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“SPIRITUALISM.”

A S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

WORCESTER STREET BAPTIST CHAPEL,
BROMSGROVE,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8th, 1872,

BY THE

REV. E. P. BARRETT,

(WITH SOME SLIGHT ADDITIONS.)

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S E R M O N .

“Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel.”—I SAM. xxviii. 20.

It would not be considered orthodox, I suppose, if I were not to preface my sermon this evening with a text; and, therefore, lest a charge of unorthodoxy should be brought against me, I have chosen this passage in the first book of Samuel. But, I do not engage to confine my attention entirely to this passage, although, as a rule, no man is fonder of “sticking to his text” than myself. Our subject this evening is really “Spiritualism,”—this must be the text to a great extent—and I shall endeavour to discuss the subject in such a manner, and offer such remarks thereupon, as may appear most desirable for the proper ventilation and illustration of the theme.

Those who are accustomed to attend the services at Worcester-street Chapel, will credit me when I say, It is not by any means my habitual practice to select what may be designated sensational subjects for discourse—to notice every fire that burns down a house, or every sudden death which may occur in the neighbourhood. Some ministers like to be continually “improving” such dispensations (and I will not blame them for so doing); but, I must confess, I cannot bring my mind—and I do not wish to—to this mode of preaching. It appears to me, the great truths of the Gospel have no need of such extraneous supports as these. As a rule, rather than make every out-of-the-way little event the

subject of discourse, I should prefer to press home such words as those our Lord represents Abraham as uttering in answer to the request of the rich man in his agony for some one to be sent to his five brethren—"They have *Moses and the Prophets*, let them hear *them*." "Nay, father Abraham," pleaded the rich man, "but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent." And Abraham said unto him, "If they hear not *Moses and the Prophets*, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Or, as a rule, when any great calamity took place, I should content myself by drawing such a general lesson as that enunciated by Christ when those present with him at a certain season told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Christ merely gave them this general warning—"Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This was the simple but the forcible lesson taught by the Lord. Death shall come in one form or another to you all one day, and if it find you without repentance you shall perish even as they.

But, it is not only within the province of a christian minister, I think, to discuss such a subject as "Spiritualism," (which is now agitating so many homes in this town,) but his bounden duty to do so—to bring out fully and faithfully, if it be possible, the true features of this practice, which so many have resorted to. Let no persons imagine, as they listen to my remarks upon this subject, that I am looking at it from what might be called a "professional point of view," for I can honestly aver I desire to treat the subject on the broadest basis possible, and to speak as a man to men, as a brother to his brethren; as one liable to err, to others liable to err also. I am not quite a novice in regard to this subject, having read rather extensively upon it years ago; for (while I should demur, myself, to making every exciting event the text

for a sermon,) I hold it to be the unquestionable duty of one who has to preach to the hearts of men to know something of what is agitating them and the world around them. Rowland Hill, it is reported, was once observed attentively studying the play-bill of a theatre, and one who saw him thus occupied suggested *that* was hardly the duty of a minister of the gospel; whereupon Rowland delivered himself to this effect—"It's as much my business as anyone's to know what the devil is doing in the world."

Having enquired fairly and impartially into this subject, I cannot bring myself to say as some do—"There is nothing in it; it is all imposture." When I hear people speaking thus of "Spiritualism," I always take it for granted that they have hardly enquired into the matter—that they "understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." There is, in all probability, a great deal of imposture connected with Spiritualism, but when we take into consideration the fact that the adherents of this system in England and America are numbered by the million, it seems hard to believe that all the manifestations are simply feats of legerdemain—that all these people are imposing upon each another. This brings us to as great a difficulty as the supposition that dealings with invisible powers do really take place. Moreover, the Bible never dismisses the subject in the contemptuous way to which we have just referred; but invariably speaks of it, and, as we shall have occasion to show, condemns it in a very serious manner.

The *Literary World*, of October 27th and November 3rd, 1871, contains a very fair review of the "Report on Spiritualism of the London Dialectical Society, and to that I am indebted for the following information:—"On the 26th of January, 1869, a committee was appointed by the London Dialectical Society, for the purpose of instituting a thorough and searching enquiry into the so-called spiritual manifestations. This committee held fifteen meetings, at which they received evidence from thirty-three persons, as well as written statements from thirty-one other persons. The attendance, co-operation, and advice of scientific persons were also in-

vited by the committee. The committee divided into six sub-committees, that the matter might be the more thoroughly investigated. The six sub-committees, at the conclusion of their investigation, sent in their reports, all of which substantially corroborate each other, and are to this effect:-- 'That sounds of a very varied character occur which are not produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance; that the movement of heavy bodies takes place without any visible cause; that by means of a simple code of signals questions are answered and coherent communications spelt out; that such answers and communications are for the most part of a common-place character; but that facts are sometimes correctly stated which are only known to one of the persons present; that the presence of certain persons seems necessary to the occurrence of these phenomena, which nevertheless are not always insured by the presence of such persons.' A large majority of the members of the committee, it appears, became eye-witnesses to several phases of the phenomena, without the aid or presence of any *professional* medium, 'although the greater part of them,' we are told, 'commenced their investigations in an avowedly sceptical spirit.' *

* For the information of such persons as are disposed to ascribe *all* the phenomena witnessed at these *seances* to fraud and deceit, I may just refer to one special experiment; which is recorded in the minutes of sub-committee No. 1. There were eleven persons holding the *seance* upon this occasion, and after sitting round a dining table in the usual manner for forty minutes, by way of test, each one turned the back of his chair to the table at about nine inches from it; they then *knelt* upon the chairs, placing their arms upon the back of the chairs, and necessarily, in this position, their feet were turned away from the table, and could not by any possibility be placed under it, or even touch the floor, while the hands of each person were extended over the table, *at about four inches from the surface*. "In less than a minute," the report goes on to say, "the table, untouched, moved *four* times; at first about *five* inches to one side, then about *twelve* inches to the opposite side, and then in like manner four inches and six inches respectively. Not yet satisfied, the hands of all present were removed from their position over the

The conclusion at which sub-committee No. 1 arrive, is expressed in this cautious manner:—"That there is a force capable of moving heavy bodies without material contact, and which force is, in some unknown manner, dependent upon the presence of human beings." This sub-committee also observe that they have not obtained collectively any evidence as to the *nature* and *source* of this force; they simply note "*the fact of its existence.*" Nor, considering the sceptical spirit in which they entered upon the investigation, can they entertain the popular belief that the presence of sceptics interferes in any way with the manifestations of this unexplained force. Some of the committee incline to the belief that the "manifestations" may yet be traced to some hidden force in the human frame by which it can act upon material bodies at a distance without actual contact, while others are as strongly inclined to believe the phenomena must be ascribed to "the spirits." On the whole we may say, while there is *some* room for scepticism in regard to much that is ascribed to the agency of spirits, looking at some of the manifestations observed by the members of the London Dialectical Society, it becomes evident there is some power in exercise at many of these *seances* which we do not fully comprehend, and the nature and source of which must remain for the present an open question.

table, and placed upon the back of their chairs at about a foot from the table. The table still continued to move. Finally, each person *folded his hands behind his back*, his body being thus about eighteen inches from the table, and having the back of the chair between himself and the table. And once more the table moved four times in various directions. In less than half-an-hour," the report informs us, "the table thus moved, *without contact or possibility of contact* with any person present, thirteen times, the movements being in different directions, and some of them according to the request of various members of your sub-committee." Afterwards, that it might be evident there was no deception, the table was carefully examined, turned upside down, and taken to pieces. The committee declare this experiment to be "conclusive," and state that it was conducted throughout in the full light of the gas above the table."—E. P. B.,

And now, passing on from these necessary preliminary observations, I have to invite your attention to the first of four aspects under which I shall review Spiritualism this evening.

I.—Our first point is—*That this practice of dealing with spirits, or the attempt to deal with them, is a very old practice.*

I am very often inclined to laugh at the Spiritualists because they appear to think (many of them) that they have discovered something *new*; whereas the practice in one form or another can be traced back almost to the infancy of this world. The thing which they think so new is as old as the Pyramids of Egypt. To go no further back, the practice of dealing with spirits from another world can certainly be traced back to the time of the Canaanites—whom the Israelites under Joshua dispossessed—because we find the Israelites warned by God against associating with any persons who had such dealings. It will be quite sufficient to establish the age of this practice if I quote one passage from the Scriptures, which you will find in the book of Leviticus XIX. 31--“Regard not them that have familiar spirits; neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them, I am the Lord your God.” That Saul was well aware of such practices being carried on is very evident, because we find it related in the chapter from which our text is taken (verse 3) that “Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land.” And further on in the chapter (verse 7) we find him saying to his servants, “Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and enquire of her.”

It is interesting to observe how extraordinary old practices become revived under new forms. Here was this woman of Endor to whom Saul betook himself. I have no doubt she was what Spiritualists of the present day would call “a very good medium.” She had evidently attained a certain kind of notoriety as being able to carry on communications with the invisible world—to summon up the spirits of the dead. When Saul came to see her she did not for a moment attempt to deny that such practices had been resorted to by her, she

only spoke of her fear of Saul (not knowing at the moment in whose presence she stood), and referred to the manner in which he had cut off those that had familiar spirits. Upon Saul's swearing to her by the Lord that no harm should happen to her for this thing, the only question she put was, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" This woman appears to have had more power in dealing with spirits than any medium of the present day. What preliminary forms she went through to summon the spirits we are not informed—God's great book does not condescend to gratify idle curiosity upon that subject—but there stands the *fact* recorded that the practice of dealing with the spirits of the departed, or attempting to deal with them, is as old as the time of King Saul.

I am very well aware that Spiritualists of the present day attempt to show that their practices are altogether different from those spoken of in the Bible; but, for my own part, I can see very little difference. This woman of Endor attempted to summon Samuel to her presence, that Saul might address to him a question and receive a reply; and Spiritualists of the present day address various questions to the spirits and receive (or say they do) replies to them.

II.—Our second point is—*That this practice of dealing, or attempting to deal, with spirits of another world is a very unprofitable practice.*

It is difficult to see what is gained by it. "In all labour there is profit," says Solomon; but we can hardly think he intended to include the labour of Spiritualism. This must surely be an exception to the rule. Here are people meeting together time after time, spending hour after hour, evening after evening, in the company of the spirits, asking them questions and receiving their replies by means of raps on a table; or the characters traced by a peculiar pencil, susceptible to the slightest influence, which has been invented, I suppose, for the special behoof of spirits. Well, but what does all this amount to? Is there any great good gained by it? If a man labour hard either with the muscles of the body or the muscles of the brain, he will acquire, if his energies be well directed,

some degree of gain, by means of which he may surround himself with those things that minister to the necessities, or comforts, or luxuries of this life. An evening spent in the company of a good and entertaining book—whether the book unfold to us some page in history; take us in thought to distant parts of the earth; open up the problems which are comprised in the term “social science;” or transport us to the realms of healthful fancy and fiction—has some profit attending it, we may acquire much important or interesting information in this way; but so far as I can learn, the information to be acquired by talking with spirits is of a very meagre character indeed. Granted, that there are spirits present at these meetings; that answers to questions put are received from them; that these answers are perfectly correct; yet, we have still to say, the spirits scarcely tell us anything we did not know before.

When a spirit tells a medium of some event in his life which has already transpired, or of some event likely to happen in the future, of which the medium is already cognisant, I do not see there is much gained by it. When persons known to have led a life of open immorality, and to have died without any sign of true repentance, have the question addressed to them “are you happy or miserable,” and reply “very miserable,” I am ready to say to the Spiritualists, “You might have supposed that before, without asking these spirits to tell you so.” The most important item of information, apparently, alleged to have been communicated by the spirits is this—the spirits are reported as affirming that there are several spheres (seven is the number I believe) of different degrees of progression, to which the spirits of the dead are transported; the sphere assigned them being dependent upon their good or bad deeds in this life. The spirits also affirm that progression is permitted from one sphere to another after death, according to the “good behaviour” of the spirit in the spirit world, until the highest sphere of all, which is nearest heaven, is attained. But, from the lowest sphere of all, where murderers and suicides and such characters are confined (so the Spiritualists represent the spirits as affirming), there is no escaping. Well, this may or may not be true—it rests upon the bare, unsupported testimony of the spirits—but even if it be true, I do not see there

is much added to our stock of information.

In addition, it seems to me, when once the little charm of novelty has worn off, such an irksome mode of carrying on a conversation. You cannot see the creature with whom you are conversing—whereas he can see you; you cannot sit down and talk with him face to face, as when Stanley discovered the great traveller, Dr. Livingstone, in the heart of Africa; but you have to put your question, and then wait for the rockings or the knockings—the bumpings or the thumpings—of a table, or something quite as irksome. Suppose you had your fellow creatures in the flesh and blood before you, and asked them such questions as “What is your name?” “How old are you?” “How long have you been in the present state?” “Are you happy or miserable?” and suppose also that the answers to your questions had to be given in the kind of dumb show adopted by the spirits, you would in a very short time vote the whole thing a bore.* I do assert, without fear of contradiction, that if men are anxious to learn about the world to come as they ought to be, they may acquire more interesting and valuable information in a few hours careful study of the Word of God, than in many evenings spent in the company of the spirits.

III.—The third point to which I wish to direct your attention is—*That this practice of dealing with spirits from another world, or the attempt to deal with them, is a very wicked practice.*

1.—*Nature* herself revolts at this practice, and it must be wicked to do violence to one's nature. The attempt to communicate with the inhabitants of another world, to force ourselves into their company, or to compel them to reveal themselves to us, is a thing any man in a healthy state of mind and body would naturally shrink from. There is a kind of fear to which the strongest men are subject—whether it be a right fear or a wrong fear I know not, but certainly we find it implanted in our nature—the fear of being left alone with an inanimate corpse, and the fear of seeing spirits of the dead. Of course, we have all laughed at the ghost stories which have gone round the Christmas fire—have said they

* Having gone carefully through a specimen number of “The Medium and Daybreak,” one of the avowed organs of the Spiritualists, and noticed the poor *manifestations* recorded in it, I am more than ever convinced of the *unprofitable* nature of this practice.—E.P.B.

were "trash"—but still, without committing ourselves to an opinion whether there be any foundation for ghosts stories or not, we may venture to say it would require more than ordinary courage for one to betake himself, alone, at night to some ruinous old churchyard as the clock began to strike the hour of twelve; and there, seated upon some flat tombstone, wait and meditate alone till the hours of the morning. Certain it is that most people have a fear which would lead them to shrink from such a mode of passing the night—a fear, as the phrase goes, "*of seeing anything worse than themselves.*" We find the disciples of Christ were subject to this fear even as ourselves, for we are informed that when they saw their Lord walking on the sea, they supposed it was a spirit, "and cried out with fear." And we find Christ did not rebuke them for fearing to see such a thing as a spirit, but calmed the agitation of their minds at once by telling them in his well-known voice who He was, saying, "It is I, be not afraid." Thus, any man, unless he has accustomed his mind somewhat to the subject, naturally shrinks back in dread at the thought of having to do with the spirits of the dead—especially bad spirits. A friend of mine once became an occasional attendant at some spiritualistic meetings—he went for the most part out of curiosity, just to see whether there was anything in the subject or not—and so long as he could believe it was all imposture, he found no difficulty in being present; but when he saw signs that something more than flesh and blood was being brought into play, he drew back in horror at the thought that he might be dealing with powers which belonged to another world.

2.—But our main argument under this division is, that this practice is clearly and emphatically condemned by the *Scriptures*. In every instance where it is mentioned at all it is condemned. I quote Leviticus xix. 31, again in your hearing—"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them, I am the Lord your God." In Deut. xviii. 10-12, we read—"There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, 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." And how plain is that verse in regard to the death of Saul which we find in I Chron.

x. 13, "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord which he kept not, and *also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to enquire of it.*" Coming to the New Testament, in Galatians v. 19-21, we find witchcraft classed as a work of the flesh among the worst vices. I quote the passage entire—"Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, *witchcraft*, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

I take my stand, then, upon this fact to night, that wherever the practice of dealing with spirits, or the attempt to deal with them, is spoken of, or referred to, in the Book of God, it is clearly and emphatically condemned as a horribly wicked thing, and an abomination unto the Lord. It was God's command under the Jewish economy that all witches—all dealers with familiar spirits—should be *put to death*. In Exodus xxii, 18, we find the words "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Thus Saul was acting in accordance with the divine commandment, when he put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, "out of the land," (I Samuel xxviii. 3.) It was God's command that those who were so fond of peering in this unauthorised manner into the next world, should be put into it as soon as possible. It was His injunction that those who were so fond of dealing with spirits should be made into spirits at once by having their bodies taken from them. The practice in any shape or form, whether an imposture or a reality, was deemed by God such an atrocious, such an unnatural, such an unholy, horrible, devilish kind of thing that those who addicted themselves to it were not to be tolerated in the world for a single moment—and the world has always been bad enough too—but were to be hurled out of it at once into the abyss of Hades.

In all faithfulness and affection, then, I ask those members of our christian churches, who have taken up this practice—"By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?" I am quite disposed to meet you in fair argument. If you will bring me a single precept, a single verse from Scripture, a solitary Scriptural example of a good man who has attempted to pry into the secrets of another world in this way, I will say

no more. But you cannot bring such a verse, precept, or example. Search the Bible through and through, and you cannot do it. Whereas I can bring you passage after passage where the whole thing is clearly and emphatically condemned. The question is so plain and simple on Scriptural grounds that it needs no elaborate process of argument—only such an argument as a child might understand.

Our friends, the Spiritualists, may be thankful they do not live under the Jewish dispensation, for, if such were the case, they would all of them most surely be put to death. Even in this country, not so many centuries ago, witches, or persons who were supposed to have dealings with the devil or familiar spirits, were often put to death, sometimes by judicial hands, and at other times by the hands of an infuriated populace. Men, then, for the most part, could not bear the thought of such communications being carried on. But we live in the nineteenth century, in an age of toleration (I am glad for the sake of the Spiritualists that we do). But now, in a slightly different form, it may be but essentially the same in its nature, the practice is revived and carried on in many homes—even the homes of professing christians—and youths and even tender infants (shame on those parents who have so far forgotten their claims and responsibilities!) have been initiated into the mysteries of this diseased, dark, and damnable art.

I speak thus strongly of this practice because I feel strongly in regard to it. It appears to my mind an attempt to pass in a surreptitious manner the barriers which God has mercifully erected between this world and the next—an attempt to leap in a wild way the dark chasm which separates the things which are seen from the things which are not seen. It is dealing with the devil and his emissaries, rather than holding communion with God—knocking at the door of hell for information which ought to be obtained from heaven.

I cannot help thinking sometimes that the Spiritualists are beguiled to a great extent by that "father of lies, the devil," and that very often the great adversary or lying spirits may be personating their friends while they know it not. I do not say it is so on all occasions, but it may be so at times: and I cannot perceive that any adequate test can be applied to prove the identity of a spirit who may appear. Some commentators have supposed that

the apparition that appeared to this woman in response to Saul's enquiry was not Samuel at all, but the devil *personating* Samuel, assuming his form, imitating his voice and mode of dress. Bishop Patrick well observes on this—"We cannot suppose it is in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men and bring them back into the world when they please; nor can we suppose that the true Samuel would have acknowledged such a power in magic and dark arts." Another writer remarks "That it could not be the soul of Samuel himself, they might easily apprehend when it ascended out of the earth, for the spirit of a man, much more of a good man, 'goeth upwards,'" (Eccl. iii. 21.) But if people will be deceived, it is just with God to say, "Let them be deceived." We see, moreover, that this apparition had not a ray of light, or one gleam of hope to throw upon Saul's future, but what he said was manifestly intended to drive Saul to despair and self murder; and thus this apparition—whoever or whatever it was, successful in this terrible purpose—helped to dig Saul's grave beforehand for him. True, the name of the Lord is mentioned by this apparition again and again; but we know the devil can transform himself into an angel of light—can put on the *speech* and *garb* of religion as well as the most self-righteous Pharisee that ever walked God's earth; and that Satan can quote scripture when he thinks it may be distorted to serve his turn we have abundant evidence from the record of the Temptation of our Lord. Saul went seeking for information in forbidden quarters; and, therefore, it may be, God gave him over "to strong delusion to believe a lie."

In concluding this division, I may remark that without a doubt this attempt to deal with spirits from another world springs from the natural enmity of the human heart. Men do not like the "record which God hath given of his Son," and therefore they betake themselves to the revelations of the spirits; they will not read God's holy book, but they will indulge in this unholy practice. The meaning of this practice translated into plain language, is, Any revelation *but* the one which God has given! Any path *but* that which is lighted up by the rays of the divine gospel! "Fellowship with devils" rather than fellowship with God.

IV.—But we notice lastly, *That this practice of dealing, or attempting to deal, with spirits of another world, has been, and, may be, a ruinous practice.*

I do not think you can find a darker picture any where than that which we find in the text—"Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel." This was the one—"higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards;" anointed by the prophet Samuel in the name of the Lord, to be king over his people Israel; of lofty stature, of graceful form, so that Samuel looking upon him said—"See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people;" whom all the people hailed with acclaim as they shouted—"God save the King." How fair and promising was the opening of that young life! How dimly dark its close! How brightly shone the fine gold once! How is the fine gold become dimmed now! At one time, obedient to the word of the Lord, how did he lead the armies of Israel on to battle and to victory! Now, as he stood upon the heights of Gilboa and surveyed the hosts of the Philistines pitched in Shunem, his heart sank like lead with him—"he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled." At one period of his life he could take counsel of the Lord; now deserting the Lord, and being deserted by him, answered "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets;" behold him, disguising himself, and accompanied by two retainers only, betaking himself in the dead of night, a miserable, despairing, desperate, God-forsaken man to this accursed Witch of Endor, to take counsel of the bottomless pit. He listens to the terrible words of this terrible apparition in the guise of Samuel; and then with that lofty, kingly form, Saul falls "straightway all along on the earth." If there was any fire of seeming piety in that brave, warlike heart once, it has died out now, and the fires of hell have already begun to burn instead. Peace has gone, hope has fled far away, and only despair with huge black, baleful wings is there to brood over and settle upon that prostrate form. A despairing, forsaken man to-day; a suicide, falling upon his sword to-morrow, well might David give utterance to his sad lament, and cry, "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul."

Saul had been gradually falling from the time when he mounted the throne; but this was the lowest depth to which he descended in his life; the wildest, most desperate and wicked deed he ever committed—and, that which received the most terrible and irrevocable punishment at the hands of God.

This is one instance in which this practice was punished, and in the case of the Canaanites who were driven out before the Israelites, and also in the case of those put to death judicially by the command of God afterwards, we see this practice of dealing with spirits ended in ruin. There is no room to question that in other cases this practice has borne bitter fruit. Dr. Edmunds holds the dark *seances* to be extremely injurious to persons of sensitive organisation, and tending to unhinge the mind; for, of the comparatively small number of persons who were conspicuous as advocates or "mediums" during the investigation of the committee of the London Dialectical Society, the doctor informs us that "one person had been the subject of well marked mental illness, and another had been confined in a lunatic asylum." There were many in the time of Christ who were *possessed* with evil spirits, and the best authorities agree in thinking these evil spirits were not fallen angels, as is popularly supposed, but the bad spirits of dead men or women. One wonders, if this supposition be correct, why it was permitted; and we are almost ready to imagine it was because the old abominations of the Canaanites had been revived. I am informed that when a medium of the present day goes off into what is called "a trance," a spirit is supposed to take possession of him for the time being, and speak through his mouth. If those who give themselves up thus to the occasional possession of spirits should be given over by God to their *permanent* possession, as many were in the time of Christ, it would be more than the Spiritualists bargained for I trow, but not more than God might justly inflict. Men and brethren, look at it how we will, this practice seems a horribly wicked and an evil thing. I lift my voice in warning against it this night, and I say (taking God's word for my guide, and I will not accept of any other in relation to such things as these, for this has been tried and tested and proved in a thousand fires), I say, taking God's word for my guide, to those who have become addicted to this practice, You are treading upon forbidden ground, ground which slopes down to hell. You are walking upon the dangerous edge of a frightful precipice, which at any moment may crumble beneath your feet. You are tearing down a veil woven by God's loving hand. Beware, lest you behold a sight like that of the fabled Gorgon's head of old—a sight which shall transfix you with horror, while you gaze, and turn you to stone.

Oh! How different is the revelation of the gospel of the grace

of God, from the revelations given by these spirits! Look at the words of Him who came to bring "life and immortality to light through the gospel." "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." We raise our eyes to Him and say—There is the appointed medium between earth and heaven, between man and God; through Him the veil is rent in twain, and the way into the holiest is made manifest. Enquire not of familiar spirits, but of the great Prophet of Nazareth, the way to the world to come, and you shall surely find the "strait gate" and the "narrow way" that leadeth unto life, and come at length "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the *spirits of just men made perfect.*"

FINIS.

