

## **SPIRITISM EXAMINED.**

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits ...to be defiled by them." Lev. 19:31.

"There shall not be found among you...a consulter of familiar spirits, or a wizard or a necromancer...because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive out (the nations) from before thee." Deu. 18:10-12.

The belief that the dead are alive in another sphere or condition of being is not new. It was part of the religion of the ancients, and was the very root of all mythology. This naturally made it appear then as it now does, at least reasonable that these dead persons under such circumstances should be capable of, and did hold intercourse with the living.

This very plausible reasoning, based on a misunderstanding (the facts being made known in the Scriptures only) has given cover and force to the deceptions practised by "demons" under the guise of disembodied spirits of men. They have eagerly availed themselves of this mode of concealing their identity, and have thus perpetuated their sway over the minds and lives of many.

God regards this intimacy or familiarity with spirits as a vile abomination, and threatened those who would engage in it (mediums) and those who would inquire of them with death.

This consulting of spirits was evidently extensively practised by the heathen nations that had inhabited the land of Canaan. Against spiritism, "orthodoxy," so called, makes a feeble show of opposition, but it is really powerless to cope with it, because the orthodox theories give it encouragement and strength. This is shown by a sermon

preached by Rev. W. J. Robinson, of Allegheny, which we quote below from the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, of November 3d, 1884:

### **MODERN SPIRITUALISM**

"An unusually large audience assembled last evening in the First United Presbyterian Church, of Allegheny, to hear an interesting and instructive sermon on "Modern Spiritualism," as delivered by the pastor of that congregation, Rev. W. J. Robinson, D.D. He had chosen for his text the words: "They have Moses and the Prophets. If they hear not them neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead." In his introductory remarks he said he did not see the necessity of any soul returning from the spirit land, as they could tell no more about it than had already been revealed by the word of God as set forth in the Scriptures. He cited the declaration of King David in regard to Absalom's spirit returning. David said, "I will go to my son; he shall not return," and again, Job had emphatically declared, "the dead shall not come until the heavens are no more." There are but three instances of the return of souls from spirit-land in all the records contained in the Bible. When Jesus took three of his disciples into the mount, they fell asleep, and, upon awakening, saw Moses and Elijah was one of these; Samuel's apparition to King Saul forewarning him of his death on the morrow, and the coming reign of David was another, and the returning of Dives, the rich man who persecuted Lazarus and turned a deaf ear to his requests for the necessities of life, was the remaining one.

As to Samuel's coming, there was no need of it, as Saul knew what was inevitably to happen to him for his wilfulness and disobedience of the commands of God; but it is evident that Samuel came to convince men of the uselessness of such visitations, as he could tell only what was already known. Moses had been dead several hundred years. Elijah had departed for the other world 150 years previous. Dives's message was concerning that hell of torment of which all had heard. He told them that repentance on earth alone would save

a soul, and that such a thing was impossible in hell. And that was also familiar to every one who had heard the Scriptures read or explained. All these came with messages and only reported facts which God is constantly keeping before the eyes and in the minds of men. But how different were these Bible revelations to those spoken of to-day. Only one in all the ages appeared in response to a call. And then the manner of their coming. Those of the olden times were voices which spoke messages of truth, while those of to-day, so called, are rappings, which would indicate anything else as well as a return from Spirit Land. The Bible-told messages were the truth, while those of modern times speak a mummery that whatever else the spirits had learned they had lost their former senses. They speak drivelling nonsense. The difference lies between truth and falsehood and light and darkness. The Bible contains all men need to know; there is found the testimony of the dead. "And now, while the dead did not come back to us, we are rapidly going to them. Study this world and your Bibles, and prepare for the world to come," were the concluding words of his sermon.

This may be regarded as the expression of "Orthodoxy" as to the condition and abode of the dead.

"Only one (says Dr. Robinson) in all the ages responded to a call," but if one why not more? And this one was God's faithful servant Samuel. If this were true, then God's righteous servant was under the dominion of a wicked medium, and all God's servants would undoubtedly be subject to the same kind of power, and if the great God was powerless to protect Samuel from this abomination which was so abhorrent to his will, how could any of his children expect protection from the powers of darkness? We cannot find words to express our indignation and abhorrence of such blind and misguided views of God and his word. Is it any wonder that Spiritism is spreading, when teachers in high places misquote and flatly contradict the word of God? God's word declares, "The dead know not anything;...there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5,10). "In death there is no remembrance of thee;

in the grave who shall give thee thanks" (Psa. 6:5). Either so-called Orthodoxy and Romanism and Spiritualism are right, and that the characteristics and sensibilities of life are possessed by the dead, and God's word is a lie, or else God's word is true, "the dead know not anything," and these man-made systems teach falsely. There can be no middle course. We must reject one or the other.

If Dr. Robinson had quoted Job correctly he would have demolished his own argument. Job says (Chap. 14:10-12), "Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost ("gasps out – expires" – Young), and where is he?... as the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and RISETH NOT: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Could anything be stated more plainly than this? It shows the absence of everything that characterizes life – wisdom, knowledge, work, device, remembrance, or thanksgiving. And none are exempt from its penalty. "In Adam all die." No man can deliver his soul (being) from its power. He is cut off from the "land of the living" – all life, for the time being, shown by the words "man dieth...and where is he?" implying that he no longer exists – except as he has a place in God's purpose to be realized through a *resurrection*.

The penalty or wages of sin is death – extinction of life. There is no escaping it, nor is there any possibility of rising out of it: this is proven beyond peradventure by these Scriptures, and is made very emphatic by the words – "riseth not," and "shall not awake," but that there will be an awakening or resurrection of the dead at an *appointed time* is apparent from the completion of the sentence – till the heavens be no more; i.e., till the new dispensation is introduced; the present referred to by Jesus (Matt. 24:29), and by Paul, (Heb. 12:26,27), being shaken and removed. As no exception to these statements of God's word is possible, it should be evident that the possibility of communication with dead men is a delusion. The deception practiced

in Spiritism is the more gross, because, not men but demons are communicated with. There is abundant proof of this furnished by God's word. Nevertheless "orthodoxy" is powerless to cope with this abomination because of her adherence to false theories as to death and her wilful ignorance of the testimony of God's word to the contrary.

The mediums of modern spiritism are identified with those who anciently had "familiar spirits," who under the names of Witch and Wizard then claimed power to bring up and communicate with the dead as they now do. This is shown by the reply of the Witch of Endor to Saul's request: "Whom shall I bring up unto thee"? and Saul answered, "Bring up Samuel" (1 Samuel 28:11). That which she did bring up assumed to be Samuel as do the same spirits now assume to be dead friends of living men. If this spirit told the truth as claimed by Dr. Robinson, and the "orthodox" theory be right, wicked Saul would next day be with righteous Samuel.

If, however, this consulting of familiar spirits was contrary to God's express command – "Regard not them that have familiar (or intimacy with) spirits...to be defiled by them" (Lev. 19:31) how could God's prophet who had denounced this as wickedness, be a party to it now that he was dead? And whether called up willingly or unwillingly, he would in either case have become subject to the powers of darkness in this intimacy with one that was deemed guilty of death, because of this kindness.

If it was not Samuel, then who was it? We answer, It was an evil, lying spirit who personated Samuel.

These wicked spirits eagerly avail themselves of every opportunity to bring mankind under their foul sway, deceiving those who commune with them as to their identity, notwithstanding God's **[R755 : page 5]** command: "There shall not be found among you...a consulter of familiar spirits, or a wizard or necromancer, for all these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive out (the nations formerly

inhabiting Canaan – whose sin Israel's king imitated) from before thee" (Deut. 18:10). And "the soul that turneth after such as have familiar [R755 : page 6] spirits and after wizards...I will set my face against that soul and cut him off from among his people" (Lev. 20:6). Of these commands Saul was well aware: he knew that he was in the most deliberate and wilful manner acting contrary to these commands in consulting the Witch of Endor; and God visited upon him the threatened punishment for this transgression. "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the word of the Lord which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Chron. 10:13). This settles the point at issue. Saul sinned in asking counsel contrary to God's command of one that had intimacy with a spirit to inquire of it. Therefore it is plain, not only that it was not the Lord's prophet that was consulted, but that it was an evil spirit – the same in kind as those cast out by Jesus and his disciples. That they were of this same class of fallen spiritual beings, is conclusively proven by the similarity of description in the case of the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination... which brought her master great gain," by soothsaying, which so grieved Paul that he "turned and said to the *spirit*, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:16). This corresponds with the account in 1 Sam. 28, "Saul said to her, I pray thee divine (make known) unto me by the familiar spirit." The divination practiced by the Witch of Endor was of the same nature and through the same agency used by this damsel out of whom Paul cast the unclean spirit or demon.

Nor does the *appearance* of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration, quoted by Dr. Robinson, support the theory that dead men live, for Jesus expressly declared to these disciples that this was a "*vision*," and charges them to tell no man of this foreshadowing of the kingdom of Christ until after he was risen (Matt. 17:9).

All the parables recorded in the New Testament receive a non-literal interpretation by orthodoxy, except that of Dives and Lazarus,

which, contrary to this generally accepted principle, they literalize: this involves some absurdities, such as Lazarus carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; and the great gulf fixed so that they which would pass hence (from heaven) to you (in an orthodox hell) cannot, &c. They commonly add to this literalism that "they who enter hell return no more: they who sink there, sink forever." Dr. Robinson, however, adds a new phase to it which reaches the climax of absurdity and inconsistency in trying to make it appear that Dives returned from spiritland (an orthodox hell) with a message. For a consistent elucidation of this parable, see "Food for Thinking Christians," page 154. See also page 74.

S. O. BLUNDEN.

N.B. Those of our readers who have not yet had a copy of this little book ("Food") can procure a copy *free*, by applying to the Editor.

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