

SPIRITISM IS AGGRESSIVE.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago we pointed out the Scripture evidences that Spiritism would be one of the terrible deceptions of the end of this age. Evidences to this effect multiply daily. The outlook is so terrible that we must warn all within our reach to beware of everything connected with the occult – Hypnotism, Spiritism, etc. All they ask is INVESTIGATION – "they do the rest." The Bible is our only proper point of contact with the unknown spirit world, and it warns us to have nothing to do with the wicked spirits which deceptively personate the dead, who "know not anything." – Eccl. 9:5.

By reason of having followed heathen fallacies and neglected the Bible, Christendom is peculiarly in danger along this line. Believing that the dead are not dead, but more than ever alive, they naturally expect personal interest in their affairs, and in the advice which deceptive spirits most cunningly offer to mislead them. This is one of the "strong delusions" of our day, which only the consecrated ones, guided by the divine revelation, will be able to resist steadfastly: and even "the very elect" would be deceived were it possible; – but God's providence makes this impossible.

SAME METHOD AS IN EVOLUTION THEORY.

Notice the method by which the Evolution theory led on to Higher Criticism infidelity, which now rules in one-half the pulpits of Christendom and is rapidly grasping the remainder and the rank and file of all the cultured. Did not noted scientists carry the torch and guide the way? And is it not the same now with Spiritism?

While in Great Britain a prominent Episcopalian minister is relating to the public his experiences in spirit communication,

even to the extent of having [R3742 : page 86] parcels transported for miles and delivered in an instant, in our own land the Rev. R. Heber Newton, D.D., declares that he has had sufficient proof to convince him that spirit-communication with the dead is possible and probable, and that he favors scientific research on the subject. And the Rev. I. K. Funk, D.D., one of the most prominent Methodists, declares that he has been and still is investigating spirit phenomena.

Dr. Funk's latest pronouncement on the subject, published in the leading newspapers of January 22, is:

"Dr. Richard Hodgson has kept his promise to the Psychical Society. I have had a most remarkable interview with him, and talked with him in his spirit form last night for ten minutes, as agreed upon before his death. I stood face to face with his spirit, and he told me all was well with him. No one can any longer reasonably doubt that the spirits of the dead communicate with the living."

The account assures us that the interview took place very early Sunday morning between midnight and one o'clock. We wonder if Rev. Dr. Funk or others of the Psychic Society ever sought as persistently for the Truth in the Word of God! Yet it is still true, "He that seeketh findeth;" and the thing sought is generally the thing found. Let us not seek with those who have familiar spirits, but to the living God for our counsel. – Isa. 8:19.

We quote from the public prints as follows: –

"'It is true,' cried the Rev. Mrs. Pepper, exultingly, last night. 'The spirit relation with Dr. Hodgson has been established. From the dead he has come back, not in the material sense, of course, but he has actually communicated with us from the beyond as he promised. After weeks of trying we have succeeded. The world could ask for no greater proof.'

"The seance at which Dr. Hodgson's spirit is said to have come back to earth to make good the promise made by him, was held shortly after midnight yesterday morning at the home of Mrs. Pepper, at No. 258 Monroe street, Brooklyn.

"Only the head of the Spiritualistic Church and Dr. Funk were present. For weeks the two had striven to enter into conversation with the dead man, but some atmospheric disturbance always caused failure.

"Suddenly, Dr. Funk and Mrs. Pepper declare, the longed-for communication was established. It was while the minds of both were intensely concentrated on the subject. The room in which they were was absolutely quiet, and it seemed that the session must meet with failure, like the ones previous, when suddenly, they declare, Dr. Hodgson's spirit responded to the summons.

"My soul was filled with rapture,' Dr. Funk declared. 'I realized that I and I alone had been the fortunate one to receive Dr. Hodgson's long-promised message. It was unfortunate that Mrs. Pepper had to leave the room, else she, too, would have talked to him.'

PSYCHIC STUDENTS INTERESTED

"No more intensely absorbing problem has ever confronted the fraternity of the psychic societies at large and caused more curiosity on the part of the lay public who have been watching the case than Dr. Hodgson's promise to communicate with his fellows from the spirit world.

"Dr. Hodgson was president of the Society for Psychic Research, and his promise aroused world-wide interest. Dr. Hodgson fell dead while playing baseball in Boston, on December 20. Four weeks passed and nothing was heard from him. Branches of the Psychic Society in various cities of the country were making

constant effort to enter into spiritual communication with Dr. Hodgson.

"In life Dr. Hodgson made every possible effort to communicate with those who had gone before. He approached every new manifestation of the supernatural with the mind of a skeptic. He would not believe in anything unless it could be proved to his own analytical mind.

DEVOTED LIFE TO THIS PROBLEM

"He dealt Theosophy the hardest blow it ever received by denouncing Mme. Blavatsky as a fraud, and proving that the so-called supernatural things which she performed were the simplest kind of artifices. Yet he firmly believed that he had many times communicated with the dead, and he devoted his life to the proof of the theory that intercourse between the living and dead was possible. Many times prior to his death Dr. Hodgson openly declared that he would certainly put the question to the proof by personally communicating with some member of the Psychic Society from the world beyond.

"On Dec. 20, when Dr. Hodgson fell dead, he was at the Union Boat Club, apparently in the best of health. Heart disease took him off in the twinkling of an eye. When four weeks had passed and no word came from the mysterious bourne beyond the veil, some of the weaker members of the Psychic Societies began to doubt that the communication would ever be established. The stronger members of the cult declared that Dr. Hodgson had not yet got into complete accord with the spiritual world because he had not been dead long enough to have found the proper 'communicator.'

"Dr. Hodgson in life usually communicated with the dead through Mrs. Leonora Piper, the noted Boston medium, who

proved unsatisfactory to him occasionally, however, because but few of the spirits would send messages through her.

"It had been expected by those who were the most intimate with the Boston psychist in life that his first manifestation, if ever made, would come through James H. Hyslop, former professor of logic, ethics and psychology at Columbia University. Prof. Hyslop was one of Dr. Hodgson's friends and intimate co-workers in the field of psychic research. Both served on the committee appointed to determine whether Mrs. Piper, America's most famous medium, really communed with the dead or was just a clever fraud. Both arrived at the same conclusion, that Mrs. Piper was all that she claimed to be. Dr. Hodgson and Professor Hyslop attended seventeen sittings at which Mrs. Piper demonstrated her power, and the report made by them was as follows: –

"The theory of fraud is not tenable in the case."

THE CUNNING OF THE SCHEME

Note the cunning of the "lying spirits." (2 Thess. 2:9.) They not only get hold of the most prominent men possible, but they use them well for world-wide advertising. For instance, the seance with Dr. Hodgson could as well have taken place the day after he died (or the day before, for that matter) as a month after, so far as the deceiving spirits were concerned; but the delay was to arouse curiosity and deepen interest. The delay of a month, the correspondence between the prominent people of the Society for Psychical Research, the questions, hopes, fears, midnight vigils with mediums, now called "sensitives," all whetted expectancy [R3742 : page 87] and made the matter ten-fold more notable than it otherwise would have been. Even now the message is to be held back awhile until the public is anxious for it.

AUSTRALIA NOT OVERLOOKED

The demon-spirits seem specially to angle for the English-speaking peoples. Thus far-off Australia is having its full share of attention, and some of the most pronounced manifestations of power yet made anywhere. Well-attested accounts are published to the effect that a Mr. Stanford, brother to Hon. Leland Stanford (deceased), founder of Stanford University, has recently found a "sensitive" through whom he was able to secure remarkable manifestations of spirit powers. The published accounts show that at seances covering several nights, and at which various prominent persons were present, miracles were performed by the spirits for the asking. For illustration, a sea-fish, still alive and wet with salt water, was deposited in a closed room by unseen spirit hands. Rare ancient coins, etc., of Egypt were deposited within a few seconds after the expression of the request. A bird on the nest with its young, the latter still asleep, was similarly presented, claimed to be from India.

The curios from Egypt and India are claimed to have great value; and the newspapers have been kept busy telling that Mr. Stanford had offered the collection, free, to the College founded by his brother; that the President of the University had declined them because of the manner in which they were obtained (the conduct of the latter has been denominated bigotry); and finally the said Chancellor of Stanford University has publicly denied that the curios have yet been tendered. All this has stirred up talk respecting the occult as never before in modern times. Whoever is guiding these wicked spirits shows great sagacity and insight into human conditions.

THE LONDON DAILY MAIL'S SAY

The London "Daily Mail" of January 23 devotes nearly a page to this topic, "Are the Dead Really Communicating?" – heading it with the likenesses of "Three Famous Scientists Who

Encourage Psychical Research – Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. A. R. Wallace and Prof. Crookes." We give some extracts from the article as follows: –

MENTAL, MORAL AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF SPIRITISM. ALL BAD.

"It is daily becoming more and more evident that of all the problems that are at present agitating the public mind the one presented by spiritism and by modern psychical investigation is having the preeminence.

"The interest in the subject, although for obvious reasons not very apparent in the surface-movements of life, is nevertheless a keen and a widespread one and is growing in intensity day by day.

"In view of the unhesitating testimony recently given by savants of high standing and of European reputation, increasing numbers of skeptically inclined persons are reluctantly abandoning their attitude of reserve and are beginning to realize the seriousness of the subject and its far-reaching issues. **[R3743 : page 87]**

"The consequence is that the study of occult subjects and the search and craving for phenomena is daily growing apace, and that a voracious appetite for literature in any way bearing upon these subjects is being created. In thousands of families the 'spirit circle' is an honored institution, and the reception of messages from 'departed friends and relatives' is becoming an everyday occurrence.

"How very deeply these practices and the results flowing from them are affecting the mental and moral life of the community is only known to those who are intimately connected with the movement and who have opportunities of looking behind the scenes. And it must be admitted that, strange as such a

phenomenon may appear at first sight, it is one at which we cannot be very much surprised.

"When one bears in mind the natural tendencies and cravings of the human heart, the innate desire of most men to have some definite answer to the whence and whither of human life, the doubts on the other hand which recent research has aroused, and the general tendency of modern rationalistic thought to destroy belief in the supernatural, one can scarcely wonder at a universal and growing interest in phenomena increasingly believed to be a means by which the age-long question of man will be answered, and by which the fact of a future life will be established on a sound, scientific foundation.

"Now what, briefly, are the facts of the case at this present time?

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

"English science, it is well known, has, broadly speaking, given its verdict. We have it on the authority of men whose veracity cannot be doubted, and whose scientific authority no one can reasonably call in question – who, moreover, have risked their reputation in giving their testimony –

"1. That the much-disputed phenomena occur, and that many of them are of an objective and tangible character.

"2. That they are often governed by intelligence – that intelligence in many instances extraneous in its nature and operations.

"This testimony is being added to day by day by the published writings of eminent foreign scientists, and it is being confirmed by thousands of intelligent spiritists and of private investigators all the world over. 'The alleged facts,' writes

Professor A. R. Wallace, 'which the scientific world scouted and scoffed at as absurd and impossible now, one after another, prove to be real facts, and, strange to say, with little or no exaggeration, since almost every one of them, though implying abnormal power in human beings, or the agency of a spirit-world around us, has been strictly paralleled in the present day and has been subjected to the close scrutiny of the scientific and skeptical with little or no modification of their essential nature.'

"It was, of course, to be expected that testimony of such a character, and coming from such unlikely quarters, would powerfully affect the public mind, and that it would, in the course of time, give rise to questions of the gravest possible import.

ARE THE DEAD COMMUNICATING?

"The greatest of these questions – and, indeed, the one which may be termed the burning question of the hour – is the one which has reference to the nature and aim of the intelligence which is displaying itself. Is it human in character – in other words, are the dead communicating, and are we by these means receiving demonstrative evidence that there is life and a world beyond the grave?

"It is impossible for those who are familiar with the subject and with the results of the most recent investigations to doubt that science itself is tending in the direction of an affirmative answer to this question. **[R3743 : page 88]** If a certain learned reserve still characterizes official statements, it is difficult not to read between the lines and to see what the ultimate verdict is likely to be.

"The pronouncements of individual scientists, speaking in their private and personal capacity, can leave no room for doubt in the matter. And the cry which they have sent forth has found an echo in thousands of human minds, and has given an impulse to the spiritistic movement, the effects of which are but too plainly

and painfully visible in every sphere of our social life. Indeed, so strong are the impressions created that the utmost impatience is being exhibited toward those who would raise a note of warning and who cannot join in the exultant cry of the multitude.

"Ignorance, prejudice, religious bigotry, and narrow mindedness are the epithets applied to persons who, while admitting the actuality and intelligence of the phenomena, nevertheless deny that it has been shown to be that of the dead.

A DISSENTIENT VOICE

"And yet it is manifest from the evidence at our disposal that there are incontrovertible facts pointing in this direction, and that this is an aspect of the subject which should awaken in thoughtful minds the most serious considerations. I can but briefly indicate what an experience of nearly twenty years has taught me, and why I cannot share the popular view as to the nature of the mysterious phenomena under consideration.

"1. It is certain that the identity of the communicating intelligences has not been established. Although it is admitted that in practically every instance the entities claim to be the spirits of departed men and women it is certain that that claim has invariably broken down in the presence of real test conditions. The most recent psychical research in this direction has yielded wholly negative results. Those whose names were best known in spiritistic and psychical research circles and who have practically spent their lives in the search for such evidence, have, after death, been unable to furnish it themselves. They have not found it possible to supply what may be termed the missing link of the spiritistic hypothesis.

"2. It is a known and admitted characteristic of the intelligences that they attempt to personate deceased individuals. Indeed, so constantly does this characteristic display itself that it

constitutes the chief difficulty in the way of satisfactory investigations. We meet with fraud and trickery on every side and with the most heartless deception that the imagination can conceive. The most trusted "spirit friends or relations," sometimes after years of intercourse, and often on their own admission, turn out to be masquerading entities who have culled the information needed for the impersonation from the passive minds and memories of the experimenters, and who by some slip or some unusually bold manoeuvre in the end turn the tables against themselves.

THE SPIRIT INTELLIGENCE

"3. The moral character of the manifesting intelligence is invariably of a low order. This fact is and must be admitted by all unprejudiced inquirers who have an accurate knowledge of the subject and who have themselves observed and experimented for a sufficient length of time. In numerous instances, of course, this moral depravity is not immediately apparent – indeed it often remains hidden for years under a mass of platitudes and of high-sounding phrases, but it almost always discloses itself in the end. I know of instances which are appalling in character, and a recent publication of mine has placed material in my possession strongly confirming and illustrating the truth of this statement. A great ecclesiastic sent for me not long ago and told me instances which had been privately communicated to him and which had caused him such alarm that he was anxious to enter upon an active crusade against spiritistic practices and teachings....

SPIRITISM AND LUNACY

"4. As to the moral effects of these practices a big volume might be written, and even then the half would not have been told. I have in my possession communications from former spiritists which throw a lurid light upon the subject, and which suggest the gravest possible considerations. As far back as 1877 Dr. L. S.

Forbes Winslow wrote on 'spiritualistic madness.' 'Ten thousand unfortunate people are at the present time confined in lunatic asylums on account of having tampered with the supernatural...I could quote many instances where men of the highest ability have, so to speak, neglected all and followed the doctrines of spiritualism only to end their days in a lunatic asylum.' And grave and weighty are the warnings more recently given by Professor Barrett, a former president of the Society for Psychical Research, and by Dr. Van Eeden, a Dutch physician, who has devoted much time and labor to the study of psychical phenomena. The latter tells us that in this unexplored region lie risks of error more serious than in any other department of science, and not merely of error, scientific and intellectual, but also of moral error. And it is this which seems to him 'to justify the orthodox religions in condemning the evocation of spirits as immoral, as infringing upon secrets hidden from man by the Eternal.'...

"5. The teaching imparted by the intelligences is wholly contradictory in character....There is unanimity on one point only and that is as regards the fundamental [R3744 : page 88] doctrines of Christian faith. It is as a medium, or seer, or human being of exceptional power and degree of development, that they seek to present Christ, and it is the subversion of faith in him as a divine person that the spirit messages ultimately aim at. The truth of this statement is fully established by the writings of the best of our modern spiritists. From personal letters which have reached me it is evident that the writer had in each single instance lost his faith in Christianity, and was suffering the keenest grief and disappointment in consequence.

AN ENEMY IN THE HOME

"It is for the reasons thus briefly stated that I cannot share the popular view respecting the interpretation of the phenomena of spiritism. On the contrary, I am thoroughly convinced that a

terrible deception lurks behind these phenomena and that a grave and daily growing peril is menacing society. A dangerous and subtle enemy is silently creeping into our homes and families, and the astonishing thing is that our pastors and teachers are so strangely silent on the subject and are doing little or nothing to warn the people. I am personally strongly convinced that the policy of silence on the subject, so frequently adopted with a view to the avoidance of greater peril, is no longer a safe and a wise one.

"In my opinion our safeguard lies in taking every opportunity of conveying accurate information, and above all things stating all the facts of the case. It is the one-sided presentation of the subject and the scientific support which is being given to it that are doing all the mischief and that are hourly increasing the spread of evil.

"Let it once be clearly and fully known that these 'dear friends' on the other side of life ruin and desolate [R3744 : page 89] homes, that they drive men and women to destruction and to the madhouse, that they undermine religious faith and confidence, and that in a thousand instances they bring about an utter weariness and a detestation of the duties of the present life, and thinking men will abandon their intercourse with such beings and will seek for the interpretation of the problems elsewhere than in scientific records."
