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# SPIRITUALISM CONSIDERED,

IN ACCORDANCE WITH

THE DIVINE TEACHINGS,

AND

THE WRITINGS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

BY

GEORGE HALES.

*Hales*

“Probe all things.”

“Hold fast that which is good.”

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## SPIRITUALISM CONSIDERED.

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**S**PIRITUALISM undoubtedly takes its origin from Spirit and Life, as in JOHN—"The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit, and they are Life." (vi. 63.) And hence Spiritualism teaches that the good disposed, at the Lord's good pleasure, may be sensibly privileged with Spiritual or Angelic Communications. Now, although there are, no doubt, many sincere Christians who do not in name profess to be Spiritualists, but these, in my opinion, are mistaken upon the ground of not thoroughly considering the subject. Hence, when we take into consideration or view the subject of Spiritualism upon broad and undeniable grounds, we shall, I have no doubt, come to the truth of the subject. In the first place then, Do they not believe the Lord's words? as in JOHN—"It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (vi. 63.) In the second place, Do they not believe in the existence of angels and spirits? thus, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (PSALM xxxiv. 7.) And again—"There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (PSALM

xc. 10-12.) Again—"Are they not *all ministering spirits*, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (HEBREWS i. 14.) In the third place, of course they do believe in such truths, because they are undeniable. Consequently, all good impressions, as a matter of course, are from the Lord, and hence they are communicated or revealed in the divine word through the medium of ministering angels or spirits, as the word teaches; and therefore, undoubtedly, all good people who are receptive of the spirit of heaven, are, of course, Spiritualists, by reason that they have intercourse with heaven, which is in itself spiritual and divine, because it is from the Lord.

Moreover, there is a peculiar kind of Spiritualism which professes to teach that special mediums can hear Spirits or Angels speaking to them, as distinctly as one man with another; and which it is the principal purport of this little pamphlet to *demonstrate*.

Spiritualism, doubtless, involves a variety of sentiments and conjectures. Some, for instance, are supporters of it; and others are, more or less, in favour with it; whereas others, again, are entirely opposed to it, because they maintain that Spiritualism is wholly contrary to the divine teachings, and that, consequently, it is both mentally and physically injurious to mankind.

Notwithstanding, every one who regards the Lord as a Being of infinite wisdom and infinite love, in whom dwelleth the whole fulness of the Godhead bodily, whatever may be his peculiar religious denomination, undoubtedly believes that mankind are receptive of two distinct influences—the one from heaven, or of a heavenly nature, which regards uprightness in all our various engagements in life; or, one by which we are influenced upon all occasions to regulate all our thoughts and actions in accordance with the Lord's commandments, which are so many *bright luminaries* directing us through the world, and hence, to eternal

happiness; and consequently, that such a course of life is the fruit of heaven, which is the heart's desire of being pleasantly and cheerfully useful to all mankind. Hence the Lord says—“If ye love me, keep my commandments: he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” (JOHN xiv. 15–24.) But, reversely, the other influence, which is of a *satanic or evil nature*, and consequently from evil spirits, disregards everything that is truly noble and lovely in itself, and hence it is the offspring of everything that is painful, gloomy, and wretched in itself. Consequently, those who are the dupes and slaves of such a direful influence, are satans or devils in spirit (how differently soever they may appear in society), and hence they are linked with them comparatively as the body is linked with the soul, agreeably to the Lord's own words—“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (JOHN viii. 43, 44.)

Now, we will hence further proceed with the investigation of our subject—namely, Spiritualism—by the following arrangement, thus:—

FIRST—That there is a *species* of Spiritualism which is in strict accordance with the divine teachings, and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

SECONDLY—That the Lord, who is infinite love and infinite wisdom, and who is omnipresent, instructs, regenerates, and protects mankind in various ways, in accordance with His own

divine word, through the medium of ministering angels or spirits, as His word teaches, and also, of course, by the various good societies in the world.

THIRDLY—That it is contrary to the divine order for any one to be led or influenced by spirits, or by mankind, without regard to one's own judgment, because it is destructive to man's freedom, and therefore renders him a machine, or an automaton.

FOURTHLY—A few prominent and conclusive inquiries and replies.

I. Our first position or point is, then—that there is a species of Spiritualism which is in strict accordance with the divine teachings, and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

This, of course, can only be applicable and predicated of those who from their hearts worship the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who is in a divine human form. To worship the Lord from the heart, undoubtedly implies to regard his commandments in all our various transactions in life, from a religious or heavenly principle. Hence we will endeavour to demonstrate that there is a possibility of the *good disposed* being so sensibly privileged by the Lord, as to be able to *hold converse*, or receive *oral communications* from angelic beings or spirits, as distinctly and intelligibly as words can possibly be expressed by one man with another. In proof of which, we read of Cornelius, thus:—"I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God." (ACTS x. 30, 31.) Again, of Peter, in the same chapter (v. 19)—"The spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee." And again, we read of Peter being visited by an angel of the Lord when he was in prison, and how the angel addressed Peter, and the wonderful manifestation of the power of the Lord through the medium, this angel, in rescuing Peter in so remarkable a

manner; that "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him; and when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the door kept the prison; and behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison, and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly; and his chains fell from off his hands: and the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord, and they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying; and as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda, and when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate; and they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished." (Acts xii. 5-16.)

Notwithstanding, it may possibly be replied by the Non-Spiritualists, that these angelic communications, or manifestations, were of a special kind, and therefore they are not, in reality,

evidences in support of modern Spiritualism. Now I most cordially concur with them in this respect, that these angelic communications were undoubtedly of a special kind; but nevertheless, they cannot, of course, be regarded as being evidences of the impossibility of any one being sensibly privileged (at the Lord's good pleasure) with any spiritual or angelic intercourse at the present day, and consequently, that there is *no* species of modern Spiritualism that can be regarded as being in harmony with the divine teachings. But, on the contrary, for instance, when we comprehensively and calmly reflect what were the Scriptures given to us for, but as ever bright and unchangeable luminaries for our instruction in all that is good and true; and hence, the Lord, from whom all that is good and true proceeds, in a comparative point of view, deals as lovingly and wisely with mankind even at the present day, as in former times; because He is ever the same Divine Being, possessed only of unvarying infinite love, and of unvarying infinite wisdom.

And moreover, Paul says, speaking of the various spiritual gifts—"To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another, discerning of spirits." (1 Cor. xii. 8-10.) And again, JOHN says—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits," (1, iv. 1) not to mention other *divinely authenticated evidences* in support of our first position or point. We will, however, briefly conclude with it by making a few quotations from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Thus—"I am well aware that many persons will insist that it is impossible for any one to converse with spirits and angels during his life in the body; many, that such intercourse must be mere fancy and illusion; others, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit; whilst others will indulge doubts and scruples of different sorts. All these objections, however,

are of no weight with me, for I have seen, heard, and had sensible experience, of what I am about to declare.

“Man was so created by the Lord, that during his life in the body he is capable of conversing with spirits and angels—as was indeed common in the most ancient times—for being a spirit, although clothed with a body, he is one in nature with them. However, in process of time mankind so immersed themselves in corporeal and worldly things, almost caring for nothing else, that the way became closed; nevertheless, it is again opened as soon as bodily things are removed, and then man is introduced amongst spirits, and dwells with them.” (ARCANA CELESTIA, Nos. 68, 69.)

“The speech of an angel or spirit with man, is heard as sonorously as the speech of one man with another; nevertheless, it is not heard by other men who are present, but only by the man who is addressed; because the speech of an angel or spirit flows, first, into man’s thought, and by an internal way into his organ of hearing, and thus acts upon it from within; whereas, the speech of man with man flows first into the air, and by an external way into his organ of hearing, which it acts upon from without. Hence, it is evident that the speech of an angel or spirit with man, is heard *in* man, and since it affects the organs of hearing as much as speech from without, that it is equally sonorous. That the speech of an angel or spirit flows down from within, even into the ear, was proved to me by its effect upon the tongue, which it also flows into, and excites to a slight titillation; but this vibration is not a local motion such as takes place when the sound of speech is articulated in words by the man himself.” (HEAVEN AND HELL, No. 248.) Consequently, and conclusively—How could Cornelius, Peter, Paul, and also John, and Swedenborg, have expressed themselves so harmoniously upon the subject of Spiritual intercourse, or

Spiritualism, *unless* it is a *tenet* of the divine teachings? and hence, it is a *tenet of the New Church*. Whence it is obviously possible that the well disposed, at the Lord's good pleasure, may be sensibly privileged with angelic or spiritual intercourse, even at the present day.

II. That the Lord, who is infinite wisdom and infinite love, and who is omnipresent, instructs, regenerates, and protects mankind in various ways, in accordance with his own divine word, through the medium of ministering angels or spirits, and also, of course, by the various good societies in the world. That the word of God is reverently regarded by every true Christian to be the source of all love and wisdom, because it is the divine manifestation of the Lord himself, in accommodation to man's lowest capacity. Hence it is "the word made flesh," (JOHN i. 14) "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (JOHN xiv. 26.) And hence, the Lord evidently instructs mankind into the divine truths of his word, through the medium of ministering angels or spirits, in accordance with Paul, thus— "Are they not *all ministering spirits*, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (HEBREWS i. 14.) And therefore, when any one truly and sincerely reads the divine word with a view to apply the divine truths therein to the *various uses* of life, by shunning all kinds of evils, because they are sins against God, and consequently destructive to his own eternal happiness; then such a person is peculiarly privileged with the divine influence of the Lord, which is the Holy Ghost (or the Lord's omnipresence), instructing and protecting him in all that which *is good and true*, so that he may become thoroughly regenerated, and thus prepared to enjoy the inexpressible harmonies of heaven. And again: as soon as any one commences to refrain

from evil, from a religious principle, he is immediately protected by the Lord, through the medium of angels; thus—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (PSALM xxxiv. 7; xci. 10-12.)

Moreover, what are angels, or those heavenly mediums, but good men in a spiritual state of existence, comparatively as good men are angels in a natural state of existence, by virtue that they love the Lord above all things, and their neighbour as themselves; and hence with whom every well disposed person, in a mental or spiritual point of view, is unquestionably in consociation? And therefore, angels or spirits are man's spiritual companions or guardians. That angels are really men, as Cornelius says, thus—"I prayed in my house, and behold *a man stood before me in bright clothing*, and said; Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God." (ACTS x. 30, 31.) And of John, the angel replied to him, saying, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, worship God." (REVELATIONS xxii. 8, 9.) And also Paul says, "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (HEBREWS xiii. 2.) Hence, how beautifully the poet expresses himself, when he says, thus—"Angels are men in lighter habits clad, and men are angels loaded for an hour." In conclusion with our second point, namely, that the Lord instructs, regenerates, and protects mankind, in accordance with His own divine word, through the medium of ministering angels or spirits, and, of course, by means of good societies in the world.

And hence Swedenborg says—"That the Holy Spirit is identical with the Lord, and that it is the essential truth which enlightens man, is evident from the following passages of the word:—"Jesus said, When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.' (JOHN xvi. 13, 14, 15.) 'That he shall be with the disciples, and in them.' (JOHN xvii. 26.) 'Jesus said, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' (JOHN vi. 63.) From these passages it is evident that the truth which proceeds from the Lord is called the Holy Spirit, which enlightens, because it is in the light. The enlightenment which is attributed to the Holy Spirit, is indeed from the Lord in man, but still it is *effected through the medium of spirits and angels*. The nature of this mediation cannot yet be described; only that angels and spirits are by no means able to enlighten man from themselves, because they, like man, are enlightened by the Lord; and as this is the case, hence all enlightenment comes from the Lord alone. It is *communicated through the medium of angels or spirits*, because a man who is in enlightenment, is then placed in the midst of such angels and spirits as receive more enlightenment than others from the Lord alone." (THE DIVINE LOVE AND THE DIVINE WISDOM, Nos. 149, 150.)

"Man is altogether ignorant that he is governed of the Lord by angels and spirits, and that with every individual there are at least two spirits and two angels. By spirits, man has communication with the world of spirits, and by angels, with heaven. Without communication by spirits with the world of spirits, and by angels with heaven, and thus, through heaven with the Lord, it would be utterly impossible for man to live, for his life depends entirely on such conjunction, so that, supposing spirits

and angels to depart from him, he would instantly perish. Whilst man remains unregenerate, he is governed in a manner altogether different from what takes place after his regeneration. Whilst he remains unregenerate, evil spirits are with him, ruling over him in such a manner that the angels, notwithstanding they are present, can scarcely do more than prevent his plunging himself into the lowest depths of mischief, and incline him to some sort of goodness; which they contrive by making his natural inclinations in some degree subservient to good, and the fallacies of his senses to truth. In this state he has communication with the world of spirits, by means of the spirits that are attendant on him; but he has not the like communication with heaven, inasmuch as the evil spirits have dominion over him, and the angels only endeavour to avert their influences. When, however, he becomes regenerate, then the angels have the dominion, and inspire him with whatever is good and true, infusing at the same time a dread and fear of what is evil and false. The angels, indeed, guide man, but herein they only minister to the Lord, who alone governs him by angels and spirits. As this government is, however, effected by the ministry of angels, therefore it is here first said in the plural, *let us make man in our own image*; but as the Lord alone governs and disposes, in the following verse it is added in the singular, *God created man in his own image*. This, the Lord also plainly declares in ISAIAH—'Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb; I am the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.' (xliv. 24.) The angels themselves likewise confess, that they have no power of their own, but that they act from the Lord alone." (ARCANA CELESTIA, No. 50.)

III. That it is contrary to the divine order for any one to be led or influenced by spirits or by mankind, without regard to

one's own judgment; because it is destructive to man's freedom, and consequently renders him a *machine* or an *automaton*. And therefore, in the same proportion as any one submits himself to become the dupo and slave of the subtleties and allurements of evil spirits or man, he acts in opposition to the divine order, and consequently he abuses his freedom, which is given to him by the Lord for the purpose that he should rationally and intellectually conduct himself with propriety, which is in accordance with the divine order. Hence, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (1 THESS. v. 21.)

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (JOHN vii. 24.) And again, for any one to *converse with spirits, unless he is led by the truth*, which is the Holy Spirit, and he is constantly being led by the *truth* when he performs it *for its own sake*. But, otherwise, it is comparatively like putting a razor into a child's or infant's hand, for evil spirits will act upon one in such a manner that it is *utterly impossible* to outwit their persuasive and destructive communications or influences. Hence, it follows as a consequence, that no man can possibly be protected from *evil spirits* or *evil ends*, UNLESS he look to the Lord, because "no man can serve two masters."

Swedenborg says—"To converse with the angels of heaven, is granted only to those who are in truths derived from good, and especially to those who are in the acknowledgment of the Lord, and of the Divine in his Human, because the heavens are in this truth." (HEAVEN AND HELL, No. 250.)

And moreover, in his ARCANAE CELESTIA, he says—"In some earths, angels and spirits appear in human form, and speak with the inhabitants (Nos. 10751-2); but in this earth it is dangerous to discourse with spirits now, *unless man is principled in a true faith, and led by the Lord*." (Nos. 784, 9438, 10751.)

## IV. A few prominent and conclusive inquiries and replies.

*First*—What is the use of holding converse with Spirits? In reply, I know of no other use except it is to realise the truth, and consequently, to render a mutual assistance, because *union is strength*; and comparatively, I know of no other use of conversing with mankind, except it is for the same purpose.

*Secondly*—When a medium is addressed by Spirits, how is he to regard or to deal with them? In the same respectful manner as he would the conversation or the truth spoken by any person, for this reason, that Spirits are men in a spiritual state of existence, as we have previously shewn.

*Thirdly*—Is the conversation of Spirits superior to that of man's? Certainly it is, if they are good Spirits, because they are, of course, in a higher state of intelligence and wisdom than man.

*Fourthly*—Are not persons scripturally forbidden to hold converse with "familiar Spirits"? Yes. For this reason, that "familiar Spirits" are predicated of the false and evil, and therefore it is contrary to the divine order for any person to be led or influenced by them. Hence witchcraft is forbidden (EXODUS xxii. 18; and 1 SAMUEL xxviii.) But it is not, of course, contrary to the divine order for any good disposed person to discourse with an evil spirit or the devil, or an evil disposed person if necessary, who in Spirit is a devil, "Ye are of your Father the devil," (JOHN viii. 44) provided that he is not led or in any measure influenced to do that which is *wrong*, because our Lord "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (HEBREWS iv. 15.) And who therefore, upon all occasions resisted the devil by his saying unto him, thus—"Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him." (MATT. iv. 10, 11.)

*Finally*—In order for any one to become a *Spiritual Medium*, what means should he adopt? He should, of course, submit everything to the will of the Lord, because he is divine love itself, and divine wisdom itself; and who therefore provides, irrespectively of persons, for every one's eternal good; for says Peter—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (ACTS x. 34, 35.)

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