Do the Dead Communicate?

SPIRITUALISM
Scripturally and Scientifically EXPOSED
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"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?"—Isa. 8: 19, R.V.

1924
NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP
York House, Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Australia
12 Davies Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, England
676 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A.
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Wholly set up and printed in Australia by
The Specialty Press Pty. Ltd., 174 Little Collins St., Melbourne
Registered by the Postmaster General for transmission
through the post as a book.
Do the Dead Communicate?

I.

SPIRITUALISM SCRIPTURALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY EXPOSED

This is a scientific age. The dictum of science is that nothing shall be accepted as truth unless it be demonstrated by actual experiment. Moreover, the demonstration must be made by a number of scientists, and they must invariably obtain the same results. Thus mathematics is undoubtedly a science because in addition, subtraction, etc., the same results are obtained from similar calculations, and can be depended on. Two and two invariably make four; six taken from nine invariably leave three.

There are other sciences—such as botany—correctly called such because they record the proved observations of keen students of Nature. Trees, shrubs, plants are classified, and each has its place in a certain genus recognised by all scientific observers and demonstrable in any part of the world.

Electrical science, agricultural science, engineering science, and other sciences brought within range of practical men in everyday life; the extensive teaching of these in ever more numerous schools and colleges, until a "scientific farmer" is taken as a matter of course; the publication in the daily papers and in popular magazines of interesting items from the store of knowledge of well-known scientists and inventors—all these things give a scientific air to the present gen-
eration. Anything presented to us, to attract our interest, must be labelled "science." And as soon as the average person feels that he knows all he needs to know about this science or that, albeit it is only a smattering, he is on the lookout for some new science to reveal its marvels. And so we have Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and "Christian Science," all making their appeal on the ground that they are "science," whereas a few minutes' investigation shows they are not scientific at all, since in both theory and practice they are uncertain, everchanging, and never unquestionably demonstrated. Undoubtedly they do make demonstrations of a sort, but not such as prove their claims.

Spiritualism, or Spiritism, too, makes its appeal on scientific grounds. It claims to offer a scientific demonstration of two things which nearly everyone wants to know—1. Is there life after death? 2. Do the dead communicate with the living?

Spiritualism Not Scientific

Spiritualism answers yes to both these questions, and claims to demonstrate the truth of their answer by calling up the dead and receiving messages through the instrumentality of a medium. Scientific men have instituted rigid tests to exclude the possibility of fraud, and agree that sounds are heard, articles fly about, and other phenomena occur for some of which they cannot account except on the ground of super-normal power. But in no case has it been proved that the spirits of deceased human beings are responsible for these sights and sounds, as the spiritists claim. As a matter of fact, the evidence is all the other way. All the phenomena may be accounted for on another basis than that of communication from the dead.

When the spiritualists say "life after death," they do not mean that the person has been dead and that life comes after that death. They mean that the person has never died. They mean that the spirit of
the deceased has "passed over," that every human being has an immortal part that cannot die, and that in reality, while the dead appear to have died, it was only the body that died, while the immortal part or spirit went on living in another sphere. But they cannot demonstrate the truth of this statement. All they do is to go through a certain performance usually centred round a medium in a state of trance, and accept blindly and without question the claim that the communication received comes from some certain deceased person—perhaps a scientist, or a writer, or a friend of someone present.

This is decidedly unscientific, notwithstanding that of late years the names of a few scientists have appeared among the converts to spiritualism. Far from bringing their scientific training to bear upon the problem, they seem to have been as easily deluded as the most ignorant follower of the cult. But in at least two instances the spiritualists claim converts wrongly. "Dr. A. T. Schofield, a Harley Street (London) specialist, who for many years was personally acquainted with Sir William Crookes and Mr. W. H. F. Myers (both now deceased), states that while they investigated spiritualistic manifestations, neither was ever a convert to it.*

Dr. Schofield considers it deplorable that these men and others continued a profitless investigation long after the futility of it was apparent, allowing their names to be continually used as interested men of science, and so giving Spiritualism an influence over the unscientific which otherwise it would not have had. Dr. Schofield also refers to the Psychical Research Society as another example of how good men, not believers in Spiritualism, lend their influence to keep

alive interest in the subject, thus assisting to attract the unwary; for though the Society frequently exposes fraudulent practices on the part of mediums, and is well aware of the injury done to those who become "possessed," of the puerility and nonsense, often obscenity, which characterize spiritist seances, it still continues to "investigate." That is a wrong course. We are glad the Doctor's voice is raised, with no uncertain sound, warning all men of the dangers of tampering with spiritualism, of the downward moral tendency, and the possibility of ultimate demon possession. For he holds, as do we, that the dead do not communicate with the living, and that evil spirits, not the spirits of departed friends, are responsible for the table turning, rapping, lights, automatic writing, and other phenomena, and for the supposed "messages" from dead friends; that is to say, when no fraud is practised and when the phenomena can be accounted for by no natural means. When a thing is "investigated" and found to be false, it should thereafter be let alone.

More recently Sir Oliver Lodge, the noted English scientist, became a convert to spiritism, although he freely admits that not all is proved. Thousands of scientists opposed to spiritualism consider they are not honoured by this adventure by one of their number; for, as already stated, no communications through a "medium" under a spirit "control" can prove anything regarding the state of the dead; hence "science" must be in abeyance when a scientist becomes a spiritualist.

Still more recently, the celebrated author and creator of "Sherlock Holmes," Sir A. Conan Doyle, openly professed conversion to spiritualism, and has become an active propagandist. His name is being made much of in spiritist circles. His training as a physician is also referred to as giving him special
knowledge. Yet against him are arrayed thousands of physicians and alienists of wide experience who unhesitatingly condemn spiritism as the work of the devil and the ruin of those who permit themselves to be drawn into it.

Let no one therefore be influenced in favor of Spiritualism simply by the sound of a great name in science or in literature. Scientists and literary men have adopted strange religious ideas before today. For instance, many thousands, without proof, and without sanction of the Scriptures, where alone true knowledge is to be found, believe in the evolution theory, and deny the existence of a personal God. Others try to harmonize the evolution theory with the existence of a personal God, but deny that men need a Saviour and that Christ died to atone for their sins. We must remember that worldly wisdom is no guarantee of spiritual wisdom. The world by wisdom knows not God. (1 Cor. 1: 20, 21; 2: 5, 6.) For spiritual wisdom we must go to Christ Jesus, the great Teacher. The Word of God was given expressly to preserve His people from the shifting lights of the adversary, and keep before their minds the true and steady Light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.—2 Cor. 2: 11; 11: 14, 15; 4: 4-6.

Modern Spiritualism

Modern Spiritualism is commonly dated from the year 1847, when two sisters named Fox, living in New York State, U.S.A., caused mysterious rappings to be heard all over the house. Investigators found that the girls could, at will, without apparent movement, loudly crack their knee and toe joints, but it was never proven that this was the sole cause of the mysterious rappings. Says Dr. Schofield (p. 28): "This caused a revival of old spiritist practices that can be traced from ancient times. It was common among the
Essenes [a sect of the Jews], and Delitsch shows table turning was practised in Jewish circles in the seventh century. Spiritism was known in Egypt in the fourth century. The successor to the Emperor Theodosius was announced by table-rapping. All over the Roman and Grecian Empires, in China, most pagan countries, amongst the Red Indians, and the sect of the Gnostics, Spiritism was found; and history records how universally it was practised in the Middle Ages, and the severe laws against it.

"The French Revolution is said to have brought in an era of materialism that largely extinguished Spiritism in civilised countries. It was revived by Professors Mesmer [1733-1815] and Swedenborg [1688-1772]. We take it that the Doctor here means the successors of Swedenborg and not Swedenborg personally.—Authors.] in somewhat different forms with great power, and carried on later in France by its skilled exponent, Allan Kardec, a great apostle of reincarnation." ... Spiritism "was little known in England until 1852, when it became popular in the familiar phenomenon of table turning. It was the amusement of nearly every drawing-room. During the Crimean war it was a great resource in society circles." "Swedenborg was a great Spiritist, and was supposed to speak with the mighty dead in all ages."

Thus it will be seen that the materialistic influence of the French revolution did not obliterate spiritualism in Sweden, where Emanuel Swedenborg made great claims of a divine revelation and of having been transported to seven heavens. It is also worthy of note that, as the close of the eighteenth century marked the end of the 1260 years of Papal domination over the saints, and the time arrived for "Michael" to "stand up" and bring about a great increase of knowledge—the true knowledge (Dan. 7: 25, 26; 12: 1),* Satan became specially busy with all sorts of interesting diversions and mysterious entertainments. Swedenborgianism attracted the mystical, Mesmerism the sensational, Spiritualism the credulous and more-

*For evidence on this point please see "Daniel the Prophet in the Latter Days," mentioned in Book List.
Spiritualism Exposed

bid; Hypnotism,* Quimbyism, and Christian Science,† those interested in healing and being healed. All of these false systems of religion are based on Satan’s lie, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3: 4.) The differences between them are mostly in details, and millions of professed “truth seekers” have been kept so busy studying these details, and going from one form of error to another, that they have entirely missed the truth they professed to seek.

Contending with these numerous errors the truth concerning the state of the dead has had a hard fight. The truth is not sensational, nor does it afford many evenings’ entertainment in listening to weird sounds and alleged communications from the dead. The truth is clear and simple, but it is amply satisfying to those who are willing to take the Scriptures as their guide. That truth was expressed in Eden by God—“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2: 17), and it is reiterated all through the Bible by Prophet and Psalmist and Historian and by our blessed Lord Himself and His apostles.

The Scripture teaching on the state of the dead formed a large part of the teaching of William Miller and others in the revival of Bible study which took place in the early part of the nineteenth century, beginning about 1820.

Spiritism Dangerous

To spend an evening turning tables may seem innocent amusement. But the questions must be faced sooner or later, Where does this lead to? What is the power behind these manifestations? For table turn-

†For Quimbyism and Christian Science see “New Covenant Advocate,” October, 1923.
ing is a favorite amusement to this day, and hosts of young people are still being drawn into a terrible bondage before they realize what is happening. Says Dr. Schofield (p. 19)—"Simple, however, though this is in itself, and apparently little more than a parlour game, it leads on imperceptibly by further steps to manifestations so remarkable that it has often proved the beginning of an obsession that has led to the most disastrous physical and mental results." These disastrous results will be referred to again.

Necromancy

Among the abominations which Jehovah forbade His people Israel to practise are several which correspond exactly with the manifestations of modern spiritists. From this it may be seen that it is no new thing to seek to consult the dead. Deut. 18: 9-13 says—

"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire [i.e., to Moloch], or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord:

and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."

A necromancer means, literally, one who "seeks the dead." Necromancy is defined by the Standard Dictionary as meaning: "Divination by means of pretended communication with the dead." There is no doubt about the meaning of the prohibition in Deuteronomy. The description, a "consulter with familiar spirits," exactly fits the modern medium, who in the trance goes under the control of a superhuman power, called here a "familiar spirit," but to-day known as the "control." In those days, as now, supposed communion with the dead was obtained by
means of these mediums. That in itself should throw doubt on the genuineness of the claim to receive messages from the dead. For the medium becomes unconscious, a mere instrument for the use of the "spirit" (whatever it is), and consequently unable to exercise discrimination. The audience is equally in the dark, for they have no way of proving the bona fides of the "spirit" claiming to be the dead friend or relative — whether he is or is not what he claims to be. That is to say; Spiritualism itself offers no proof on the subject, the claims being mere assertions — that the spirit speaking is so-and-so, etc. There is abundant proof, however, from the standpoint of the Christian, or even a candid non-believer, that the "spirit" is not what it claims to be.

Proof I. is the plain Scripture testimony —

""The dead know not anything." — Eccl. 9: 5.
""There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." — Eccl. 9: 10.
""In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" — Psa. 6: 6.

If all go to the grave [sheol, or hades], and know not anything, even the good not remembering or being able to praise God, it is evident they could not possibly communicate with the living either with or without the intervention of a "medium." Consequently the unseen power or spirit that claims to be the dead friend or relative must be an impostor, a pretender. What knowledge he may possess of the dead person and of incidents in his life and the life of his family must be gained by a power more than human. The spirits often make mistakes, however, relating incidents that never happened, and giving communications from fictitious persons named by investigators.

King Saul and the Witch of Endor

A real difficulty presents itself to the earnest truth
seeker when considering the visit of King Saul to the witch at Endor. If communion with the dead was forbidden, and the law commanded that witches should be put to death, why did God permit Samuel to be brought "up" by the witch and give Saul a message through her? The answer to this question is that God did not permit Samuel to rise up and speak through the witch. Samuel was faithful during his lifetime and would not, we may be sure, disobey God after his death. For forty years he judged Israel, instructing them in the fear of the Lord. We cannot suppose he would endorse Saul's disobedient consultation with one of the forbidden class by giving him a message through her.—1 Sam. 28: 3.

The explanation is that Samuel was in the grave, awaiting the resurrection, and that the witch in a trance came under her control and described what she saw. The control used her vocal organs to give Saul a message purporting to be from Samuel; but, as in other cases of necromancy, this was a fraud perpetrated on Saul by the evil spirit.

Some think that because Saul and his sons died next day as the witch had said they would, the moving power must have been Samuel, or if not Samuel then God, or one of His angels. But we can no more think of the Lord communicating through the witch than of Samuel doing so. In fact, from the time of Saul's rebellion recorded in 1 Sam. 15, the Lord had rejected him from being king, and 1 Sam. 15: 35 adds—"And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death." Later on, when the Philistines came against him, Saul enquired of the Lord, to ask whether or not he should go up against them, but "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." (1 Sam. 28: 6.) These were legitimate ways of ascertaining the Lord's will.
and the fact that God would not answer showed His determination to have no further dealings with Saul. It was then that Saul sought the forbidden witch. Can it be supposed that God, who refused to communicate by the recognized legitimate means—of which the chief was by Urim and Thummim by the hand of the High Priest—would condescend to use an outlawed witch?

How then can we account for the correctness of the prediction by the evil spirit of Saul's death?

We reply that the evil spirit, well aware that the Lord refused to answer Saul, would conclude that if he went to battle his death would take place and his armies be defeated, and so made a very good guess, including the prediction of the death of Saul's three sons, who went up with him. The defeat was a foregone conclusion that could have been predicted by anyone acquainted with God's method of prospering the obedient and punishing the disobedient.*—1 Sam. 31: 1-6.

But the evil spirits are not always so successful in their predictions. Dr. Schofield relates that the late Mr. W. T. Stead, who was a leading believer in spiritualism and a great exponent of its teachings, "embarked upon his last fatal voyage with a light heart, for he could not be drowned, the spirits having revealed to him that his death would be from some runaway horse in the street of a large city. This he told me." All who remember the tragic sinking of the "Titanic" by impact with an iceberg in the Atlantic ocean will recall the sensation caused by the loss of Mr. Stead. On this occasion the spirits made a bad guess!

*For further comment on Saul and the witch of Endor, please see "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," and "The Dead—Where are They?" mentioned in Book List.
Childish Communications and Worse

Proof II. that Spiritualism’s claim to receive messages from the dead is false is found in the nature of the communications. Most of these are childish, or relate solely to trifling incidents of the earthlife. The spirits contradict each other as to what heaven is like, some saying that there are cats and dogs there, the bodies of animals being material, as on earth; while others say there is no one there but the spirits of dead human beings. Some say they wear clothes, others say they do not. One says the spirits eat and drink, while another says they do not, but are “clothed with immortal youth.” Another says, “Our guides are neither male nor female. We assume the bodies of children, and other forms, to gain recognition.” French spiritualists believe in reincarnation (evidently taken from theosophy), which few (if any) British or American spiritualists teach. Some spiritualists teach that there are seven heavens or spheres (after Swedenborg), while others think there is but one heaven.

But no communication through spiritualist mediums gives any information of value to mankind, even though they claim to be the spirits of great scientists and authors of the past. The chief peculiarity noted by Dr. Schofield is that great authors seem to have forgotten their grammar, and that learned scientists have forgotten all they ever knew.

Admissions by Spiritualists Themselves

Proof III. that the claims of spiritualists are false is in the admissions made by spiritualists themselves. Sir William Crookes, whom they quote (wrongly) as a convert, said in the “Quarterly Journal of Science” (1874): “There is no proof whatever of the agency of the spirits of the dead, though Spiritists hold it as a faith, not demanding further proof, that
the spirits of the dead are the sole agents in the pro-
duction of all the phenomena.”

Professor C. Flammarion, a French spiritualist in-
vestigator, admits—“That souls survive the destruc-
tion of the body I have not the shadow of doubt.
But that they manifest themselves by communica-
tions in seances we have no absolute proof.”

Professor Richet, a spiritist leader, referring to this
question, says: “I am not yet convinced.”

J. G. Raupert, another spiritist, says: “No advance
has been made in establishing spirit identity in
twenty-five years of study.”

“Light,” a spiritist magazine, said (March 13th,
1909): “The hardest thing to prove from the other
side is identity; and we know of no test that can de-
termine it.”*

After pointing out various peculiarities of spiritist
revelations, Dr. Schofield says (p. 70)—

“It is certainly incredible, if there be any com-
communications from the dead, that none whose whole
earthly lives were spent on this very problem, and
who specially arranged when they ‘passed over’ to
give full revelations—such as Myers, Hodgson, Pro-
fessor James, and others—should say anything but
what is certainly more like the outcome of the
medium’s mind than of their own.

“After fifty years of these revelations nothing is
revealed.”

In a recent article in the “Sunday Express” (Lon-
don) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle relates some of his ex-
periences while on tour in America. Among other
things he says—

I was present at a seance before leaving America last
year, when a medium, who was the wife of a well-known

*These quotations are from Dr. Schofield’s exposure of
spiritism.
lawyer, became controlled by what professed to be the spirit of Professor William James, of Harvard University. He spoke in the most academic fashion for half an hour, and proceeded to give me a series of instructions, the most practical of which was that at every meeting I should leave some printed record in the hands of each member of my audience.

I have acted on this, and in my recent tour did actually distribute a thousand printed pamphlets on the occasion of each lecture.

This story has an interesting sequel. After my return from the United States, a lady wrote from Somerset and said, "We have been holding seances here. The spirit of Professor James, of Harvard, has returned several times and desires to send a message to you. He says you will remember him by this: 'Big A, little a, little b.'"

Now, Professor James, in Brooklyn, had drawn up his directions to me systematically, under the heads of A, a, b. Could anyone in the world demand better proof of individuality than this? I may add that the special message he sent from Somerset was so profound that neither the lady nor the medium concerned could possibly have evolved it.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a literary artist, and none is more able than he to use the right word in the right place. We therefore direct attention to his carefulness in using the word "individuality" in the above quotation—"Could anyone in the world demand better proof of individuality than this?"

To this question we answer—"Individuality" is not denied. As far as we are concerned, "individuality" is not even questioned. It is freely recognized that the spirits manifesting themselves in seances are "individuals." The IDENTIT Y of these "individuals" is the point in question. We challenge Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to substitute the word "identity" for "individuality" in the above quotation from his article: HE DARE NOT DO IT!

Those who have proved to their satisfaction the credibility of the Scriptures as faithful sayings worthy of all acceptation will believe the Lord's testimony regarding the identity of the spirits who manifest themselves at seances rather than the unproved and
unsupportable assumptions of even educated and supposedly scientific men, who in this instance have allowed their credulity to get the better of their judgment, and thus form a striking illustration of the old saying—"The wish is father to the thought."

**Spirit Possession**

Since the dead cannot communicate with the living, and the claims of Spiritualism to receive messages from them are proven false, what is the power that enters into the medium and uses his or her vocal organs, that moves the hand in automatic writing, and that produces other phenomena inexplicable from the standpoint of human ability? The Scriptures give us the answer.

In the days of Noah certain angelic beings "left their first estate" to consort with "the daughters of men." (Gen. 6.) The result was a race of giants. God destroyed the whole of the antediluvian world by the flood, excepting only Noah and his family—8 persons in all. These fallen angels are referred to in the New Testament as "spirits in prison," they having, after their fall, been deprived of some of their powers. (1 Pet. 3: 19, 20; 2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6.) But, having a desire to associate with humankind, these spirits take advantage of every opportunity to gain control over the minds and lives of as many persons as possible. Their influence is so great that the whole world has been repeatedly swept by waves of superstition, witchcraft, magic, divination, necromancy, enchantments and various other forms of sorcery. For exposition of 1 Pet. 3: 19, 20, and how Christ "preached" to the "spirits in prison," please see next chapter.

When our Lord came on His mission to the Jews, numbers of persons actually "possessed" by these demons were brought to Him to be healed. Higher
critics and others have asserted that our Lord only adapted himself to the mode of speech of the time when He addressed the spirits as living beings and called upon them to "come out," and that these persons were merely afflicted with insanity or some other form of disease. But such a view ignores the fact that various illnesses and deformities are mentioned by their right names, while the "possessed" persons form a distinct class. (Matt. 4:5; 10:8; 9:2, 27, 32.) Moreover, the spirits sometimes answered when addressed, on one occasion asking to be allowed to go into a herd of swine. The result was disastrous to the swine. These demons did not want to go out into the "deep"—the atmosphere to which they are usually confined. Doubtless they would immediately seek to get control of other human beings.—Matt. 8:28-32; Mark 1:23-27.

The fact that our Lord cast out these demons, and gave the disciples power to cast them out, is sufficient ground for believing that they were evil. Hence it is vain for spiritualists to speak of being under the control of "good" spirits. By the way, most spiritists deny the existence of angels, as well as of these evil spirits. They say there are no "spirits" but the "spirits" of the human dead. Thus they contradict the Scriptures, which tell of the holy angels who are God's messengers, as well as of these fallen angels whom He was obliged to restrain because of their wickedness. None of the good angels seek to take possession of human beings; they are in too close harmony with God to do so.—Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:14.

Demoniac Possession Throughout the Age

The reality of demoniac possession throughout the age is apparent from the pages of history, even as it is vouched for to-day by credible witnesses. When the Church fell away from its early simplicity, and
money-loving prelates rose to power, the exorcising of spirits became a profitable business. But before they could be exorcised, they had first to take possession, and so it followed that the Church of Rome encouraged the people in superstitious fears by feeding them with tales of ghosts, fairies, hobgoblins, etc., and by detailing the signs by which a wizard or witch might be detected. According to Wierus, space was supposed to be peopled with demons, numbering 7,405,925. From this we may judge "the fear of bewitchment which ruled men's hearts, from king to peasant." By this means the Church sought to maintain the people in subjection to itself. "St. Gregory of Nice relates a story of a nun who forgot to say her benedicite before she sat down to supper, and who in consequence swallowed a demon concealed amongst the leaves of a lettuce." Pope Gregory IX. wrote that Satan was adored by the witches, and appeared to them in different shapes. In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII. issued a bull against the witches. "From the issue of this bull up to the year 1782—when a girl witch was put to death in Switzerland—it is computed that 300,000 women, accused of witchcraft, perished at the hands of the law."*

"Witchfinders" rose up who had no difficulty in finding many, for they received a fee for every one reported.

It is possible that some of these reputed witches were spirit mediums, but it is probable that many of them were old women with more or less of the peculiarities of age upon them, and a charge of witchcraft became an easy way to relieve their families or the community of their care. With the great Protestant Reformation and the introduction of education among

*Quotations from "The Romance of Sorcery," by Sax Rohmer.
the masses the fear of witchcraft decreased, but it is nevertheless to be recorded, with regret, that it took Protestants some time to deliver themselves from the witch-persecuting spirit prevalent in their time.

The Jews, as a nation under God's direct government, were instructed, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (Exod. 22:18.) They were to be stoned with stones (Leviticus 20:27)—a merciful death, as the "first stone" was a large rock, designed to render the culprit insensible. But there is no command in the New Testament to the Church of Jesus Christ to undertake the seeking out and punishment of wizards, witches, mediums, and others under the influence of evil spirits. The instruction given to the disciples is to keep separate from evil and evil doers of all kinds, and to leave to the civil governments the task of dealing with transgressors. (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 23:25, 26; 2 Cor. 6:17.) Nor does this permit, as the Church of Rome interpreted it in the Middle ages, ferreting out the guilty in order to hand them over to the civil power. The Christian duty is to preach the Gospel, and let the message of Christ's love make the separation between lovers of light and lovers of darkness. (2 Cor. 2:15-17; John 3:18-21; 1 Pet. 4:2-6.) The Word of God is more powerful than a two edged sword.—Heb. 4:12.

The Example of the Apostles

Besides our Lord's example, we have that of the Apostles to guide us. Elymas the sorcerer interfered when Paul and Barnabas had been sent for by the deputy (pro-consul). Paul rebuked him, and worked a miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit—not to heal, but to afflict; and the sorcerer was stricken with blindness for a season. This special miracle was performed for the benefit of the deputy, who, seeing the power of God exceeded that of the sorcerer, believed.
But Paul and Barnabas did not pursue after the sorcerer, to imprison or destroy him. And had he not directly interfered with them, they would doubtless have passed him by, as they did scores, if not hundreds, of other workers of enchantment.—Acts. 13: 6-12.

At Philippi Paul and his companions visited a place at the riverside, "where prayer was wont to be made." There Lydia of Thyatira was converted, and constrained them to abide at her house. On another day, when going to the usual meeting place, a damsel met them, and followed after them, crying "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." This she was allowed to do for many days before they attempted to check her. Some one might ask, why should they, when she announced the truth? The lesson is that the apostles desired no such witness, for the voice that cried was under control of an evil spirit. To sanction even a truthful message from an evil spirit would be to compromise their position. This soothsayer, or Pythoness, was attached to one of the idol temples, and either hired out or sold to men who made gain by her divinations. The Apostle, by calling on the evil spirit to come out of her, deprived her masters of their profit, and incurred their enmity to such an extent that they raised a commotion and had Paul and Silas cast into prison. This, however, resulted in the conversion of the keeper of the prison and his family.—Acts 16: 16-23.

This incident shows a clear case of demon possession, and the power of the Apostle to command such to come out. This ability to command and be obeyed was one of the special powers conferred on the early disciples, particularly the apostles. Demon possession continued, but after apostolic days the method of driving out the spirits from the possessed
was more in accord with Mark 9: 14-29—"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." (The most ancient MSS.—Sinaitic and Vatican—omit "and fasting.") Unless the afflicted or his friends asked for deliverance, the apostles seem not to have used this power, except on special occasions, and for a particular reason, as in the incident related in Acts 16.

The Apostolic advice is to "try the spirits whether they are of God." Spirit, here, is not necessarily confined to evil spirits or the spirits of the possessed, but may mean any power or influence or doctrine which may come under one's notice. The method of trying the "spirits" was not to attend a seance, but to test them on their teaching—"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." This is practically applying the test of the Touchstone, the Ransom, for Jesus came in the flesh for the express purpose of giving Himself a "ransom for all."—1 John 4: 1-3; Matt. 20: 28; Mark 10: 45; 1 Tim. 2: 4-7; Heb. 2: 9.

We have already referred to the prevalence of spirit possession throughout the age. Coming down to our own day, spiritist mediums are living examples of possession at the present time. In not every case is it complete or continuous possession, but the tendency is always that way.

Present Day Examples of Possession

While we are personally acquainted with persons who had been at one time more or less "possessed," and have sometimes referred to them as warnings to others, we shall on the present occasion quote from Dr. Schofield's book, "Modern Spiritism," He speaks from fifty years' experience of spiritualistic phenomena, having been personally acquainted with Sir William Crookes, F. W. H. Myers, W. T. Stead, and others now deceased, and having witnessed many
of the "demonstrations" these gentlemen staged. He has also had personal conversations with Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the present leading exponents of spiritualism, both of whom he considers dupes both of the spirits and of fraud-practising mediums. Dr. Schofield has no hesitation in saying that demon possession is a fact in our day. To quote—

"Many, who know nothing of these occult subjects, must have been surprised and amused when at some friend's house they passed an idle hour in table turning, or even in planchette writing, to see the horrified look on the face of one of the bystanders. They cannot in the least understand the earnest warning that follows not to "dabble in Spiritism," and naturally put down the mentor as some faddist or alarmist obsessed by groundless fears. The whole thing looks so absolutely simple and innocent, that the warning is disregarded and nothing happens. It may be twenty years after, when happily married, the same lady who was warned long ago, in an idle hour recalls the long-forgotten planchette, and gets it out of the cupboard to "try her luck." The board responds, and interest is awakened. The recreation becomes a pursuit, soon raps are heard, and then something does happen, and the long-forgotten warning is recalled when it is too late.

"Such a case is not imaginary, but is outlined from life."

The planchette here referred to became a popular instrument in the United States a few years ago under the name "ouija board." The craze swept the States from coast to coast, and many cases of nervous collapse, insanity, and "possession" were reported.

"'Possession' by an evil spirit is tacitly recognised by most of our alienists [i.e., one skilled in the study or treatment of insanity.—Standard Dictionary]. There is no large asylum that does not contain one or more of such cases. These people are often otherwise sane, but are constantly liable to have their bodies used, against their will, by some alien and evil force."

Dr. Schofield relates how a mental physician arranged a meeting at a restaurant between himself
and an Arab gentleman, who was undoubtedly "possessed."

"He commenced [in India] with table turning and planchette writing, but soon began to hear 'raps.' These pursued him to his bedroom, and his sleep became disturbed with the noises and trying to decipher them. Then he heard voices at the window, and at last one day, he told me with deep earnestness, he heard suddenly the same voice from within; and from then he has lived a life of torment. He was deeply convinced of the nature of this 'unknown (and unwelcome) guest,' for it was ever speaking to him the most impure thoughts in the purest Arabic (not Hindustane, though it entered him in India), and suggesting horrible crimes and debaucheries. (He particularly pointed out it was a dialect only spoken by the highest classes in Arabia.) He said he was only now partially master of himself, and he could no longer drag on such a life, but must commit suicide if he could not be cured. Half way through the dinner this spirit began speaking, but of course I could not understand a word till the man translated it—a very weird performance."

Another case mentioned by Dr. Schofield was that of a Christian lady who (he knows not how) became "possessed" of an evil spirit.

"For nearly two years, at intervals, when sitting at table with friends, or receiving them in her drawing-room, she would suddenly begin to talk in a rough, hoarse, man's voice, saying all sorts of things that purported to be revelations of Satanic mysteries, blaspheming against God, and uttering all sorts of obscenities. (It is curious how obscenity and profanity go together.) ... distinguished alienists came to examine her, and found her sane, but 'possessed.'"

The cure is of special interest—

"Great prayer was made for her in large private prayer circles, and in the church, and suddenly one day, after long and terrible display of evil, the spirit left her, and she was completely restored to her usual health. This woman was fortunately of exceptional ability; had she had any natural flaw in her mentality, such a visitation would probably be but a prelude to insanity."

Another case mentioned by Dr. Schofield, to which he was called, and was therefore an eye witness of the "possession," occurred in Bayswater, a suburb of London. Two maiden ladies, Christians, living
in their own home, and full of good works, protected during all their life from the evils of the world, having never visited the East End, or any other place where vile language could be overheard, had the quiet of their home disturbed by an evil spirit.

"In the bedroom I found the younger one on the bed, and the elder, staring in agony at her sister, standing at the foot.

"The former was simply pouring out blasphemies and obscenities with an ease and rapidity that bespoke long practice. The language used and the animus displayed against God were as remarkable as they were horrible. She was quite unconscious. Her sister, weeping at the foot of the bed, kept declaring that, to her certain knowledge, her sister had never even heard the fearful words she was using so volubly. . . . It was quite clear to me that the true diagnosis of the case was 'possession.' After a while, and after violent convulsions, the spirit left her, and quite unconscious of all that had happened, she was her own sweet self again. These scenes were frequently repeated; again most earnest prayer was made, and, without insisting here on direct cause and effect, I am glad to say the 'possession' gradually ceased."

Another case, more violent, was that of a pious Quaker gentleman, a lay preacher, and a greatly honoured character, sent to the doctor by some Irish doctors who could not diagnose the malady. So violent and noisy were the attacks that a special house in a quiet place was rented and the patient put in charge of two strong male mental nurses, a young-residential doctor being in attendance. Dr. S. visited the case as often as he could. He thus describes the attacks—

"I shall never forget these visits. . . . The grinding of the teeth, till eventually all of his fine set (not artificial) were broken into bits and scattered over the room, the horrible expression of his face, but, above all, the scourging and devilish language, can only be alluded to. The result was that both male nurses (as stoical a race as may be found) gave me notice, saying 'that no salary would induce them to continue to hear such utterances,' inured as they both were to the vilest language."
“Between the times of the attacks nothing could be gentler or quieter than the aged Quaker.”

The Doctor’s testimony undoubtedly bears out the Scripture declaration that “possession” by an evil spirit is one of the evidences of Satan’s dominion in the world. (Luke 10: 17-20; 11: 14-22; 1 John 5: 19; Eph. 2: 2; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 6: 12.) These modern cases correspond exactly with those described in Scripture, such as the boy whose father brought him to the Master to be healed—“Wherever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth.” When the spirit saw the Lord it “tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.” This was described as a “deaf and dumb spirit.”—Mark 9: 14-26.

Another severe case was that of the man who lived among the tombs—“For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the demon into the wilderness.” (Luke 8: 26-36.) The man was completely healed when the spirits left, and the fact of his having been possessed and how he was healed was talked of by the bystanders. This was no illusion or delusion. It was real “possession”—so regarded by our blessed Lord Himself, who applied the right remedy to effect the cure.

Spiritism as a Healer

Necromancy; or claimed communion with the dead, is not the only feature of Spiritualism. Another principal feature is the cure of the sick through the instrumentality of mediums, clairvoyants, and mental healers. In working these cures more than human ability is shown. Clairvoyants in their trances see the inner organs of the patients and describe their condition, generally supplying herbs to be taken to relieve the complaint. Other healers, who deny being spiritualists, but who undoubtedly get their
power from the same source, are able to discern the patient's trouble by simply examining his hands, in some cases only his finger nails. Such powers are more than human, and quite in line with what is done at spiritist seances, where the presence and activity of spirits are freely admitted, though they are not the spirits of the dead, as claimed, but the angels who sinned in the days of Noah and have since sought in various ways to get control over humanity for their own gratification.

Some spiritist and mental healers are quite frank in asking patients to give up their wills entirely to them. A friend of ours who was ailing, and who visited one at the request of a spiritist acquaintance, was told that he (the healer) would not undertake the case unless she did so. If she would, he would guarantee a cure in a few weeks' time. As our friend was not prepared to give up her will to any human being, much less a strange man with magnetic eyes and an oily manner, she refused treatment, and was glad to get out into the air and sunshine again.

Christian Science, too, requires the giving up of the will—to be guided from Boston, the so-called imaginary illnesses to be dispelled by the reading of a particular book and the repeating of set phrases—some of which are absolute lies. True, they say the mind is given up to God, but their god is not the true God, and any mind given up to a god not the true God is consciously or unconsciously given up to the Evil One. So says the Apostle Paul—"the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God." (1 Cor. 10: 20.) The giving up of one's will is the greatest of all sacrifices. It is a dangerous proceeding: Beware of those who ask it, or seek to impose it without asking.
Spiritualism as a Religion

Spiritualism has shown Satanic facility in adapting itself to the religion of the particular region of its operations. Among the pagans it was associated with the idol temples. Among the Essenes it still suffered its adherents to be known as a sect of the Jews. Operating in the dark ages, it led some to fearful physical excesses, while others in convent and "holy orders" became "mystics," led away into all sorts of mental extravagance, metaphysics, etc. It was a good servant of Rome to keep the people in fear and trembling. With greater enlightenment of the masses, the evil spirits altered their tactics though not their objectives. Wherever the Bible as the Word of God became again revered and read and studied, spiritists were ready to quote (usually misquote) Scripture. Operating in Protestant countries and in more or less rivalry with established denominations, it was found politic to use the name of Jesus. It may be in other cities as it is in Melbourne, that some spiritist Sunday services openly ridicule the idea of God, His Word as a guide (they prefer their spirit leaders), and Christ as the Saviour, while others advertise themselves as "Christian Spiritualists." When investigated, however, the Christianity about these is in the name only, for the atonement is disbelieved in, and Jesus Christ is held to be only a great teacher and example.

When considered useful in discussion, spiritualists are ready to quote Scripture, but when their misquotation and misapplication are pointed out, they have been known to become very offensive in their remarks about God and about Bible believers. When Satan tempted the Lord he quoted—or misquoted—and misapplied an Old Testament promise, as may be seen by the account in Matthew 4. And, says the Apostle, if Satan poses as an angel of light, it is
SPIRITUALISM EXPOSED

not surprising if his followers do so.—2 Cor. 11: 13-15.

Just to give one example from their publications: In the "Messenger" (June, 1909), a Melbourne spiritist paper—"Let us shame the world, if it be possible for the world to feel the heat of shame, by making a Spiritualism which, for love and charity, and peace on earth good will to men, shall outrival the goodness of Him who said, 'Greater than I are they that shall come after me.'" No reference is given, but it seems to be offered as a quotation from the Scriptures. There is no text like it. It sounds like a mixture of John the Baptist's statement that the Lord who would come after him would be mightier than he (Matt. 3: 11), and our Lord's words, "Greater works than these shall he [the believer] do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14: 12.) Our Lord never said anything that could be construed into meaning that any of His followers would ever be greater than He. He is the Head of the Church, and all creation is subject to Him.—Eph. 2: 20-22; Col. 1: 16-18; Phil. 2: 9-11; Matt. 28: 18.

Dr. Schofield gives two examples of the misuse of Scripture phraseology, and calls it speaking "deceptively":

"Spiritism speaks deceptively at times in language borrowed from Christianity: 'The grand figure of the Crucifixion will endure throughout the ages,' but it proceeds, 'The true atonement is the ennobling of the nature, the pacifying of the spirit, the making at one the human and the Divine.'"

But the Scripture teaching on the atonement means more than ennobling the nature and reconciling the human and the divine. It means that the blood of Christ was shed to effect this reconciliation. This Spiritists deny, as may be seen by another quotation (p. 218)—a statement by the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, a clergyman of the Church of England, who became a spirit medium—
"'The idea of a good (sic) God sacrificing his sinless Son as a propitiation for man is repudiated as monstrous. Man is his own saviour.' Further, 'Far too much stress is laid on Christ's death. It's no uncommon thing to die for an idea.'"

Dr. Schofield has directed attention to the differences in the teachings of French spiritualists, who believe in reincarnation, and English speaking spiritualists, who as a rule do not believe in it. Yet, as showing how diverse their ideas are, the above mentioned Melbourne spiritualist paper says—"Do you ask what of the sin we see on every side? My answer is that under re-incarnation you cannot conceive of how rapid the quickening may be; higher developed spirits coming at every birth. Who can say but that the time is near at hand when His will will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven?" Evidently the suggestion is that by a process of re-incarnation the will of God will ultimately be universally done on earth.

Systematizing the Spiritualist Belief

Of late years efforts are being put forth to produce a statement of faith that shall represent the beliefs of spiritualists, and organisations are being formed definitely to stand for that statement. To illustrate: We have before us what is called a 'Propaganda Hymn Sheet' of the 'Stratford (London) Spiritual Church.' Page 1 states that "The object of the Stratford Spiritual Church is to extend the propaganda of the facts and teachings of spiritualism." "Spiritualism teaches that Man is a Spirit, in direct touch with God; that evolution does not end at the grave—but proceeds ever God-ward; that, under proper conditions, Man ex-carnate can communicate with Man in-carnate, that there is no death." Inquirers are invited to attend, or to apply to various officials for further information. Page 4 says, in black letters, "We believe in the
Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man, Immortality of the Soul."

Since the conversion to Spiritualism of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle an attempt is being made to form a creed that shall be acceptable to the mass of spiritualists, and so a world-wide "Spiritualist Church" be established under one leadership.

Dr. Schofield says (p. 233) that Spiritualism is the child of theosophy, and not of Christianity. A writer in the Melbourne spiritualist paper above referred to says—'Run your mind over what I have written. Reason out how the 'sparks' of light have been gathered together! Embraced in what I have been inspired to write is, Spiritualism, Buddhism, Theosophy, Christianity, and every other religion the world has ever known.'" Says Dr. Schofield on this point (pp. 216, 217)—

"The New Revelation"

"Modern Spiritism attractively describes itself as a new revelation: just as the Christian revelation succeeded the Mosaic, so does the Spiritist succeed the Christian. We are not told, however, the important point, who in this last 'revelation' represents either Moses or the Lord Christ.

"I am very sorry that Sir A. Conan Doyle, . . . should have permitted himself to speak of the Divine Son as 'a broad-minded model, always progressive, and open to new ideas! Full of robust common sense, but (forgive the blasphemy) occasionally losing his temper.' One can hardly tell whether the praise or the blasphemy is the more offensive; both are utterly unworthy of Sir Conan Doyle. It is a most significant fact that any connection with Spiritism always lowers, in some way or other, and never raises the reputation of a man, however eminent otherwise.

"Allan Cardoc pointed out, fifty years before, that while the Old Testament was the first law of God, the New Testament was the second in Christ, and Spiritism is now the third revealed law of God. Is this the source of Sir A. Conan Doyle's remarks? To talk of Spiritism as 'a law' seems almost more confusing and ridiculous than to think of it as 'a revelation.'
"Sir A. Conan Doyle says that Christianity must 'either change or perish.' There can be no doubt, however, that it is just in proportion as it has changed that it has perished. 'He sees 'no justice in a vicarious sacrifice, none!' Nor in 'redemption from sin,' nor in 'cleansing by the blood of the Lamb,' when it has become certain that man has not fallen. 'There never was any evidence of the fall of man.' [To which the doctor interjects—"Many, however, since the horrible revelations of the late war, have come to believe in it again.] 'But if no fall, what becomes of atonement, redemption, and original sin?' (What, indeed, but the 'if' is a big one.)

"He further says, 'Spiritism is only fatal to one religion.' (I wish he would say which he means; it cannot be Christianity, for it is still alive!)

"He points out that, in his opinion, 'Christ has done no more for man than thousands in the war.'"

No Case

In the "Sunday Express" article before referred to, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle states that his "propaganda mission" to America sought to accomplish the following objects:—(1) To bring comfort and support to spiritist believers; (2) To give mental food to earnest inquirers; (3) To convince the general public that spiritists have "a strong case."

We say, without fear of successful contradiction, that spiritists have not even started to make out a case, neither will they be able to begin until they can truthfully substitute the word "identity." for "individuality" in some such statement as that quoted from Sir A. Conan Doyle on pages 19 and 20. Please read again the section under the subtitle—"Admissions by Spiritists Themselves." This is the crux of the whole position; for if the identity claimed by the spirits, who, communicating in seances, or privately by table turning or automatic writing, allege themselves to be disembodied spirits of deceased human beings be not established—as spiritists admit it never has been—then spiritists HAVE NO CASE.
Applying "the Touchstone"—the Ransom—to the teachings of Spiritualism, we find them false. Spiritualism, in common with many other religions, teaches that man does not die; that at death he merely "passes over" from one sphere of life to another sphere of life. The doctrine of the Ransom teaches, to the contrary, that man at death is really dead. The Apostle Paul expresses this very clearly in 2 Cor. 5: 14—

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

Here is the logical position. The fact that Christ Jesus died for all is proof that death was the sentence under which "all" (that is, all the race of mankind) rested. At the time that Christ died, thousands of millions were already in the grave, and that generation was rapidly hastening to the same end. The following generations also died, and the generation in which we are living is going the same way.

Now, the Apostle argues, Christ did not die for the living, such as the angels who had never been put under a sentence of death, but for the dead. The human race "were dead" in a double sense. Even while enjoying a modicum of physical life on the earth, they were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1), and at the close of their allotted span they "were dead" absolutely. The very fact that Christ had to die in order to redeem the race is proof that the whole race was dead. Or, put another way, If the race had not been dead, Christ need not have died to redeem them.

The Revised Version and some other modern versions render this passage, "because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died," but this
does not alter the sense; the meaning is that each one at the close of his career had died; to die was the lot of all without exception, as other Scriptures declare—“and so death passed upon all men,” “in Adam all die,” “these all died,” etc. (Rom. 5: 12, 15, 17; 1 Cor. 15: 22; Heb. 11: 13.) Tischendorf gives the reading of the Sinaitic and the Vatican MSS. as—“that one died for all, consequently all were dead.” The Syriac renders it—“For the love of the Messiah constraineth us to reason thus: One died for all; therefore are all dead.”

The State of the Dead

The information concerning the state of the dead, sought in vain through spiritualism, can be had for the asking through the study of the Scriptures. They declare that death to man means returning to the dust out of which he was taken; that in the very day of his death his thoughts perish; that when dead he knows not whether his sons come to honour or are brought low; that there is neither work, knowledge, nor wisdom, nor any device in the grave.—Gen. 3: 19; Psa. 146: 4; Job 14: 21; Ecl. 9: 4-6.

To understand what death means involves some knowledge of what the soul is. According to Gen. 2: 7 Adam became a “living soul” when the breath of lives (Hebrew, plural) was breathed into the already formed body. When man began to breathe he was alive, a living soul or being; able to think, feel, and act. When Adam died he ceased to live; he returned to the dust. And, according to 2 Cor. 5: 14, at the time our Lord died Adam was still dead.

Again “the Touchstone” of the Ransom makes clear what the soul is. Isaiah 53: 8 states of our Lord Jesus that He was “cut off out of the land of the living,” and verses 10 and 12 say that He made His soul an offering for sin and that He poured out His
soul unto death. Thus His soul was His life or being taken from Him when crucified for us.

Acts 2: 27—quoting the Psalmist’s prediction—declares that our Lord’s soul was not left in hades—the grave, corresponding with the Hebrew sheol, the state or condition of death. Our Lord did not go to Heaven at death, nor was His death in any sense a make-believe. He actually died, and remained dead until His resurrection on the third day. Even then He did not go to Heaven. His ascension took place forty days later.

The Resurrection

As the resurrection was Christ’s hope, so is the resurrection the hope of those for whom He died. The commonly accepted teaching of the immortal soul (a term nowhere found in the Bible) has no place, no use, for the resurrection; it is unnecessary if the dead are more alive than ever, and progressing in another life to greater heights than they knew in this. But the resurrection is essential to the completion of God’s dealings with mankind. He has arranged that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; that all in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth. Of what use to give the risen Lord Jesus the keys of hades and of death if there is no one there? (Acts 24: 15; John 5: 28, 29; Rev. 1: 18.) Why talk about the destruction of death and the grave as a great victory if death is a fine portal to a better and higher life?—Hosea 13: 14; 1 Cor. 15: 54, 55.

Writing to the same Corinthian Church, to whom he said, “then were all dead,” the Apostle Paul explains the necessity of the death and resurrection of Christ—first his death “for our sins” (1 Cor. 15: 3), then His resurrection—that the dead human race may be raised. (1 Cor. 15: 4-17.) So strongly
does he put it, that he says even the saints, Christ's disciples, who had believed on Him and been faithful till death, were *perished* if Christ had not risen. (1 Cor. 15: 18.) Moreover, we are told that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. (1 Cor. 15: 20; Acts 26: 23; Col. 1: 18.) All who died before Him are thus clearly shown to be sleeping, even as the Old Testament declares when recording their death—not "passed on to a higher life," but "slept with his fathers." (1 Kings 2: 10; 11: 43; and many others.) When Peter spoke at Pentecost David was still thus asleep; and if David, then myriads of others also.—Acts 2: 29; 13: 36.

"But now," says Paul, "is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." He had slept, the others were still asleep. But He, as the First Fruits, has been made Lord of all, with authority to call forth the dead. This He will do at the proper time. (2 Tim. 4: 1, 8; Rev. 11: 18; 20: 12.) In the meantime, knowing that the dead are quietly asleep awaiting the resurrection, we are certain that they are not communicating with men through spirit mediums or in any other way. We are equally certain that those who claim to be the dead and to convey messages to friends are impostors; they are the fallen angels, wicked spirits, who, knowing that the dead are asleep, and that God has forbidden men to consort with evil spirits, still take pleasure in leading men astray, destroying them bodily and mentally, while at the same time throwing discredit on the Word of God, which is given for the guidance of those who desire to walk in the right way and learn the true knowledge of God. No wonder that association with these evil spirits has a disastrous effect upon those who indulge in it! How could it be otherwise when these spirits are wilful rebels against God? Even though for a time they profess to be good and to seek the welfare of
their dupes, they sooner or later betray themselves for what they are. All who are wise will give them a wide berth.

Let us rather draw nigh to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the pure and holy One, and seek to be led by His Spirit of love and obedience.

II.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."
—1 Peter 3: 18-20.

CONSIDERED one of the difficult passages of Scripture, the words of this text have been subjected to a variety of interpretations, colored more or less by one or both of the two great doctrinal beliefs that have been generally received in Christendom since the Apostles fell asleep.

Those who consider a presumed immortal part persists in living on, after the death of the body, understand the Apostle to be referring to the disembodied spirits of deceased human beings as "the spirits in prison," to whom our Lord preached. Inasmuch as these "spirits" are "in prison," the persons mentioned consider that they are the spirits of such human beings as have died unsaved. Since the Lord "preached" to them, the question naturally arises, What was the object of the preaching? Some are bold enough to intimate, though they do it very cautiously, that the Lord preached a hopeful sermon to the unsaved "spirits."

But to say this (and few would wish to assert that our Saviour delivered a hopeless message;
if He had nothing better to say than the negation of hope, why “preach” at all?) brings up another “difficult” question; viz., Is there hope for those who have died unsaved? The generally accepted opinion among Protestants is that the eternal destiny of each human soul is fixed at death. But the opinion of many of them, that our Lord’s preaching to the spirits in prison was addressed to the spirits of deceased, unsaved, human beings would lead to the opposite conclusion; namely, that destiny is not decided at the death of the individual.

To admit that the soul’s destiny is not fixed at the death of the body would, in the opinion of most Protestants, be absolutely ruinous. In this opinion they are very firmly fixed. It is therefore not surprising that 1 Peter 3: 18-20 is considered by them to be a most difficult passage to understand.

The Roman Catholic view being that there is a favorable prospect before those who have died unsaved, not having been wilful sinners against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, they are prepared to take what must seem to most Protestants a very liberal view of this text.

Then there are other Protestants, who claim that the soul sleeps while the body is dead, so that there is, in their opinion, no possibility of deceased persons being preached to between death and the resurrection. Some of these are also fully persuaded in their own minds that the eternal destiny of each individual is absolutely fixed at the moment of his death. These friends cannot admit that deceased persons can be preached to while dead, nor can they tolerate the idea of a post-resurrection hope of salvation for such as have died unsaved, even if they died in ignorance of the way of salvation. Therefore they also consider this text a “difficult” one.
Some of them try to satisfy themselves with the thought that somehow or other the text must mean that our Lord preached before the flood to the human sinners at that time, Noah being the Lord’s agent to do the preaching. But to us this “explanation” omits to explain some of the things one most wishes to know, such as the force of the very important phrase, “by which,” at the beginning of verse 19. Any proposed explanation which omits to take this phrase fully into consideration will be as full of “difficulties” as the text itself, and must be set aside as unsatisfactory, while search is continued for something that will explain all the passage, agreeably with its own requirements and harmoniously with the remainder of Scripture. We are persuaded that a satisfactory explanation of 1 Pet. 3: 18-20 is quite possible, and we trust that what is now to be offered will be found so by all.

Careful Reading Necessary

At the outset it is all-important to read the passage rightly. It is necessary to be quite certain that we read and consider all that is in the passage. It is equally necessary to be quite certain that we do not read something which is not in the passage. Failure to observe these principles has been a most fruitful cause of difficulty and perplexity in Bible study.

Beyond all doubt, something has been read into this passage by all the various interpreters before mentioned. They have one and all taken for granted that “the spirits in prison” are the spirits of deceased human beings. They differ as to the time when the preaching to these was done, some saying between the death and resurrection of our Lord, others saying before the flood through Noah; but, after all, they agree as to what “the spirits in prison” are.

Now, all should read the passage—several times if
necessary—slowly and carefully, until they see that the passage itself says nothing about human "spirits," neither in the flesh nor disembodied. This point being perceived, it will soon be seen that the idea that deceased human beings are here referred to is read into the text. Perhaps it has been assumed because the commentators could think of no others than human beings needing to be preached to. Whatever the reason for it, the fact remains that the Apostle is understood (we should say misunderstood) on nearly all hands to be referring here to human beings, by the term "spirits in prison." As the Apostle’s language does not in itself require this interpretation, and is capable of another, inasmuch as God is a Spirit, and angels are spirits, it must be recognized that the words "spirits in prison" do not require us to think of men. Had the Apostle Peter said "spirits of men," as another Apostle did in Heb. 12: 23, we should know that he meant something in connection with human beings. Since he left the word "spirits" unqualified, except to say they were "in prison," and that they sinned in the days of Noah, it is only a foundationless assumption to claim that human beings are meant. This much appears at once from a careful reading of the passage.

What Other Scriptures Show

Elsewhere in the Word we are informed that a deceased human being has no ability to receive knowledge, because he can neither see, nor hear, nor feel, nor perceive, nor think.

"His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them."—Job 14: 21.

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; In that very day his thoughts perish."—Psa. 146: 4.

"The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor know-
From these and many more passages in both Old and New Testaments,* we are bound to conclude that deceased human beings are asleep until the Lord’s voice shall call them forth at the resurrection. It therefore follows that the spirits of deceased human beings cannot be preached to while dead. It further follows that the commentators who think that the inspired Apostle wrote of human spirits in 1 Peter 3: 19 are offering an interpretation which is not only not required by the passage itself, but is also directly contrary to other parts of Scripture. Their interpretation must therefore be definitely rejected; it is not a faithful saying, because it is proven by searching of the Scriptures to be untrue.

The idea that our Lord did the preaching through Noah to wicked men before the flood must also be rejected, because it appears that the preaching was done by means of our Lord’s death and resurrection, thousands of years after the flood. This is shown in the words, “by which,” already referred to.

Therefore, as human beings are evidently not meant by Peter, we have to look for others, who were disobedient in Noah’s days, who did not die, but were “in prison,” restrained in some manner, who were alive and capable of being preached to many centuries later by our Lord at the time of His first advent.

Who are the Spirits in Prison?

The wickedness that was in the earth in the days of Noah was very great, one of the outstanding features of the iniquity being the union of the “sons of God” with the “daughters of men,” the resulting progeny

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*For further references, please see “Bible Talks for Heart and Mind,” chapter “Death and Resurrection,” and small book, “The Dead, Where are They?”
becoming "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (Gen. 6: 2, 4.) To identify the parties to this unauthorized union is the next point in our inquiry. The "daughters of men" were, of course, female members of the human race. Some think that the race in those days consisted of (1) those who paid no attention to the will of God (alleged descendants of Cain), their females being called "daughters of men," and (2) those who called on the name of the Lord (alleged descendants of Seth), their males being called "sons of God." They proceed to identify the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" in a manner agreeable to this opinion.

In addition to the entirely unsupported assumption that all the descendants of Cain were godless and all the descendants of Seth were godfearing persons, the flaw in this theory is that it takes no account of the fact that all flesh on the earth, male and female, except those few preserved in the ark, was destroyed by the flood, so that none of them could have been preached to by our Saviour at His first advent. Beyond question, the "daughters of men" were human beings, and are therefore not to be counted among the "spirits" that were disobedient in the days of Noah. The "sons of God," being evidently referred to as the "spirits," must therefore be identified as beings apart from the human race.

This identification is greatly assisted by the fact that, besides the occurrence in Gen. 6: 2, 4, the phrase, "the sons of God," is found only three other times in the Old Testament; viz., in Job 1: 6; 2: 1; 38: 7. In these passages it is clear that "sons of God" are the heavenly angels. That they are not men is notably apparent from Job 38: 7, where the Lord asks Job—a man—where he was when God laid the foundations of the earth, "and all the sons of God
shouted for joy." This was long before the creation of man, but evidently the angels were there to give a cheer as our planet swung into its place in the universe of God their Father.

There seems no doubt, in view of these things, that the "sons of God" mentioned in Gen. 6: 2, 4 were heavenly angels, spirit beings, who had to do with the affairs of earth before the flood. The administration of the spirits was evidently not a success from either the moral or material standpoint; for some of them became involved in sin, for which they have been put "in prison;" while the then existing social order had to be destroyed with all but eight of the human inhabitants of the earth.

The Sin of the Angels

The transgression of the angels was in that they left the condition and mode of life (called their "estate" and "habitation") for which God had created them, entering upon another for which they had not been created—

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."—Jude 6.

The proper "estate" and "habitation" of the angels is spiritual, not fleshly; heavenly, not earthly. It is contrasted with a man's present estate in our Lord's answer to the sceptical Sadducees' question about the woman who had seven husbands—"In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be?" (Mark 12: 18-25.) He answered—

"When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

The angelic estate being one in which marriage is not included, the action of the angels who took to themselves wives of the daughters of men before the flood (Gen. 6: 2) was a leaving of their estate, and a sin against their Creator.
In order to commit this sin, the transgressing angels abused a power and privilege with which God had endowed them; viz., the ability to appear in bodies of flesh. This power was frequently exercised by the holy angels when bringing messages from God to men, and with these bodies the angels were able to walk, talk, eat, etc., just as though they were really men.

Angels appeared in this manner to Abraham (Gen. 18: 1-33); to Lot (Gen. 19: 1-29); to Joshua (Josh. 5: 13-15); to Gideon (Judges 6: 11-24); to the parents of Samson (Judges 13: 1-23); to Zacharias (Luke 1: 11-22); to Mary (Luke 1: 26-38); and to others. These temporary appearances in bodies of flesh were only for the purpose of manifestation to the sight and hearing of the humans to whom the angels were carrying messages.

Such temporary assumption and proper use of fleshly bodies by the angels would not constitute a leaving of their own estate or habitation. An Australian might go to China for a short visit on business, but he would not thereby be leaving his Australian estate. If, however, the Australian elected to live among the Chinese according to their customs, he would thus renounce his Australian birthright and estate. Something similar to this was the sin of the angels. They abused their God-given power to create and temporarily use bodies of flesh in discharge of their duties as messengers. They misused this power for purposes of their own not authorized or designed in the divine economy, and manifested a disposition to occupy permanently the estate for which they were not created, thus acting against the good order of the Universe and offering serious affront to the dignity, the wisdom, and the benevolence of its Creator, their Father. This sin must be punished.
The Punishment of the Fallen Angels

Many hundreds of years before the sin of the angels, sin had entered the world through the transgression of our parents in Eden. Before this occurred, the Lord had said to them that death would be the penalty if they sinned. After their sin, the sentence was pronounced, and in due course was executed, the whole of our race being made heirs of the same.—Gen. 2:15-17; 3:17-19, 22-24; Rom. 5:12.

The penalty of death was neither threatened, pronounced, nor executed upon the sinful angels. In His perfect wisdom, the Almighty adopted another way with them, and so we are told that their punishment consists of restraint of their powers and deprivation of their liberties, they to be finally dealt with in the great judgment day. Thus the Scripture says—

"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness; to be reserved unto judgment."—2 Peter 2:4.

"The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."—Jude 6.

The angels that sinned have been cast down to tartaros (neither the word hades nor gehenna appears in 2 Peter 2:4); and as our Lord came in contact with them frequently during His earthly ministry, it may be understood that "the deep" which tartaros signifies is the atmosphere of earth. This would mean that the sinful angels are not allowed to enter heaven, nor to behold the face of God, as the holy angels always do.—Matt. 18:10.

Besides, the angels that sinned are so restrained that whereas they could, before the flood, create and assume human bodies, they are not now permitted to use this power, which they then misused. Nevertheless, as they still have a preference for the human estate, so they enter into possession of human beings whenever they can find any who, knowingly or igno-
norantly, will submit to their control. Before the flood the sinning angels could and did make fleshly bodies for themselves. Since the flood they cannot do this, but can only occupy the ready-made bodies of human beings who will submit to them. This explains why we read nothing of persons with "familiar spirits" before the flood, though we read much about them since. The Jews were not to associate with those who consulted "familiar spirits"; they were to put such persons to death. It was because of such abominations that the Lord drove out the inhabitants of Palestine from before the children of Israel.—Deut. 18: 9-14; Lev. 20: 27.

Modern Spiritualists are consulters with "mediums," who have "familiar spirits," that falsely claim to be the disembodied spirits of deceased human beings, but are, in reality, none other than some of the angels who sinned before the flood, and who now use this means to gratify their desire still to associate with human flesh. These angels know much about the human beings who have died, and can impersonate them to perfection, imitating their little peculiarities of speech, etc., in a manner calculated to deceive those who are not guarded by the truth revealed in the Scriptures. Some of the great men of science of to-day have taken a lively interest in inquiring into these "communications," and some (not all) of them have fallen into the snare. They show a most unscientific credulity in being so ready to believe the unproved assertions of the spirits as to their own identity. But this credulity is perhaps not so surprising, because the wise men of this world are not more perfect than the rest of us, and they are not, as a rule, willing to be guided by heavenly wisdom.—1 Cor. 1: 19-21.

Some of those who are possessed with evil spirits are very grievously afflicted indeed. Our Saviour
met many such cases during His earthly ministry, and cast the demons out of the afflicted persons. In one such instance, the man possessed of evil spirits, who claimed to be "Legion," was a raving lunatic. Lunacy can be, and often is, produced by purely physical causes, but the case now under consideration was not such a one. The demons besought the Lord that He would not command them to go out into "the deep"; that is, the atmosphere, or tartarus. For them to be separated from the human body they were occupying would have been to them very undesirable, for they could not tell when they might find another tenement. But, seeing that the Lord was determined to cast them out of the man, and their desire to associate with the flesh was so strong that they would dwell in pigs if nothing better were available, they besought the Lord to permit them to enter into a herd of about 2,000 swine feeding in the mountain. This permission being granted, the result was that the swine ran down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned. The demons were not drowned; they lost their dwelling in the swine, and so, after all, they found themselves in the atmospheric "deep."—Luke 8: 26-39.

Thus it is seen that the punishment visited upon the angels that sinned in Noah's day was not death, but restraint or imprisonment in the "deep" of the world's atmosphere, and under "chains of darkness," which we take to mean mental darkness and ignorance rather than physical darkness; though it is a fact that darkness is more favorable than light for many of their present-day operations through spiritualistic mediums.

Preaching to the Spirits

Though our Lord often met the fallen angels during His earthly ministry, He never preached to them as He constantly did to throngs of Jews, and privately
to His disciples, and still more privately to those who came to inquire of Him, such as Nicodemus and the woman at the well. Neither does the text say that He preached a set discourse to the disobedient angels, or spirits. What it says, literally, is that He was "put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit [that is, put to death as a man, but raised from death a spirit being]; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

The word "which" refers to our Lord's death and resurrection. The Apostle is therefore informing us that by His death and resurrection our Lord preached to the disobedient spirits—not a vocal, but an action sermon, which doubtless "spoke louder than words."

To the fallen angels our Lord's death and resurrection constituted an object lesson on the virtue of obedience to God and the certainty of its reward, as contrasted with their own experience of the folly of disobedience and the sure visitation of its heavy penalties.

That the fallen angels knew our Lord is shown by the remark made by one of them—"I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." (Mark 1: 24, 34.) That they knew Him even better after His resurrection is shown by their remarks as they followed the apostles—"These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us ["you" according to the most ancient MSS.] the way of salvation." (Acts 16: 16-18.) And—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (Acts 19: 14-17.) Here was testimony available, but neither Jesus nor Paul would have it, because its source was evil, so that the testimony could not be beneficial.

"Went and Preached"

The use of the words "went and" in 1 Peter 3: 19 is the reason why some think that our Lord took a journey in order to preach to the disobedient spirits.
But it should be observed that these two words are here used in a manner that has been common in all languages from the most ancient times to the present. This manner or form of speech is known as "pleonasm." It consists of the superfluous use of a word, often the verb "to go" in almost any of its forms or tenses, combined with the conjunction "and." Thus used, the verb "went" in our text does not imply that action was taken to traverse space; "went and" is entirely superfluous, and is understood so to be; it is in the sentence only because its use complies with a well-known and very usual idiom. In English it is quite customary to say, "Go and do this," or "He went and did it," without meaning that the person goes anywhere. The Bible does not use arbitrary forms of speech peculiar to itself; it employs the forms in constant use among the people living at the times when its various books were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Other Scriptural uses of pleonasm are found in Deut. 29: 18; 1 Kings 9: 6; Isa. 2: 3; Jer. 29: 12; Matt. 9: 13; 19: 21; John 15: 16; Matt. 13: 46; 18: 30; 22: 15; 25: 16, 18, 25; Mark 2: 18; Eph. 2: 17.

The words "went and" being used in this superfluous manner, the sense of the text is in no way altered if read without "went and"; thus—"Being put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit; by which also he ... preached unto the spirits in prison."

We understand, therefore, that our Lord did not preach to the spirits in the days while He was dead. Nor did He at any time deliver to them a set discourse. His preaching was done by the facts of His death and resurrection of which the disobedient spirits were witnesses. The apostles were permitted to preach to angels by their faithful lives; and it is just possible that the lives of others who faithfully follow in Christ's footsteps are sermons too.—1 Cor. 4: 9; Heb. 10: 33.
"The Judgment of the Great Day"

Our risen Saviour is at the right hand of God, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3: 22); when, therefore, we read that the disobedient spirits, or angels, are reserved unto "the judgment of the great day," we know that they are to be judged by Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed by the Father. We remember, too, that our Lord is a judge such as the ancient judges of Israel were; in the first place a deliverer of the people from bondage, and subsequently a ruler of the people to guide them in the ways of the Lord. These characteristics of Israel's judges, divinely raised up in olden times, are revealed in the book of Judges; and the same characteristics are perfectly illustrated in Him who was divinely raised up as Judge of all—angels and men.—John 5: 22; Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

The Saints shall Judge Angels

Associated with Him as assistants in the great work of the thousand-year reign and judgment day will be the Church, His joint heirs. (Rev. 20: 4.) And so the Apostle writes—"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor, 6: 3.) Not the holy angels, who never have been disobedient, though doubtless they were tested before the flood as well as those who sinned, but those who are "reserved" thereto shall be judged by the saints as assistants to the glorious Lord.

Behold what a glory is in store for those who make their calling and election sure! They shall be joint heirs with Christ in His throne; they shall be judges of the world; they shall be judges of angels! The scriptures concerning this great glory are more particularly referred to in "Bible Talks for Heart and Mind," chapter "Some Better Thing for Us."
Object of the Judgment

The object of the judgment of the angels cannot be to judge and pass sentence on account of their sins committed in Noah's day. Of these they were found guilty, and for these they have been punished for some thousands of years. The object of the judgment of the angels during the thousand-year Judgment Day is to enlighten and discipline them, to see whether they will repent and be obedient under the instruction of the great Judge and His assistants. As the Lord hears He will judge, and His judgment will be perfectly just. (John 5:30.) If, under the instruction and ruling of the great Judge, the hitherto disobedient spirits reform, we see nothing in Scripture to hinder them living on in the enjoyment of the liberty granted to obedient "sons of God," it being remembered that their sin before the flood brought them not death, but bondage. If they will not repent, there is "fire prepared for the devil and his angels," which shall utterly destroy them in the second death. This is the punishment of all who will not obey the divinely appointed King, our Lord Jesus Christ; they shall be cut off, destroyed, punished with everlasting destruction.—Matt. 25:41, 46; Acts 3:23; 2 Thess. 1:9.

Is there Hope?

Thank God, Yes! There is hope on behalf of the spirits that were disobedient in the days of Noah.

If not, why should they be dealt with in the great Judgment Day, when Christ and His saints will be

*Concerning the nature of this "fire," and of the "everlasting punishment," with an examination of every text in which the words sheol, hades, and gehenna occur, together with an explanation of "the lake of fire," please see "Everlasting Punishment," mentioned in Book List. For full explanation of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, see "The Parables of our Lord."
ruling for the blessing and enlightenment of all? If their cases were hopeless, the Lord would know it, and would deal with them from that standpoint.

If there be no hope on behalf of the fallen angels, why was our Lord's death and resurrection carried out in full view of them, so that the Apostle could say that in this way our Lord "preached" to them? Why should they have any preaching if there were no possibility of their benefiting by it?

If the case of the disobedient spirits be hopeless, why were the apostles made "a spectacle to angels"? Undoubtedly there was in their lives a lesson for the angels as well as for men.

Having regard to all the Scriptures have shown us, we feel bound to affirm, and with a heart full of thanksgiving to God we do give it as our conviction, that there is hope in the future for the fallen angels, even for the "spirits in prison" who saw the sermon of our Lord's perfect obedience unto death and His resurrection to glory.

Of those angels who during the present age have come to regret their sin in the days of Noah, or who during the thousand-year Judgment Day will be convinced and repentant, we may therefore say, on the authority of Scripture, that they will be forgiven, and reinstated in their original position in Heaven as "sons of God," with all the privileges of enjoyment in His presence possessed before they sinned.
III.

GOD'S INTEREST IN OUR BELOVED DEAD

There are three ways of obtaining knowledge—by information received from reliable teachers; by personal observation; and by experience. Persons having knowledge of the subject tell a child that fire burns; he observes that articles cast into the fire are burned up; by inadvertence, or in a moment of skepticism to test the matter for himself, he experiences the truth of what he had been taught and had observed.

In the preceding pages we have given the testimony of reliable authorities—the writers of Holy Writ, and our Lord Himself—that the fallen angels, being deprived of their once-enjoyed privilege of appearing in bodies of flesh as God's messengers, and now bound under chains of darkness, still like to associate with human beings. Instances were given of spirit possession in our Lord's day. On this evidence, without either personal observation or personal experience, we believe that "the angels that kept not their first estate" did manifest themselves from the time of the Flood onward, wherever they found persons susceptible to their control. And on account of the resemblance between modern spiritualism and the ancient demon possession, we believe that certain phenomena produced in our own day are due to spirit-possession. The medium comes under the control of one or more spirits, and the medium speaks of things entirely beyond his or her ability to know without the prompting of a superior intelligence.

Having had respect to the warnings of Scripture and of Christian instructors, we have never dabbled
in Spiritualism for the sake of obtaining knowledge of it by observation or by experience. (For this preservation from the toils of the Evil One we thank God.) But we do not feel ourselves any the less qualified to speak against it. It is not necessary to commit a murder, or to see one committed, to justify oneself in condemning it as a crime, nor to steal before being entitled to warn others not to misappropriate the property of their neighbours. No more necessary is it to be a spiritualist, or even to attend a seance, before condemning Spiritualism. The Apostle Paul was never a spiritualist, and yet he could speak with authority of the Evil One, saying, "We are not ignorant of his devices." Even though he transform himself into an angel of light, and appear as a harbinger of light, underneath he is the same prince of darkness. Paul spoke with authority when he called upon the demons to leave those whom they had possessed. (2 Cor. 2:11; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:11-13; Acts 26:18.) The knowledge gained from the Scripture, and from observation, of those so unfortunate as to have been mixed up in Spiritualism, is sufficient for God's children. Scripture directions to the Jews were to avoid those who "peep and mutter," and those who claim to have intercourse with the dead notwithstanding the Lord's assurance that the dead "know not anything" and cannot communicate with the living—

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"—Isa. 8:19.

The absurdity of the living seeking information from the dead would be apparent to every one by the non-receipt of answers from a corpse, were it not that both ancient and modern religious systems teach the immortality of a part of the human being, sometimes called the "soul," and sometimes the "spirit," of the dead person. These false teachings give out
that when a person dies he is more alive than ever he was. There is then but a short step to Spiritualism and its claim to transmit messages to and from the departed. Thus the whole of these ancient and modern systems are based upon Satan's lie in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die," in defiance of God's pronouncement that man returns at death to the elements from which he was originally made.—Gen. 3: 4; 2: 7, 17; 3: 19.

On no subject were the commands to the Israelites more emphatic than that they should have nothing to do with witches, wizards, or other "mediums," as they are called in our day; and to no command were severer penalties attached. (Exod. 22: 18; Lev. 19: 26, 31; 20: 27; Deut. 18: 9-12.) Mediums among the Jews represented the dead as coming up from the earth, or speaking from the earth; e.g., the witch of Endor when Saul wished a message from Samuel (1 Sam. 28: 3-19; Isa. 29: 4); in our day it is most usual for mediums to speak of the spirits of the dead (so called) as brought into the room from heaven.

But it would be wrong for anyone reading these prohibitions against consulting those who have "familiar spirits" to run away with the idea that the God of the Hebrews and His prophets were less sympathetic with the mourners who long for knowledge of their beloved dead than were the priestly cults of the nations who encouraged such intercourse. It must always be remembered that Moses and Isaiah were prophets of the true God, while the leaders and priests of the nations were under the influence of the Evil One. Nor were the prohibitions due to jealousy on God's part, or the part of His prophets. They were made solely in the interest of the Hebrews themselves, to preserve them from the evil consequences of association with evil spirits. As the prophet said,
If you desire knowledge concerning the dead, why seek it from such a source? How indeed could the living expect to learn anything from the dead? Should not people who know the true God seek from Him any desired information?

Spiritualists would have us believe that only through their ministrations can the bereaved find true comfort, because they claim to bridge the gap between the living and the dead, and so enable the mourners to have direct assurance that their loved ones are still alive and happy, thinking of and loving them as of old and ready “on the other side” to welcome them at their time of death, which they call “passing over.” To those who have feared their beloved dead were in a place of torment or unhappiness, such an assurance would no doubt give comfort. But there is this to consider. It is not necessary to go to the evil spirits to learn that our beloved dead are not writhing in eternal flames. The Scriptures provided by God give that information, and it is there for whoever will seek it. Moreover, do not forget that the evil spirits who give these assurances are the very same who in times past have described the departed as suffering eternal misery, and who falsely accused the compassionate Jesus of having a plan to torment them. (Matt. 8: 29.) Furthermore, these same spirits take fiendish delight, once they get possession, in tormenting now, rendering the lives of mediums and others unhappy and in some cases unbearable, as we have shown in the first chapter of this book.

As a giver of comfort we assert that Spiritualism is a counterfeit. God and Christ are more interested in our beloved dead than the evil spirits ever were. God so loved the whole world that He sent His beloved Son to die on behalf of all. Christ so loved the world of sinners that He gave Himself a perfect sacri-
fice for our sins. What have the evil spirits ever suffered on our behalf? Nothing! They seek only their own indulgence at the expense of mankind, and camouflage it with professions of interest in our loved ones gone before, whom they, as well as we, know are asleep awaiting the call of Jesus who bought them, and whose purpose is to enlighten and bless all for whom He died.

In asserting that our beloved dead are happy and progressing, learning lessons and developing character, the evil spirits borrow a page out of Scripture, and yet give no credit to either God or Christ, but rather abuse. True, the Scripture nowhere endorses the spiritist teaching that the dead are alive and communicating now, but God’s Word does say that at the resurrection, when Christ comes to reign a thousand years, the dead who have been quietly sleeping will come forth to learn the truth about God and Christ and life in general. Then loved ones will be re-united.

The evil spirits picture heaven as very much like the earth, with trees, animals, houses to live in, and food to be eaten. Many people find satisfaction in this prospect. But the fact is that in this they offer merely a counterfeit of what God has arranged for; namely, the Millennial kingdom, when the curse shall be removed from the earth, and men will come back to enjoy the wonders and beauties of nature, with every man happy and satisfied under his own vine and fig-tree.—Rev. 22: 1-3; Isa. 65: 17-25; Micah. 4: 1-4.

The reader of these pages who is interested to learn more of this Millennial Kingdom for re-uniting loved ones and giving opportunities for growth and development is invited to send his name and address for further publications, especially the books, “The Dead—Where are They?” and “The Divine Healer,” mentioned in Book List.
Safety in Christ

To any reader of these pages who has not personally visited a medium, or attended a spiritualist seance, we say, *Do not do it.* Have nothing to do with what the Lord in His Word calls abominable. Become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and go to no place where His teaching that the dead are in the graves awaiting the resurrection (John 5: 25-30) is contradicted, and where the fallen angels by personating the dead array themselves against Christ and His Truth. The path of faith and obedience is always the best. It saves one from many snares and disappointments.

But to those who have by inadvertence or curiosity, or while seeking the truth, become entangled with Spiritualism, we say, Make haste to be free. Ask the Lord's help to break the chains that bind you. Pray, and ask your Christian friends to pray with you. And meanwhile believe the assurance of the Saviour's own words—"'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."' (Matt. 11: 28-30; John 12: 46.) The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench. He waits to bind up the broken and bruised hearts, and to encourage every sincere seeker after truth and holiness. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 36.) Come to the Saviour now!

—E. C. and R. B. Henninges
**Book List**

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