither from Heaven nor from Hades: before making any positive assertion as to their origin, let us search the Scriptures for the purpose of discovering whether it is possible for such miraculous performances to take place independently of Jehovah’s express commands; and let us at the same time notice to what agency any phenomena which we may meet with are referred by the inspired authors.

(1.) Old Testament.—We have not turned over many pages of our Bibles, ere we come to the record of a series of remarkable events which took place in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Moses and Aaron appeared before the monarch, and for the purpose, first, of proving their Divine commission, and then of obtaining the release of their captive brethren, performed certain miracles: Aaron’s rod became a serpent (Ex. vii. 10), the water of the Nile was turned into blood (ver. 20), and frogs covered the land of Egypt (viii. 6): these wonders are distinctly stated to have taken place at the word and by

the power of the Lord. But Moses and Aaron are not alone here : the "sorcerers" and "magicians" appear, and "with their enchantments" imitate God's servants in each of the above mentioned particulars (vii. 11, 12, 22 : viii. 7). Now it is necessary to notice that what is recorded here actually took place : a profane historian might have been imposed upon by sleight of hand, chemistry, or a hundred other devices : but the words before us admit of only one construction : the Holy Spirit asserts the "sorcerers" and "magicians . . . . *did in like manner*" ; and it would be as cowardly as it would be futile to attempt to explain away such a statement. The magicians then, *by some supernatural agency*, performed these manifestations *in opposition to Jehovah*, and for the purpose of discrediting His messengers ; we must therefore ascribe their feats to that power which was hostile to the purposes of the Lord. The sorcerers evidently expected to produce the desired results : they used their "enchantments," and for a time were successful : at length they reached a point beyond which they could not go—for Satan is not omnipotent, and can only work so far as he is permitted by God—and then frankly confessed, as modern Spiritualists do when placed under similar circumstances, that a Spirit more powerful than their own was present — "this is the finger of God" (viii. 19).

And this seems the proper place to notice a case already referred to, viz., that of Saul's consultation

with the witch of Endor (I Sam. xxviii. 7-21). This person was said to have "a familiar spirit," or, as Gesenius translates it, "to be possessed of a soothsaying dæmon:" in modern language, she was a *medium*. To her Saul, in his despair, went and requested that by means of her familiar spirit—her dæmon—she would raise the prophet Samuel. Eventually she consents, the séance ensues, the chamber is alive with spirit forms (ver. 13); Samuel appears and addresses the unhappy monarch. It is well to observe here that the woman was no mere juggler: on the publication of Saul's edict (ver. 3, 9) she had probably laid aside her magical arts, and was only induced to use them upon this occasion by the king's promise that she should escape punishment (ver. 10, 11). And that she was what she professed to be—*i.e.*, a spiritualistic medium—is shewn by the fact that *she alone* witnessed the manifestations which took place (ver. 12, 13, 14). But the witch saw more than she had expected (ver. 12): she was prepared to gaze upon the usual spirit forms, but what she beheld was far more real than anything to which she was accustomed: Satan, with all his powers of imitation, had never been able to produce so life-like a resemblance. We must therefore conclude that this was in its essence an ordinary spiritualistic séance, but that the Almighty overruled the machinations of the Evil One, and, setting aside for once that which Scripture teaches us is His law on this point, permitted His servant to return to earth in

order to perform a very extraordinary and unusual function (ver. 15-20) : and it will be impossible for us to read the account of the occurrence without perceiving how exceptional it is. We may notice with advantage, however, how God, whilst granting the king's wicked desire, punished him for engaging in a *diabolical intrigue* : " So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to inquire of it : and inquired not of the Lord ; THEREFORE He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" (1 Chron. x. 13, 14). Is it possible for any one to read such a passage as the above, and still to believe in the innocency of Spiritualism ?

The further we go into God's Word, the more we shall be convinced not only that direct intercourse with the Evil One is possible, but also how heinous is the guilt of those who shall make use of witchery, incantations, or spiritualism of any kind. Under the Mosaic economy we find that death was the punishment of this crime : "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Ex. xxii. 18). "The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (Lev. xx. 6). Here we see that the consulter of the dæmon, as in the case of Saul, is put in the same category as the spiritualist himself.

Again, "a man also, or woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. xx. 27). We read that in after days "the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight," because, amongst other sins, "they used divinations and enchantments" (2 Kings xvii. 17, 18). King Manasseh "provoked the Lord to anger," because he "used enchantments and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards" (2 Kings xxi. 6); whilst good king Josiah zealously put away amongst various "abominations"—such is God's own term for them—"the workers with familiar spirits and the wizards" (2 Kings xxiii. 24). Would the Holy Spirit use such misleading language, we may fairly ask, or would such a heavy punishment as death be attached to the practices above mentioned, if, by the words "wizard," "witch," "familiar spirit," "divination," "enchantments," etc., we were only to understand the conjurers of the times, their confederates, and the impositions which they practised upon their dupes?

(2.) New Testament.—The annals of modern spiritualism tell of aerial flights accomplished by Home and others: why should this be considered incredible? During our Lord's temptation two feats of levitation took place, both of which are distinctly stated to have resulted from the agency of Satan—"the devil taketh Him" (Matt. iv. 5, 8). If this could happen in the *first* century of the Christian era,

why should it not also in the *nineteenth*? Since, moreover, the object of the feats in both instances was the same, viz., to subject, in the one case the Lord, and in the other, as we believe and hope to shew, His creatures to the powers of darkness; and since the Devil is declared to have been the agent in the one case, there is a strong presumption that he was the agent in the other also.

The Gospel narrative is replete with instances of dæmoniacal possession: seven devils were ejected by our Lord from one victim (Luke viii. 2), a vast number from another (Mark v. 9); their presence in the human frame was attended by various phenomena; in some cases the possessed person was dumb or blind (Matt. ix. 32; xii. 22), in others he appeared to be afflicted with the most ungovernable mania (Mark v. 2-6; Luke ix. 39), whilst not unfrequently he was gifted with powers of prophecy and discernment of no ordinary degree (Mark v. 7; Luke iv. 33, 34); but in each case—in the latter as well as in the former—the possession is said to have been diabolical, and the dæmon was cast out.

With reference to all the cases above alluded to, it has well been remarked by Dean Alford (note on Matt. viii. 32), “the Gospel narratives are distinctly pledged to the historic truth of these occurrences. Either they are true or the Gospels are false . . . . The personality and presence of the dæmons is distinctly implied. See especially Luke xi. 17-26. Now either our Lord spoke these words or He did

not. If He did not, then we must at once set aside the concurrent testimony of the Evangelists to a plain matter of fact; in other words, establish a principle which will overthrow equally every fact related in Gospels. If He did, it is wholly at variance with any Christian idea of the perfection of truthfulness in Him who was truth itself, to suppose Him to have used such plain and solemn words repeatedly, before His disciples and the Jews, in encouragement of, and connivance at, a lying superstition. After these remarks, it will be unnecessary to refute that view of dæmoniacal possession which makes it *identical with mere bodily disease.*"

One of the "signs" which our Lord, previous to His ascension, promised should follow the preaching of the Gospel by His first missionaries, was that in His Name they should "cast out devils" (Mark xvi. 17). Armed with this and other powers, Paul and Silas started upon an evangelistic tour, and in due time arrived at Philippi, where they were much annoyed by a medium, who, like those of our own day, "brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying." The medium herself was a poor slave girl, and her "familiar spirit" is said (Acts xvi. 16, marginal note), to have been Pytho, the same that presided over the oracles of Apollo at Delphi. By the influence under which she acts, she is enabled to recognise the Apostles, and to declare their mission. St. Paul is conscious that the girl is labouring under dæmoniacal possession, and relying upon his Master's

promise, orders the Devil, in his Master's Name, to come out. "And he came out the same hour." "All attempt to explain away such a narrative as this by the subterfuges of rationalism, is more than ever futile . . . . This was a case in which the presence of the spirit"—and that spirit a *devil*—"was a *patent fact*" (Alford).

The result then of Biblical evidence, gathered alike from the Old and New Testaments, is to the effect that within the period to which the Scriptures historically refer—a period, be it remembered (dating from the time of Moses), of at least fifteen centuries, and therefore not limited to any one era or dispensation—the principal phenomena of Spiritualism did take place, and are stated by the Holy Ghost to have been the work of the Devil.

Now we have no Scriptural authority for supposing it to be even probable that this state of affairs was to close with the canon: on the contrary, there are not wanting passages in Holy Writ, which may lead us to expect to see such phenomena in our own day and generation; our blessed Lord, ere His departure, warned His people that "there should arise false Christs, and false prophets, and *shall shew great signs and wonders*; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 24). St. Paul speaks of "the *working of Satan* with all power and *signs and lying wonders*" as about to take place, and adds, "for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they shall believe a lie; that

they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 9, 11, 12). Again the same Apostle says, "Now *the Spirit speaketh expressly*"—note that—"that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils who speak lies in hypocrisy*" (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2).

It being therefore impossible to reconcile Spiritualism and Scripture, honest Spiritualists have been obliged to express their disbelief in the Bible. At a meeting of the British Association of Spiritualists held on November 4th, 1875, as reported by the *Daily Telegraph* of the following day, one speaker urged that Spiritualism should be made a "national religion," whilst another "remarked that the Bible was the great obstacle to all human progress." The Lord Jesus teaches that there is but one way of approach to God. "*I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*" Spiritualism professes to have found this "old path" too simple or too antiquated, and suggests others—mediums, disembodied spirits, etc.—so plausible and so fascinating, "that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Satan has cunningly hidden the essence of Spiritualism beneath a mass of trickery and nonsense, and so has induced a large section of the Christian world to laugh at, and to pooh-pooh that which is a real and very awful conspiracy—a conspiracy which is gaining ground day by day amongst the learned and the scientific as well as

amongst the ignorant, and against which, as we have seen, we are warned in God's Word—to undermine and discredit the truth as it is in Jesus. The testimony of Scripture is to the effect

I. *That Spiritualism not only certainly can exist, but certainly will exist ; and*

II. *That it is purely diabolical.*

We do not laugh at infidelity, at heathenism, or immorality : why should we laugh at Spiritualism, which is but an attack from a new quarter, and that, alas ! a very telling one, against the cause and kingdom of our beloved Lord ? Let us beware of playing with it under any of its forms, remembering that by consulting any oracle but that of Jehovah, we range ourselves on the side of our God's great enemy, and incur the doom of king Saul. Let us never lose an opportunity of shewing the true and Scriptural character of that which in outward appearance is only amusement, or, at the worst, deceit ; and let us earnestly pray that God's people everywhere may by His grace be kept from falling into this soul-destroying device of the Devil.