

SPIRITUALISM, THE BIBLE, AND TABERNACLE PREACHERS.

LESSON READ: MATTHEW XI.

I intend this evening to offer some remarks upon a sermon entitled "The Religion of Ghosts," supplied by an American Tabernacle tall-talker to certain "Christian" papers of the American complexion published in this country.

I do not propose to review every perverted statement and absurd proposition in this complicated and contradictory rigmarole, for that would occupy too much time. The sermon, indeed, is something like a person so dreadfully diseased that to effect a cure it would be necessary to reconstruct every organ and tissue of the body, and make a new man of him. There is some truth in the discourse, to be sure, for it would be impossible to tell a lie unless there were a basis of truth to be perverted. Were this discourse altogether untrue and imaginary, it would be an invention, a work of genius. But, like a diseased man who has some sound timbers in his constitution to hold him together, so this discourse has certain elements of fact running through it, but which, like sound parts in a diseased frame, are wholly enveloped in morbid humours.

The title, "The Religion of Ghosts," is intended to caricature the views of Spiritualists. It is not made clear in the discourse, however, why this title has been assumed; because it is not shown that Spiritualists turn their backs upon the divine truths recognised by the religious portion of mankind generally; nor is it demonstrated that Spiritualists regard the spirits of defunct men and women as gods or objects of worship. In truth, Spiritualists recognise the only one religion that has ever been propounded by spiritual teachers to mankind throughout the history of the world,—that to do good to men in the light of celestial truth is the only acceptable offering that can be made to God the Father. There is only one religion, and that is advocated by Spiritualists in common with all prophets and teachers, ancient and modern, who have aspired to lead the soul to God.

But let us examine whether this preacher has not in his rashness calumniated the religion of which he professes to be an exponent. "The Religion of Ghosts"—what does this phrase

imply in view of the saying of Paul, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."* Peter, also, on the day of Pentecost laid the basis of the apostolic church in the following terms:—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." (Acts ii. 22, 23, 24.) Here we have the religion of the apostles springing from a deep subsoil of spiritual phenomena, and nourished by a rich surface stratum of ghostic manifestation in the arisen person of the crucified Jesus. But let us dig deeper—penetrate nearer to the core of the historical evidences of this preacher's religion, and we shall gaze with astonished eyes upon the materialised spirit-form, the grandest manifestation of ancient or of modern times, exhibited in the career of Jesus as he appeared to his followers after his crucifixion upon the tree. A cursory glance at the gospels is sufficient to show anyone that the religion of Jesus, the works and teachings of Jesus, were eminently of the ghostly kind, and demonstrated spirit-power independent of human agency. His denunciations, which we have this evening read in Matthew, chap. xi.,† were uttered against those unbelievers of the Talmage type, who, by overlooking all practical manifestations of spiritual life, become more degraded than were Sodom and Gomorrah—those cities of the plain, which, because of their gross sensualism and flippant materialism, two features of character which go hand-in-hand, were destroyed by fire from heaven.

It is said that Jesus "brought life and immortality to light"; that he taught of the existence of a power outside of human prowess, and showed that the soul of man exists after death. The narrative of the Transfiguration upon the Mount is to that effect.‡ Jesus in that instance revealed to a few of his followers the spirits Moses and Elias, men who had lived in past ages on earth, and then lived in the spiritual state. But this would not have been sufficient evidence for the Spiritualist, unless gifted with very active faith and clear spiritual perceptions, for how could he be certain that these manifestations were indeed the spirits of Moses and Elias? The Christian world of to-day would possibly have attributed these celestial forms to demoniacal agency, regarded Jesus as an imposter and in league with Satan (as the Jews did),§ and at least would have sought for proofs of the identity of the spirits. The evidence of immortality in the transfiguration

* 1 Cor. xv. 14. Read also succeeding verses.

† "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."—See verses 21 and 23.

‡ Matt. xvii.

§ "Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, 'Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil.'"—John viii. 48; also vii. 20.

scene is not conclusive, but it was no doubt the best that could be done under the circumstances.

In due season Jesus made the test complete, and after his crucifixion appeared bodily, first to those disciples travelling on the road to Emmaus,* who, by their sensitive mediumistic power, felt something, they knew not what, yet they could not read the individuality of Jesus in the form of that materialised spirit who walked with them and talked with them by the way. He revealed himself in breaking bread with them, and then vanished out of sight—became dematerialised there and then, and left them in a state of great astonishment. Afterwards, while recording these experiences to others of his followers who were gathered together, suddenly, without the opening of door or the rending of walls or ceiling, the form of Jesus stood among them,† and “they supposed that they had seen a spirit;” in other words, these followers of Jesus who had listened to all his teachings, and seen his mighty works, did not actually believe in the continued existence of the soul after death—all his exhortations and moral sayings had not impressed their minds with the great truth of immortality. To make his work complete in this respect, Jesus came among them in palpable form, and showed not only the usual features of personal identity, but also those wounded places that were the result of the crucifixion of the physical body.‡

Now, there are two views which may be taken of this narrative. The one commonly received is that the physical body of Jesus, which had expired on the tree, again became the tabernacle of his immortal spirit, and that that identical body had the power to come through the solid walls of that room, and to appear bodily in the midst of the apostles. This most assuredly is an admission of one of the most wonderful phenomena of Spiritualism, viz., that of matter travelling through matter; and, accepting this view, thus was positively demonstrated by Jesus himself, nearly two thousand years ago, the fact of the permeability of matter by matter, which nevertheless Christian scientists resolutely shut their eyes against when attention is called to the fact by the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism.

The Spiritualist will, however, take a more spiritual view of this wonderful phenomenon—the *post-mortem* appearance of Jesus—than that commonly received by the Christian world. He will view the body of Jesus as a body made for the occasion by the power of the spirit over matter—a body accreted together from invisible or gaseous elements, formed in the atmosphere of that apostolic chamber, and suddenly revealed to the sight of those present, even as we at the present day know that material forms can be constituted by spirit-power under harmonious conditions. This manifestation at any rate demonstrated to these apostles that it was not a phantom, but a real form. It took food; it could be

* Luke xxiv. 13, et seq.

† Luke xxiv. 36.

‡ John xx. 26.

handled; it was solid and substantial. It could perform the intellectual, vital, and other functions of normal humanity. Hence it was not "a spirit." What is meant by the term "a spirit," as recognised in that age, is not very clear. The apostles were very ignorant and illiterate people, and only knew of spiritual things as revealed to them by that peculiar power at this day exhibited in the phenomena of mediumship. Their own normal notions, then, would partake more of the vagaries of superstition than the light of correct ideas. From the experience of every-day life, we well know that our countrymen, both of the ignorant and learned classes, believe in "spirits" of various orders, and yet do not believe in the demonstration of human immortality. As illustrations, we have the "Christian," with his devil and demons, the ghost of the peasant, the "spook" of Talmage, the aerial spirit of the thaumaturgist, and lastly "psychic force,"—a very modern superstition. Thousands of people all around us believe in these notions, who have no knowledge of the proofs of human immortality. No doubt a similar state of things existed in the time of Jesus. It exists now all over the earth. To overthrow all these flimsy theories and superstitions about spirits and devils, and to "bring immortality to light," was the work of the Gospel; in other words, to demonstrate unmistakably, as a palpable fact, the continued existence of man after death.

This Jesus did at that memorable seance recorded in the last chapter of Luke's narrative. He furnished satisfactory tests of identity, and having repeated to his followers the charges which he gave to them when in the ordinary physical body, thus proving him to be the same person in mind as well as in external form, he vanished again out of their sight. The language of the chapter has it, "He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." Of course he became invisible, but where the physical form used for the occasion went is a matter of but little moment, seeing that flesh and blood cannot enter the heavenly kingdom.

Modern Spiritualism supplements and corroborates the apostolic Spiritualism. Jesus said there were many things that age was not prepared to profit by.* Thank God, He has fulfilled his promise, and given in our day most plentifully that which could only be bestowed in a single example in that less-favoured age. We who are Spiritualists are familiar with this grandest of the gospel phenomena, and know, from every-day experiment, that our departed friends can, in the midst of sympathetic groups, gather around their spiritual bodies again the elements of earth, and appear to our gaze and our touch with those testifying marks of identity so truly exhibited by the arisen Jesus, who appeared not to the Sadduces, Pharisees, scribes, priests, or rulers, but to his own kindly, sympathetic, and humble followers. Neither do the spirits at this day manifest themselves to the stiff-necked representatives

* John xvi. 12, and verse 23.

of these ancient classes which bluster and dogmatise now as of old.

The Christian religion, then, is not only a "Religion of Ghosts," based upon ghostly manifestations, according to the phraseology of the preacher we are criticising, but in its origin is identical with Modern Spiritualism. But it may be observed that the modern Christian and the apostolic follower are two very different persons. Now the prayers of the Christian church are not directed exclusively to God, but to the spirit of "a man approved of God,"* whereas the Spiritualist worships not any spirit, but worships God.† If, then, there be a "Religion of Ghosts," it is the Christian religion, and we hope preachers will no longer commit the heartless indecency of ridiculing the assumed origin of their own religion nor sneeringly remark that "Spiritualism is a very old religion," for so it is.

So much for the title of Dr. Talmage's sermon. Let us now proceed to the discourse itself.

It opens with a highly-sensational and untruthful description of the manifestations which occurred through the mediumship of the "Witch‡ of En-dor," a verse from the description of which he takes as his text. He describes "this spiritual medium" as "haggard, weird, and shrivelled up, sitting by the light, and on the table sculptured images and divining rods, and poisonous herbs, and bottles and vases." The "witch," or this "spiritual medium," as Dr. Talmage calls her, is thus represented as altogether a horrid kind of person, and by conferring upon her the title of a "spiritual medium" he would wish it to be implied that she was the exact prototype of the spiritual medium of the present day, and that these are highly repulsive, "weird and haggard." Now, if any person will take the trouble to read the Bible for himself, he will see nothing whatever about a "haggard, weird, shrivelled up" spiritual medium, with all the paraphernalia of "images, poisonous herbs, bottles and vases," which this impudent fabricator has placed upon the Woman of En-dor's table. Furthermore, in the whole history of Spiritualistic experience it has not been found that spiritual mediums use anything whatever upon their tables of the kind enumerated by the preacher. And instead of being "haggard and shrivelled up," they are often young, and even infantile;§ for the mediumistic element is more plentiful in those who have the magnetic fluids most abundant, as generally found accompanying youthful susceptibilities; for as Jesus said, "Thou hast hid those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."|| We have no reason to suppose that she was old, but, on the contrary, young and generous. The first paragraph of the

* Acts ii. 22. † Worship God.—Rev. xxii. 9.

‡ The term "witch" is not employed in the Bible, but "woman."

§ THE MEDIUM, No. 214, contains a *fac simile* of writing done by the hand of Mr. Jencken's baby, when 5 months 15 days old. Mrs. Jencken is Kate Fox, the medium in whose family modern Spiritualism originated.

|| Matt. xi. 25.

discourse under review conveys to us the warning that the author is a man whose words and inferences are not only utterly unreliable but opposed to literal truth. He has not only the hardihood to wilfully misrepresent the appurtenances of modern mediumship, a matter in which his falsehood is sure to find him out, but he even dares to pervert the Scriptures in the statement of simple fact, about which it is not possible to have two opinions; showing how necessary it is for every man to open the book, to read and to inquire for himself, and not take it second hand, more especially when it comes from the mouths of popular preachers and so-called religious guides.

Dr. Talmage uses all the power he possesses to twist in the wrong direction the whole narrative respecting Saul. If we take up the history as given in the first book of Samuel, chapter ix., we find that Saul is introduced to us as going forth with a servant to seek for a flock of asses belonging to Kish, his father, which had gone astray. He travelled through several lands, and found them not. At last he thought his father might miss him more than the asses, and conferred with his companion about returning. Said the servant, "There in this city a man of God," one described as "honourable," and "all that he saith cometh surely to pass." Saul, honest man, objected to this professional visit, seeing that their bread was spent, and they had no present to bestow on the "man of God." But the servant was richer than his superior, and had "the fourth part of a shekel of silver." They did go to consult this "seer"—"now called a prophet"—no other than Samuel, "the man of God."

From this we learn much as to the nature of the services sometimes performed by the prophets of the Jewish people. We find they were professional mediums, and took fees from those who consulted them, only they were a grade lower than those engaged in the work of Modern Spiritualism. Our mediums refuse to seek for lost property. Why? Because it brings them into contact with low spiritual influences. Our mediums desire sitters to come only to get spiritual truth, to ascertain the fact of immortal existence, or to be comforted in their wounded spirits as to the happiness of those who have passed away into the unseen country beyond. Every sitter who comes with these feelings has success, and gives ease and pleasure to the mediums in the fulfilment of their task. Those who come to a medium to seek lost property, to detect the dishonourable, to trace thieves, and the like worldly purposes, bring with them influences of an objectionable kind.*

Now, we find that the Jewish God, through his prophets, was at that time in the habit of tracing lost property! And from this circumstance, we see something of the character of the God of the Jewish nation. This Jewish God was the champion of the Children of Israel. At that time there was no king over that people,

* Detectives, eavesdroppers, and thief-catchers are not congenial spiritual company. Like attracts like; hence mediums avoid such sitters.

but they were ruled by spirit-influence through prophets or mediums. The people clamoured for a king who would lead them forth to battle, which made their spirit-king jealous, and though he promised them a king, yet he, at the same time, threatened to be revenged upon both the king and the people.

Saul was a tall man, a fine young fellow; "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people."* Our preacher makes him "eight or nine feet high." A head and neck of three feet is pretty considerable to stick on a man's shoulders, but it is beautifully in proportion with others of the preacher's statements. At God's wish, the power of the spirit came upon this noble Saul; he prophesied, and was anointed king over Israel, did excellent service, and fought their battles. But in the case of the Amalekites, he listened to the prayer of his people, and after slaying, in obedience to the voice of God, "all the people," and utterly destroying "everything that was vile and refuse," he spared "the best of the sheep and oxen, fatlings and lambs, and all that was good," that he might make a "sacrifice unto the Lord." Out of generosity, he also gave the hint to the Kenites, who had "shewed kindness to all the Children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." †

This did not please the Jewish God, who was offended at this act of generosity on the part of Saul and economy in the preservation of cattle—an act which he commended on other occasions; but, anxious to pick a quarrel with his victim, and upset the new kingdom, he declared through Samuel that he would far rather have obedience than sacrifice, and straightway passed sentence on the unfortunate Saul. This conduct may not be considered in modern times as very creditable to Jehovah, but it is attributed to him, and you must judge which was the best of the two—Saul or his God.

After that nothing went well with Saul—"an evil spirit from God" ‡ turned his generous nature into that of a demon. His heart was full of murder. He threw the javelin at David, a supple fellow, who jumped on one side, and it went into the wall. Now, I do not blame Saul for this. He was a decent country lad, but the Lord would not let him alone, but forced him into a position in which this act of disobedience was far more a credit than dishonour to him. Then the Lord sent on him an evil spirit, and made him a bad man. It was all the Lord's doing, and all the responsibility rests with the Lord.§ Saul suffered considerably, and through his sufferings, let us hope, he was absolved from any obliquity which attended his career.

Now, approaching the interview with the Woman of Endor, as recorded in 1 Samuel xxviii. Saul had at that time no power of consulting with the Lord, as he had formerly enjoyed. "The spirit

* 1 Sam. x. 23.

† 1 Sam. xv.

‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 15.

§ And the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.—1 Sam. xv. 35. If any spirit controlling modern mediums committed such a blunder as the Lord did in the appointment of Saul, what would be the verdict of our Christian friends

of the Lord had departed from Saul." In the sixth verse it is said, "When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." Which means that Saul could not get a communication from his former spirit-guide, either through his own brain when asleep, through looking in a glass, or by a trance-medium. Among other things done by Saul in his spiritual darkness under evil influence, he "had put away those that had familiar spirits out of the land."

Now, the Phillistines were about to pounce upon Saul, take his life, rout his army, and enslave his people. It was in this sore strait that Saul, being deprived of his usual means of spiritual intercourse, counselled this interview with the Woman of En-dor, thinking it better to have a spirit-communication of some sort than none at all. It was very curious that there should be such a woman at En-dor, for the country was supposed to be cleared of that class.

The explanation indulged in by some is, that this woman was such a useful character, so upright and reliable, that she had been spared by Saul's soldiers when they executed his cruel edict against the mediums of that day. This appears the more probable as Saul's servants knew that she existed and where to find her. Saul disguised himself, and, accompanied by two men, went to consult this woman that had a familiar spirit. Dr. Talmage makes very much capital out of this shame and secrecy of Saul, and supposes that all Spiritualists are in the same frame of mind when they go to a spirit-circle or commune with the spirit-world. If we were all in Saul's position we might have Saul's fears. But there is nothing of the like kind in the mental state of Spiritualists in their intercourse with the spirit-world. We are not ashamed of spirit-communication. Spiritualists are proud to express to the world at large that they not only believe in spirit-communication, but practise it themselves and teach the art to others. This preacher deplors the fact that Spiritualism "is so wide-spread in all the villages, towns, and cities of the civilised world," and is "getting new converts every day." How could he know this if, like Saul, Spiritualists kept the matter to themselves? and how could the cause spread so rapidly if the light were kept under a bushel? The fact is, there is nothing so outspoken as Spiritualism. From the very day of its inauguration till now, Spiritualism has spoken with the loudest tongue heard on this planet during these twenty-seven years.

Saul went to the woman, and she did not know who he was. She was loth to break the law, and it was only because of the assurance upon oath which she received that she consented to give a sitting. "Whom shall I bring up?" she says. "Bring me up Samuel." And Samuel forthwith appeared. Now, mark the wonderful result. This medium, as soon as the spirit came into the field of her vision, at once knew that this was Saul who had visited her. And she says, "Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul?" This one test established the *genuineness* of her mediumship. If you were to go to a medium, a stranger to you,

and he told you your name as soon as the spirit manifested, would not that be an evidence of his power? Saul evidently felt satisfied, for he told her not to be afraid, and asked her what she saw. She said she "saw gods ascending out of the earth."

Here we get a peep of the psychological philosophy of that time. It is said that the Jews did not believe in the immortality of the soul till one of their captivities into a more Eastern country, where spiritual science was farther advanced than among themselves. We can well understand, however, that spiritual phenomena would be known to the Jewish people for a long time before it was understood. This is true of our own country. Away back through the past centuries we have many indications of spiritual phenomena, but not understood as such. It was supposed to be the work of fairies, elves, devils, witchcraft, but nobody thought it was the spirits of the departed coming back and trying to impress the understanding of those on earth with the fact of a future existence. And so it was with this woman. She saw a crowd of spirits; but not understanding the return of spirits, thought they were gods.* This affords a reason why the spirit that communed through the prophets, and conducted the affairs of the Jewish nation, was called God. Their minds could not realise the fact that it was a departed human being connected with their country taking a patriotic interest in their affairs. Saul, however, seems to have known of the return of the individual human spirit.

Then the spirit-medium described the form of Samuel, and Saul recognised him at once. "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." The answers of Samuel to Saul have been quoted as deprecating spiritual communion. Such, however, does not appear from a dispassionate reading of the text. Samuel does not reprove Saul for spirit-communion, for he participates therein, but he says, "Wherefore then dost thou ask me, seeing that the Lord is departed from thee and is become thine enemy?" In conformity with that co-partnership which formerly existed between God and Samuel, Samuel repeats that the kingdom would be rent out of Saul's hand and be given to David; not because of consulting the woman, but "because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek; therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day."

* Mr. J. J. Clephan remarks: Many Biblical scholars render the phrase, "I saw a god." He adds: The Hebrew word for "a god" is certainly in the plural, but has here, as in Genesis i. 1, a singular signification. This translation agrees with Saul's immediate question, "What form is he of?" The Hebrew word for "a god" is, I believe, in this instance, equivalent to the Greek *δαιμων*, which variously means "a guardian or familiar spirit," "a good or malevolent spirit," "a god or goddess," also "a demigod," as distinguished from *θεος* more usually applied to the Being who is regarded as the "SUPREME GOD," the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Some commentators lead their readers to infer that it was not Samuel at all that appeared, but an evil spirit who assumed the well-known form. But the mental test of identity is as complete as the one in respect to form; for Samuel, in his communications with Saul, repeated to him the exact terms of indictment and condemnation which he as a prophet had spoken against Saul while he was in earth-life. Saul evidently was convinced, for he fell upon the earth and was "sore afraid, because of the words"; "there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night."

In the midst of this painful scene let us narrowly observe the conduct of the Woman of En-dor, this medium, slandered so ruthlessly by the Christian world. She behaved in a truly "Christian" manner, in the best sense of the term, to the poor, unhappy man before her. She comforted him, and offered him food. Saul refused to eat. But this woman and his servants "compelled him." And "he arose from the earth and sat upon the bed." And this sympathetic, tender woman killed her "fat calf," "took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof, and she brought it before Saul and before his servants, and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night." One thing the writer of the narrative omits. He does not tell us whether Saul paid any fee for all this trouble and expense on the part of the medium. We learn that Samuel, "the man of God," was expected to receive a fee for the discovery of the lost asses. But here was this poor hunted woman performing a genuine service to Saul in the most humane manner, sympathising with him, comforting him, and putting herself to considerable expense in feeding him, and we do not read that she received anything whatever in the way of compensation. If that be so, then her motives were of a higher class than those of the "man of God" Samuel.

But after all there is no comparison between the ordinary investigators of Spiritualism and this instance of Saul. None of us have had any battles with the Amalekites. None of us have been kings of Israel, nor is the favour of God withdrawn from us, or an evil spirit sent. We do not throw javelins, nor have we, any of us, the characteristic of being eight feet high as Saul had.

The preacher, after having descanted in a wild, stump-oratorion style upon this "awful seance," proceeds to describe the early history of Spiritualism, and its introduction through the mediumship of the Fox family. I need not tell you that his story is a STORY. He makes out that the spirits "rapped at the door." The whole is simply a flippant travestie upon the real facts. We need not waste time in pointing out how far this preacher is a perverter of facts in this well-known historical narrative.*

Kate Fox, who was then a mere child, is now the wife of Mr. H. D. Jencken, a barrister of the Temple, London. The rappings

* See "Modern American Spiritualism." by Emma Hardinge, page 32.

were heard close to her sisters and herself as they lay in bed. The house was what is called "haunted." Ultimately it was found that the raps came in answer to questions. Thus, in the providence of God, was spirit-communion discovered by modern methods on the 31st of March, 1848—not in 1847; another error of the preacher. The buffoonery of Dr. Talmage on this and other phases of Spiritualism is only equalled by infidels in their ridicule of the miracles of Scripture. Christians have at last united with their old enemies in fighting against God in the work of Modern Spiritualism, which is not a human device, but a gift from Heaven, cradled in the children's crib of the Fox family.

Having got weary of falsifying, the preacher turns to hatred. He "hates Spiritualism" because it takes hold of men in their trouble, and leads them away captive! Does not Christianity take hold of men in their trouble? If not, then it fails as a religion. In the time of trouble, when hopes are crushed and hearts bleed, if Spiritualism afford solace when Christianity fails, it thereby proves its superiority. Perhaps Dr. Talmage "hates Spiritualism" because it supersedes his "farrago of nonsense." Figs are not gathered of thistles, and if spirit-communion feeds the starving soul when pulpit rant mocks it, then in the name of the Great Physician, let men cling to it, notwithstanding the cowardly conduct of this preacher in daring them to do so. The fact is, the preacher hereby confesses his shameful defeat: He knows he is beaten, and, like the lower class of criminal pleaders, he turns round and abuses his antagonist's attorney.

The Spiritualist has discovered, by a manner which he did not himself seek, that those who are dead can commune with us, and can tell us of the conditions of life in the spirit-world, and the relationship between conduct on earth and comfort in the spirit-land. All this, God in his providence has thrown open to man, not by man's own seeking, and it is absurd to blame Spiritualists for that which they have had no hand in bringing about. Why does not Dr. Talmage say he is an opponent of Providence? Why not say he opposes God Almighty? In a part of his sermon, when decrying communion with spirits, he speaks of it as God being thereby "slapped square in the face!" Surely, if God ever gets "slapped square in the face," it is when a preacher begins to criticise those institutions of Providence, which, in their origin and development, man has had no hand in bringing about.

Of course the denunciations against witchcraft, sorcery, and necromancy, which are found in the Bible, are not overlooked. These have no relevancy to the question of Modern Spiritualism. These denunciations communicate to us the fact that various forms of divination and communion with the unseen world, and prognostications of the future, were practised in that ancient time; but it would be utterly illogical to suppose that the methods of that ancient communion were the same as the methods of to-day, or that the results were identical. In ancient times men ate—

they eat to-day: are our tables covered with the same kind of dishes and victuals as then? Where is the manna on our tables? Men dressed then—they dress now: are our habiliments and fashions the same as the Jews wore? Men lived in houses and tents then—they do so now: is there any comparison between the structures then raised and those of modern architecture? Men observed certain social and moral laws and customs then: but what was regarded as moral in that age would be considered indecent now. Why is a man not forced to take the widow and raise seed to his brother? If the commands and methods of olden times are binding upon us now, very many other things would also be binding upon us, which are positively indecent even to mention, and which the laws of the present day would not permit. Furthermore, these commands enforced on the Jews were given to them as a peculiar people, and not as adapted to other nations of the earth, and there is no evidence in the Bible to show that they are binding upon us, more particularly since the advent of Jesus is said to have abrogated the laws of Moses and introduced a new dispensation.

Let us briefly examine the circumstances of the case.

Firstly.—We observe that the Jewish law, the Jewish religion, and the Jewish political system were derived from mediumship or communion with the spirit-world.

It is absurd to regard the Jewish laws as being opposed to spirit-communion in the abstract, because they were communicated by that means, and hence are an instance of it. The Decalogue written by the finger of God on the stone tables is, indeed, the first example of "direct writing" on record. This avoidance of diviners and those who had familiar spirits was not commanded because spirit-communion under any circumstances was wrong, but for other reasons, as we shall presently see.

Secondly.—Their God, Jehovah, or the presiding spirit of the Jewish people, was extremely jealous of other spirits, or other gods, and, like any other king, he did not want two or three kings in the same country. We have a queen; but we do not blame her because she would not like another queen to start up in Northumberland, another in Warwickshire, and another in Sussex. Nor would she be satisfied with the revival of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy; and quite right, too, for there would be an end of consolidated national government. So it was with the spiritual King of the Jews. He says, in effect, Take your laws and your ordinances from me. I am the one who raises up your champions, and you are safe in my keeping. Disregard me, and the enemy will come upon you, and destroy your cities, and carry you away captive.

Thirdly.—Looking at the condition of the people, sunk down into the lowest depths of barbarism and superstition, more ignorant and degraded than the Egyptians and the Persians, it would be impossible to compare their social state with that of modern civil-

ination. The two present a contrast, not a comparison. It was only by fear and authority that they could be kept in subjection. They were a band of marauding outcasts who had escaped from slavery, and their spiritual ruler was only a shade better than themselves, or he could not have come *en rapport* with them. If such a spirit came to a circle at the present day, he would be regarded as a kind of devil—an undeveloped spirit, whom the Spiritualists would drive away or try to improve. He put a lie into Samuel's mouth when he sent him to select David as a king to supersede Saul.* There is no vice, however degrading, which he did not patronise and even command. Surely the spiritual teachings and the preachings of the last 4,000 years must be reckoned of small account if we are to suppose ourselves at this time under the laws and regulations peculiar to and promulgated by the lowest phase of spiritual government on record. We stand clear of the whole thing, and neither owe allegiance to that Jewish spirit as king, nor obedience to the laws which he promulgated.† We are, further, astonished that Christians should expect it of us, for they teach that the Jewish dispensation has passed away, and that a new gospel of love lives instead. How funny for preachers to persist in placing mankind under an obsolete rule—a dead king, a legislation which, according to their own teaching, *does not exist*. The Jewish God, Jewish laws, and the Jewish people might be very well adapted to each other, and no doubt these were God's method of dealing with that particular case ; but we live in the light of a brighter day.

The divination of that people, besides interfering with the rule of their own spirit-guide, was, no doubt, as rude and degrading and pernicious as their other habits. We know that they went so far as to perform human sacrifice, and that to the Lord God of Israel, † too. If that were permitted, need we wonder that the things forbidden were something awful.

Necromancy was one of these. Dr. Talmage, like many other ignorant people, supposes that necromancy was consulting with the spirits of the dead. The word *νεκρος* signifies a "dead body." Necromancy, then, indicates divination with a corpse. At that time the Jewish nation, it is said, did not believe in immortality at all. How, then, could they believe in communion with the *spirits* of the dead? In common with other ancient peoples, they used to divine with a dead body, and with the entrails of animals. We read in history of prognostication in the event of coming wars, expeditions, and events by opening animals killed in sacrifice, and observing the condition of certain organs, from which the future

* I Sam. xvi. 2.

† In matters civil we own allegiance to Queen Victoria, in matters spiritual to God and his administering providence. The Queen (and others of the Royal Family are said to be Spiritualists, and Abraham Lincoln, the best of American Presidents, was a Spiritualist. Let us have no more of this *petit treason*, which, if carried out, would uproot all government. Let us rather, in the spirit of the Mosaic laws, obey the governments under which we respectively live.

† Judges xi. 39.

was determined. They did the same in this country among the Druids. They would take a fair young girl, lay her naked on the sacrificial stone, plunge the knife into her heaving side, pluck out the quivering heart, when the priest, holding it up, would predict therefrom. It was this disgusting divination on dead bodies that was denounced, not communion with spirits. I therefore argue that the Jewish denunciations against the various forms of irregular mediumship of that age as they existed amongst the Children of Israel and surrounding tribes, were simply political or moral expediences, good and necessary for the people under their circumstances, but in no wise applying to us. We do not pass our children through the fire, divine as in fortune-telling, inspect corpses, or turn away from our spirit-guide. We rather strive for a higher spiritual plane, and reason with the spirit-guides whom God has sent us.

Dr. Talmage is extremely contradictory in his estimate of Spiritualism. He thinks there is "some occult law that after awhile may be demonstrated." And then, in another sentence, he dares you to be a Spiritualist; but how can men discover an "occult law" if they dare not examine into it? Then from the occult law he turns to trickery, delusion, and affairs of darkness. He talks of hidden levers, red letters on the arm, bottles of phosphoric oil to read with in the dark—letters being slit open, in order that they may be read by pretended clairvoyants—ventriloquism, legerdemain, sleight of hand, and optical delusions as the main staple of Spiritualism.

Now, we all know that it is quite possible to simulate to an extent spiritual phenomena, just as we are certain that the preacher may pervert the Bible, and turn facts into an untruthful relationship, but these lying processes do not abrogate the genuine facts which they misrepresent. The phenomena are not to be explained away by the circumstance of simulation any more than truth is to be eclipsed by flagrant lies spoken in the pulpit and "nailed" with American readings of the Scriptures. If the preacher is in earnest, and has confidence in his powers, let him do battle with the facts, and let the simulations alone. The very fact that he thus wanders incoherently over his subject shows that he has no faith in his own explanation. As Spiritualists, we know that one of the difficulties of Spiritualism is the dishonest practices of some who regard themselves as its exponents. But we must put up with this evil, while the victims of lying pulpit teachings seek a field for their wickedness within our ranks.

Dr. Talmage has had some touches of "hallucination" himself, he says, caused by eating mince pie before going to bed. I thank him for this explanation, for it has taken a cruel duty off my shoulders. In the preceding paragraphs I observed so many perversions of truth, and such stupid buffoonery, that I was about to say something strong in comment. But light from the Brooklyn Tabernacle has dawned upon my soul, and I must charitably suppose that

the preacher had been eating "mince pie" on the previous Saturday evening, and was crazy when he spouted his sermon. I much fear that this is a chronic complaint with the cloth, and if any ingenious Yankee can devise a remedy, some *odium theologicum* "pain-killer" or other effective patent medicine, he will not only make his fortune, but earn the gratitude of modern civilisation. It is rather strange, however, to attribute the anti-spiritual virtue of story-telling to Mince Pie-ety.

He speaks of the consequences of Spiritualism to its adherents. He says, "It is doom and death to everyone that yields to it. . . It ruins the body. . . Destroys the physical health. . . Induces epilepsy and catalepsy. . . Destroys the nervous system. . . And makes life miserable." He seems to know all about it. Has he been through the mill? The doom and death, however, are very slow in coming to many Spiritualists, indeed, to all of my acquaintance, as I never saw a dead one yet. At the Wallace Testimonial Soirée,* a week or two ago, men stood up and spoke in its advocacy who had been Spiritualists for twenty-seven years! There were no symptoms of "doom and death" about them. Their speeches showed no want of nervous energy and vigour; nor was "long hair" conspicuous. Facts go against this preacher. Spiritualists are generally to be found clothed and in their right mind, praising God for deliverance from the lying dogmatism of the pulpit. In his weak and low personalities on the bodily condition of Spiritualists, the animus of the preacher is displayed. The description is false, as everyone knows, and if he can be so palpably untruthful in one part of his discourse, what may be assumed of other portions? But Spiritualists can put the matter in another light. Disease may invade the strongest frame. And they can tell of relief from pain, and of the cure of many serious affections by spiritual agency.† I myself have been rescued from death by the

* See report in the MEDIUM, No. 262.

† These benefits are being continually enjoyed in thousands of instances, in all parts of the world. I cut the following testimony from the Octago (New Zealand) *Daily Times*, February 13, 1875:—"On the 3rd day of May, 1873, I received an injury to my leg in removing a box. At the time, I deemed it of little consequence, the skin being only scratched, but it soon became very painful, and, after trying cold water applications, I went to two medical practitioners in Dunedin, one of whom prescribed for me. I followed his advice for some time, but without any beneficial result. It at last seemed to be a confirmed ulcer, and I became almost hopeless as to its being cured. I suffered until November last, when I was advised to go to a 'spirit-circle,' which met in Mr. Jackson's, Great King Street, and where, I was informed, the spirit of a doctor communicated, and had been the means of some wonderful cures. On Sunday, 28th day of that month, I attended the circle. After praise and prayer, an address was delivered by what purported to be a spirit. At the conclusion, the spirits were asked if they could do anything for me. They replied in the affirmative. They, or rather he, told me to give it as much ease as possible, and to get some tar soap, dissolve it in water, and bathe the leg 12 times in 24 hours. After each application I was to sprinkle the part with burnt alum, but not to allow any of it to enter the ulcer. I followed this advice minutely, and on the first day after the application all pain had left it, and in three weeks from that date it was quite cured, and, thank God, is now quite sound. These are the simple facts of the case, which I deem my duty to make public, so that others suffering similarly may find relief. The names of the doctors whom I consulted and other particulars I will give privately

loving care of spirits. Without having recourse to ordinary medical aid, my restoration to health was due to the recipes ordered by spirit-friends.* Dr. Talmage states that Spiritualism "destroys the nervous system." Does nothing else destroy the nervous system? Does not the Christian student at college, burning the midnight oil, destroy it? Do not young men, who have passed their theological examination, often die of consumption and exhaustion, the result of overwork over stupid books? And if a glance be taken at some of our popular preachers, are they so remarkably distinguished for a healthy nervous system? I will not mention names, but I could fill a column with cases in which well-known preachers are so ill as not to be seen for days, and have to go trips to the Continent and America to recruit. Even Dr. Talmage is subject to "indigestion," and his Christianity does not prevent his making a beast of himself by overloading his stomach. Has the Christianity of which these clergymen are notable exponents saved them from the ills of common humanity? No. They have their nervous system shattered by overwork, and the more honour to them. What is our nervous system given to us for but to be spent in the service of God and humanity?† And if the reverend Mr. This or Dr. That has suffered from this cause, I say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; as you have thus profitably expended your talent of nervous force, you shall have your reward elsewhere." Is a man to shut himself up like a fatted ox in case he should injure his nervous system? We know there are thousands of the most brilliant men who have injured their nervous system in the good work they have undertaken, and I wish

to anyone interested, but I am not at liberty to do so publicly.—I am, &c., MARGARET, M'COLL, *Corner of Union and Cumberland Streets, Dunedin, 10th February.*"

* A full description of this case is given in the *MEDIUM*, No. 249. See also the desperate case of cancerous tumour—*MEDIUM*, No. 232.

† Every occupation has a tendency to bring on some form of disease or other. The following cutting from the *Lancet* is to the point:—"Something like a panic must have been caused among the telegraphists of this country by the announcement—for which a French physician is answerable—that their occupation exposed them to a disease which was said to be 'very common amongst telegraph clerks.' Although the disease is said to be common, only one instance of it is quoted, that of a man who, after nine years' work in a telegraph office, began to experience a difficulty in making certain signals, the attempt to do so being followed by cramp of the hand. First his thumb failed, then the first and second fingers, and when he had recourse to his wrist as a substitute for his hand, this became disabled also. This story is likely enough, and it seems possible that we may have to add 'telegraphists' cramp' to the list of those diseases which are aptly named 'professional impotences.' It is well known that the constant repetition of any one act is liable in persons of a certain constitution to bring about a disability to perform that act. 'Writers' cramp' is the best known, and physicians who are in the way of seeing cases of nervous disorders must encounter several instances of this disease in the course of a year. All other forms of 'professional' disorders are, however, so rare as to be looked upon as curiosities, and although 'hammer palsy,' the disease peculiar to smiths, 'sempstresses' palsy,' in which the power of plying the needle is lost, 'milkers' cramp,' which is met with among the cowherds of the Tyrol, and 'bricklayers' cramp,' in which the power of wielding the trowel is lost, have all been described, it has fallen to the lot of very few to see such cases. Telegraphists' cramp will, we have little doubt, take its stand amongst the last-mentioned curiosities."

Spiritualists would strain themselves a little more in behalf of Spiritualism. Though I have nearly killed myself by hard work several times, I never heard of a martyr yet. I wonder at Christians objecting to self-sacrifice, seeing that Jesus lost his life after three years' ministry, and few of his followers died a natural death.

No doubt if the advocacy of Christianity can injure the nervous system, so that of Spiritualism may do the same, if the essential conditions of health are not obeyed. A cold may be caught from the east wind by sitting in a draught; but is that any reason why a man should shut himself up from the fresh air? Mediumship can be made to strengthen the nervous system, and the nervous superabundance of one may be transferred to the needful system of another, and comfort and health be the result when this science comes to be understood.

Dr. Talmage, proceeding with his foul charges against Spiritualism, says, "It is a social and marital curse, and the source of debauchery and intemperance. The worst orgies of obscenity have been enacted under its patronage." Now, in Spiritualism itself there is nothing whatever to mislead mankind on social and sexual matters. Spiritualism teaches that men and women are the saviours of each other, and the most glorious condition and highest blessing on this earth is for a man and woman to be united in true marriage; but the union should be pure and spiritual, not a union directed by convenience or sordid passion. Seeing, however, that many marriages are of this adulterous kind, some Spiritualists have denounced such marriages, in order that they might advocate the everlasting union of one man with one woman, between whom there is spiritual fitness.*

But it seems to me that much looseness existed in the world before Spiritualism was heard of. Those who lived thirty years ago saw the pavements of our streets crowded with the outcasts of society, and so they are still. To whom do they minister? Are they the results of Spiritualism? I think even Dr. Talmage would say "No." Then are they the result of Christianity? This is a Christian country. These women have had Christian fathers and mothers. Many of them have themselves been scholars in Sunday

* The "Free-love" doctrine, as it is called, has been philosophically refuted by Andrew Jackson Davis in his celebrated works, and Spiritualists in convention assembled, and in lectures and periodicals have repeatedly denounced that movement. At a convention, held November 22 and 23, 1873, the following resolutions were passed in reference to "Free love":—*Resolved*—"That we, the Spiritualists of the State of New Hampshire, in convention assembled, do most emphatically condemn such action (free love) as immoral and mischievous, and fraught with fearful consequences to society, and demoralising to family relations in their highest and purest sense, besides exerting an influence destructive to the advancement and moral and social development of the human race." *Resolved*—"That we deem such teachings repulsive to our highest conception of right, disgraceful in practice; and we most emphatically protest against both theory and practice, and decree it no part or parcel of Spiritualism, and in direct opposition to the teachings of spirit: passed to the higher life; contaminating and dwarfing to the minds and souls of all who come within the pale of its pestilential influence."

schools. These women are visited by Christian men, and even Christian ministers. I really think our Christian friends should pluck the "beam out of their own eye" before they speak of the "mote" in their brother's. Look at the conduct of our young men from Oxford and Cambridge on the occasion of the annual boat-race. These students come from educational institutions standing at the very apex of the Christian system. They should be, therefore, regarded as the finest fruit of the Christian tree. Yet what have we to say of them? When they come up to London for their annual exhibition of brute force, they amuse themselves by smashing everything at midnight-supper rooms, questionable dancing halls, casinos, and such obscure public-houses in the back slums as dare be open to receive them.* Is this rudeness and unbridled wickedness a result of Christianity? Surely it is not a result of Spiritualism? Are the errant manners of a few Spiritualists, here and there, to be taken as typical? It seems to me that the amount of licentiousness practised on that one occasion of the boat-race was greater than what has been known among Spiritualists for twenty-five years. Some time ago I threw out a challenge whether there were more Spiritualists or clergymen brought before the magistrates for offences against social propriety, right, and law. I soon received a pile of newspapers containing accounts of peccant clergymen, but not of one Spiritualist. And I say that the clergymen of England and America, living under the full influence of Christianity, and received as the type of Christian men, commit more crimes than all the Spiritualists in all countries of the world. I do not wish to blacken the parsons. We did not raise the question. Let statistics be appealed to.

Next comes the matter of *Insanity*. Says Dr. Talmage, "There is not an asylum between Bangor and San Francisco which has not the torn and bleeding victims of this delusion." Why Spiritualism should in particular contribute to lunacy it is difficult to see. According to the newspapers, Moody and Sankey often make lunatics.† I hold a paper in my hand, headed "The Effects of Religious

* The *Graphic*, commenting on the affair, said:—"The free-fight at Evans's Supper Rooms, the smashing of mirrors, the demolishing of chairs and tables, and the wrecking of the whole place, were neither amusing or creditable. Pugilistic encounters at other resorts did not redound to the credit of 'Young England;' and we cannot blame those proprietors of places of amusements who kept their doors rigorously closed until it was supposed the undergraduates had quitted town."

† I quote the following from a local paper:—"An Edinburgh correspondent says: 'The *British Medical Journal* observes that the annual report of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum has just been published, and is a most able and exhaustive paper. A striking feature is that under the head of Melancholia. The number admitted was 88, or 70 per cent in excess of the average of the past five years—many of these cases being desperately suicidal. With regard to the most striking feature of this report, namely, the great increase in the number of patients from Edinburgh, and the fact that that increase was mostly due to acute cases of the class of melancholia, there is some reason for connecting it with the great wave of religious excitement and revivalism which passed over the city last Spring. We hear from other sources that the number of cases of insanity among the better classes, due to this cause, was very remarkable.'"—What say our revival rangers to these facts?

Mania : Shocking Suicide of a Young Woman." It tells of a poor girl at Paddington who clipped her throat with a pair of scissors. The chaplain of St. Mary's Church said he believed that the girl had brooded too much over religious subjects.

Let us examine the question. Lunacy, and all kinds of disease—mental and physical—depend upon inharmony of organic conditions. There is a certain proportion of society born with inharmonious organisations, and these, in the present state of affairs, are bound to die from certain diseases or to become insane, whatever their opinions or belief may be. You may as well say that Spiritualism will bring on small-pox as that it will induce insanity. If there be not organic integrity, disease will come, it may be insanity or something else. Mental derangements may even proceed from impure blood. Give a man a quantity of brandy, and he will become insane; and why? because alcohol poisons the blood. Dr. Barter cured a number of insane cases by means of the Turkish bath. He describes one case in particular. A poor deranged fellow was placed in the hot room. In a little while the madman began to perspire, and he smelt badly, but began to exhibit signs of returning reason. He tasted his perspiration. Said he, "When I was young, my flesh was sweet, beautiful, and wholesome; now my perspiration tastes badly and smells rank." And as he perspired he became sane. His blood got relieved of the foul matter, and the man was made whole. Fine organisations may be poisoned by the disagreeable magnetism of those with whom they associate. The greater number of the cases of lunacy attributed to Spiritualism are caused by the incessant persecutions of their Christian relatives, who, with a continued cross fire of persecution and anathema, drive the poor creatures to despair, whereas love and sympathy would have raised them up in spiritual strength. As cruel magnetism will poison and derange, so will loving magnetism heal and restore. Mr. Ashman* now before me, and many other healers, have restored men to soundness of mind as well as body. So that Spiritualism has cured many cases of insanity; and when this science is better understood, insanity will be completely conquered.†

No doubt a certain percentage of Spiritualists will become mad, because they possess the ill-favoured organisation leading thereto. But we would ask Dr. Talmage if many lunatics have not been made so by their Christian belief? Are there no "unforgiven-sin" lunatics? Are there no "beyond-redemption" lunatics? Are there no "hell-fire" lunatics? Before Spiritualism was heard of there were thousands of lunatics—good, sound, Christian lunatics.

The gentle escape of gas about the lost ship "Atlantic" is in feeble

* See Mr. Ashman's work, "Psychopathy; or the True Healing Art." London: J. Burns.

† Judge Edmonds has given excellent testimony on this point, which the preacher, had he been honest, would have quoted as well as the other statement of the Judge.

imitation of the sensational style of Mr. Gough, but devoid of any evidence of that celebrated orator's singular genius. It is intended to fill up time and terrify the female portion of the congregation. What sham bubbles preachers have to burst, to be sure!

Judge Edmonds is quoted as having warned people that "there is a fascination about consultation with the spirits of the dead that has a tendency to lead people off from their right judgment." And I would say the same to you. Many are they who are led off their right judgment by listening to preachers. No man who reads this sermon but would be led off if he listen unquestioningly to what is told him therein. Be self-reliant. That is the only safety from preachers and from spirits. Think for yourselves, and do not attach your faith to men either in the flesh or out of it. Judge Edmonds was an honest man, and Spiritualists may be proud of him. We have not a rotten system to bolster up, and hence can tell the truth on all sides, and allow the people to judge for themselves. Would to God that parsons would go and do likewise!

Then the Gadarenean swine are introduced; I am not aware whether for their benefit or for ours. It is impossible that these pigs could be the victims of Spiritualism, which was not then in existence. At least, if it had been it would be hard to lay the effects thereof on the shoulders of the men of the present day. He says they "no sooner became spiritual mediums than down they went in an avalanche of pork, to the consternation of all the herdsmen." This is simply nonsense. A spiritual medium is an agency through which a spirit can commune with men in the body, but we have no record of any communication having been received through these swine, unless Dr. Talmage has been specially favoured. We are so much at a loss to know whether the preacher is ridiculing the works of Jesus or exposing Spiritualism, that we are not certain whether it is our special province to reply to this pulpit harlequinade. Jesus, that eminent Spiritualist who was as much reviled in his day as we are now, and more too, cast the devils out of a sufferer,* and rather than that they should attack a human victim he allowed them to wreak their vengeance upon the swine. It is a pity the porcine remains were not preserved to make pies for Christian ministers; the "indigestion" and "hallucination" caused thereby would have furnished glowing materials for numberless sermons against Spiritualism.

If my reverend friend will pardon a little pleasantry I will return the compliment by thanking him for introducing the interesting question of the mediumship of animals. In his fondness for pork he has, I think, rather culpably overlooked a noted instance of assenine mediumship; a very ancient form, indeed, and

* Matt. viii. 28, says there were *two* men possessed of devils, while Mark v. 2, and Luke viii., 27, says there was only *one* man who had his devils driven into the swine by Jesus. This is a matter which, if it occurred in Spiritualism, would excite much righteous indignation from Christian critics. We recommend Dr. Talmage and others first to get their sacred records to agree consistently, after which they may have some time at disposal to rectify Spiritualism.

one which the angel of the Lord patronised by using. The narrative is contained in Numbers, chapter xxii., and it tells of Balaam, a worthy medium, who could fall into a trance, while having his eyes open, and who was so faithful to the inspiration of the spirits that he would not do "less or more" than the word of his guide, though he had a "house full of silver and gold" given him. This Balaam was not an Israelite, and, as God used him, we have an argument that irreproachable mediums existed in the surrounding countries, if not in Israel, and that God, instead of condemning them, used them when it suited his purpose. Let us follow his divine example, modern pulpits notwithstanding.

Balaam, by permission of God, rode forth on his ass to visit King Balak, but the animal turned aside into a field, then into a narrow lane, and rubbed his rider's shin against the rough wall; but, worse than that, the perverse creature got into a narrow place where there was not room to turn, and then lay down under his master. Balaam administered the stick, when, to his astonishment, the ass spoke to him, and after a little conversation Balaam's eyes were also opened. Like his ass, he became clairvoyant, and saw the angel with the drawn sword that had impeded the onward progress of the loaded quadruped. Here is a case of genuine mediumship, approved of and used by God, and also of similar spiritual qualities manifested in a donkey; and I would say to the reverend gentleman that the Lord conferred an honour upon that animal which we never heard of him bestowing upon a Christian minister.

The part of the sermon already reviewed is but the introduction to the burden of the discourse: Spiritualism ruins the immortal soul, and is adverse to the Bible. "The word of God is sufficient as a revelation. God says the Bible is enough for you to know about the future world." Most assuredly God has said nothing of the sort, but by all means men must be intimidated into compliance with the requirements of the preaching trade. Once upon a time the priesthood controlled all forms of human knowledge. Now their domain is limited to the soul. People dare not call their souls their own, but Spiritualism is teaching them how to conquer in this matter also, and then humanity will be emancipated from the curse of priestcraft. The preaching trade has been opposed to all forms of improvement or discovery, and now that the last thread of power is being snapped they do all they can to frighten their flocks and persecute independent minds so as to maintain their authority. As to the position of the Bible in the matter I must say that it has never contradicted me in one thing. Once it was supposed to stand in the way of science, and that the Bible contained all needful knowledge on everything. But men did not stop at that, and have surrounded themselves with inventions and arts, not one of which is named in the Bible. I most emphatically assert that this popish dogmatism and limitation of the human mind is a glaring misuse of the Bible, and has more than anything else rendered it ridiculous and impaired its

usefulness to mankind. The Bible itself is a progressive book, and hence the apparent contradictions which it contains, such as the law of love being opposed to the law of Moses. Man is a progressive being, and he requires a succession of dispensations on a progressive scale of spiritual teaching to correspond with his more highly developed state. The Bible is a record of this progress extending over thousands of years, and indicating that greater things are to be looked for in the future than have been bestowed in the past. The word of God is not a book, but, according to the Bible itself, is the ever-flowing source of divine light and guidance, which, though the flesh of man may wither as the flower of the grass, shall endure for ever.* Spiritualism is a chapter in this divine word, and it is found in strict harmony with the spirit of past chapters.

I do not complain of the Bible; it suits me exactly, and it is mine to read and interpret for myself just as much as it is the stock-in-trade of a class of talkers. What I find fault with is that people should take the liberty to interpret the Bible for me. The Bible was not the "Word of God" till a Pope made it so. The books existed, hundreds of versions of them, and were esteemed for what they were worth to the individual soul. But priests and Popes found it necessary to invent some kind of doctrine to which they might tie men's souls down. And so the Bible was made the "Word of God" and a conventional interpretation fixed upon every chapter of it by the papal priesthood, which abuse has been retained by so-called Protestants to this day.

As a Spiritualist and a Protestant I claim the right of private judgment, particularly in regard to the Bible, for if I allow men to interpret that for me I am spiritually their slave, and the Reformation is a dead letter. The Bible is a great fact. It is the gift of the ages to every man and woman to use as they may require, and it is our glorious prerogative to use it just as we please, the fulminations of papists in Protestant pulpits notwithstanding. The teachings of the Bible either mean something or nothing. If something, they are either capable of being demonstrated or not. If capable of being demonstrated, there is no necessity for any dogmatism on the matter, for on investigation they will speak for themselves. If Bible teachings, on the other hand, are not capable of demonstration, then my opinion of them is as good as that of any other man. If, again, what is in the Bible means nothing, then we need not make any noise about it at all.

This preacher, true to the tenets of priestcraft, not only would regulate the ideas of men on earth, but he would arrange their accommodation in the spirit-world. He thinks it absurd that Lorenzo Dow should have his eyes opened to higher spiritual truth by his translation to the spirit-world; or that the patriot, Thomas Paine, one of the fathers of the preacher's own country, should

* 1 Peter i. 25.

be a fit companion to abide in spirit-life with the reformed tinker, John Bunyan. Verily, Christian pride and vain spiritual conceit stink too horribly to permit of decent handling. The exhibition of such folly must be its own refutation to every truly spiritual and humble mind. As he denies men the right of private judgment, he finds fault with Andrew Jackson Davis for his candid exposition of Scriptural passages. This is the evil of popery. It calls certain records the "Word of God," and then coolly damns men for not believing it. Ritualism will flourish and the Church of Rome will spread while such a God-dishonouring and soul-enslaving abuse is allowed to exist in Protestant communities.

What unparalleled impudence it is to take a collection of tracts, no one knows by whom written, and first attribute them to the Deity, and then blackguard his poor children because they resent the liberty taken with their Divine Father. Jesus did not do so. He had no theology, no opinions about books and observances, wherewith to trammel men. He came full of love to ennoble, instruct, and save. The clergy, full of hate, come to curse, impose, and condemn. They are evidently not of the same religion.

As would be expected, this preacher, like the Pharisees of old, in respect to Jesus, honours Spiritualists by saying that they pay but lax observance to the rites and ceremonies of Church religion. He sneeringly quotes from some manual of Spiritualists, "What is our baptism? Frequent ablutions of water. What is our inspiration? Plenty of fresh air and sunlight," &c. This is just the burden of the teachings of all the prophets over again, namely, to do what is right and good, and "save thyself and them that hear thee."* It is not the Spiritualists that are un-Scriptural, but the Christians. Spiritualism is a recoil against that fancy form of Protestantism which is nothing but a nursery for the Church of Rome, and as Spiritualists we do not expect to please the parsons any more than Jesus was acceptable to the scribes and priestly humbugs of his day.

What are facts to a bigot? Something like pearls before swine. In the face of millions of materialists being converted to a belief in spiritual existence and immortality by Spiritualism, this preacher tries to show by that old device, the quotation of Scripture, that Spiritualism is powerless in such good work. He says, "I answer in the ringing words of the Son of God. 'If they believe (hear) not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'" Again, the preacher is mistaken, besides misquoting the text. These are not the words of the "Son of God" at all, though Jesus repeated them as I do now. They are part of the report of a conversation recorded in Luke, chapter xvi., which took place in the spirit-world between Abraham and the rich man, and it is genuine Spiritualism, every word. It tells the people of earth of the state and regulations of those in the spirit-world,

* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

and that is just what Spiritualism teaches. It also illustrates the possibility of spirit-communion, for how could it be possible to report what has taken place in the spirit-world, if communion with that world were not a fact? The answer of Abraham is not a condemnation of spirit-communion, which it accepts as an indisputable fact, nor would the spirit of the rich man have asked for the privilege of a spirit returning to his brothers, had he not been well aware of the possibility of the act being accomplished. The answer is a condemnation of those who will not even *listen* to, far less "believe," existing testimony on spiritual matters, and I fling the reproof back into the open throats of the preachers, as being originally aimed at such as them, for they scout all testimony on the question of spirit-communion, even to perverting the Bible, and the arisen "dead" revisit earth for them in vain. The experience of those who have "ears to hear" is vastly different.

The preacher approaches the latter end of his discourse by way of the "latter times" alluded to in the fourth chapter of 1 Timothy. These "latter times" are in a most convenient state of flexible looseness. It was the "latter times" hundreds of years ago, and it will be the "latter times" hundreds of years hence, if a preacher can thereby eke out his inconsequential hour of talk. It would be worth while for the preaching people to try to discover what this oft-quoted phrase alludes to. It cannot mean any time and every time. The Bible itself clears the matter up for us. Would that preachers would talk less, and read the Bible more. In the second chapter of Acts, Peter regards the day of Pentecost as the arrival of the "last days" prophesied of by Joel. Surely, the "latter times" cannot be after the "last days"? Every student of ecclesiastical history knows that in the Apostolic Age the end was looked for continually, and so the term applies to the time of the apostles and to no other. The warning given in that chapter does not apply to Spiritualists at all. We do not "depart from the faith," but labour to restore the spiritual faith, which ever has been; but in these "latter times," as in past ages, this "faith" has been obscured by the "seducing spirits" who occupy our pulpits and preach "a doctrine of devils," instead of spiritual truth. What "lies in hypocrisy" are told in the name of religion let any preacher's diatribe against free-thought and spiritual investigation testify. What but a "seared conscience" could urge upon an enlightened age to "teach children that there are no ghosts," when we know of spiritual manifestations? Are we, indeed, to teach the young lies to make them food for the maw of the pulpit-monster? If there are no ghosts, why all this pulpit row to frighten them away, or to frighten those in the pews from looking after them? This "commanding to abstain" from that "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth," is a Christian characteristic denounced by the apostle, who further says:—"For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving-

ing.* Spiritualism is undoubtedly a "creature of God," a divine provision, and "sanctified by the word of God and prayer," it will accomplish its divine end, as it has done in millions of instances.†

I regard the peroration, in which the blood of atonement is such an important ingredient, as utterly opposed to the gospel of Jesus and the teachings of all the prophets. It is a relict of ancient paganism, in which the element of human sacrifice formed a part, and which was engrafted upon the spiritual faith in the early centuries. As Spiritualists, we know that the pulpit teaching regarding redemption is not only un-Scriptural, but the greatest swindle that ever mocked God's creatures. The same chapter of Timothy shows that every man is his own saviour, and that we may assist in the salvation of each other. This is a glorious moral principle, which gives power to the word uttered, whereas the vicarious plan is a shield to immorality, and powerless to raise man in spiritual growth.

Man when he comes on earth gets from his Creator an immortal soul as a talent to be used to purchase an eternal abode in the heavens. As that talent is used on earth, so will the reward in the future be. The priest and the preacher, with open mouth, glaring eyes, and greedy hands, stand by and say, O man, give me that talent into my keeping. Many have succumbed to this monstrous demand, and the earth has been covered with a dwarfed humanity groping in spiritual darkness, and the spiritual world has been thronged with undeveloped souls. Spiritualism says, Thy soul, O man, is God's best gift to thee, a seal-patent of thy divine nature, and the pledge of thy immortality. It is all that is imperishable of thee. Keep it pure, use it as the Divine Spirit instructs thy conscience, trust it not to the keeping of another, for most assuredly God will require it of thee.

* 1 Tim. 3. 4.

† The spirits on prayer speak with a power which their exalted experience can alone supply. The following communication from the spirit-world, sent to the MEDIUM by Mr. Goss, is lofty in sentiment and philosophically true:—"Friend, watch for answers to your prayers—faith should wait for that which prayer asketh for; and be not satisfied until you receive an answer, an answer to your prayer. Many pray, but forget their petition so soon after it is uttered; but God the Father, who reads the heart, knows that most men's prayers are but empty sounds. When you receive a good impression, deepen it in your soul before the undeveloped mind cometh between impression and resolution. Lose not a moment, for the spirit of light goeth where and when it listeth. It will see you over your doubts and fears, until impression passes into conviction, and conviction into conversion, and conversion into joy and belief that God is the only love."—How beautiful the teachings of the spirits when compared with the "doctrine of devils," retailed from pulpits!

REVIVALISM.

From THE MEDIUM, No. 269, May 28, p. 343.

We are told that the revival is the message of God to the present age, and that it is the precursor of the millennium ; but there is one aspect in which no one seems to have hitherto regarded it. This is not the first revival, nor is a revival a reformation. There are some historical grounds for regarding a revival as the last despairing struggle of a dying faith, when its supporters, both in and out of the flesh, combine in a last and ineffectual attempt to restore the old order of things which the world has outgrown. Viewed in this light, the present revival ought to be regarded with serious concern by the upholders of traditional Christian unity, as a sign, not of the triumph, but of the rapidly approaching overthrow of Protestant orthodoxy. Let us look at the history of former revivals. The Emperor Julian was a good medium, and pagan spirits used habitually to appear to him in the guise of the ancient gods ;* and his reign marks the last successful struggle of classical paganism against Christianity. There is a precisely similar revival going on under the influence of Ultramontane spirits in France and Belgium, from which the Catholic miracles of the present day result. The rebellion against Christianity and European influence in Madagascar some years ago was also a pagan revival under spiritual influence ; and, as in the case of the revival under Julian, has been followed by the downfall of paganism in the island. Perhaps, too, the rebellions of the Jews against the Romans, at each of which their political and religious influence received the most crushing blows, may be regarded as Jewish revivals. The previous revivals under Hezekiah and Josiah were immediately followed by the captivity, with all its profound and ennobling influences on the earlier Jewish religion. These historical considerations should lead our evangelical friends to pause before they proclaim as the work of God a movement which may perhaps be merely a symptom of the approaching downfall of their whole system of theology.

W. F. K.

* See Gibbon.

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**SPIRITUALISM PROVED BY FACTS: Report of a Two Nights' Debate between C. Bradlaugh, Secularist, and J. Burns, Spiritualist. Price 6d.**

## HINTS TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO INVESTIGATE SPIRITUALISM.

SPIRITUALISTS do not recommend that reports respecting the manifestation of spirits should be received without investigation. Personal experiment should, in every case, form the basis of conviction. Spiritualism is founded on facts within reach of all. Mediumship is a faculty natural to man. The subtle nervous fluid which connects man's spirit with his body while in earth-life also brings the disembodied spirit into relationship with the bodies of men and women who are of a temperament in harmony with the aura or fluid surrounding those in the spirit-world who desire to communicate. The spirit-circle is a combination of magnetic influences arising from the sitters around a table. Thus every class of sitters gets into communication with spirits of a similar grade to themselves. Carefully exclude from the spirit-circle those of a perverse or impure disposition. The utmost harmony and mutual confidence should prevail in the circle. Any number of persons, say from three to ten, may form the spirit-circle. They should meet in a well-lighted room regularly, say twice a week, and at the same hour, all keeping their appointed places. The palms of the hands should be laid lightly on the table. It is not necessary that the sitters touch hands. Sit singing or engaging in pleasing conversation from one to two hours. Never prolong a sitting after parties present get tired, or the medium becomes exhausted. Prolonged sittings give a footing for inferior spirits. If no manifestations occur after a few sittings, then the position of the sitters may be changed, or fresh sitters introduced in place of others who may feel disposed to retire. It is well to secure the co-operation of a developed medium or experienced Spiritualist.

The phenomena obtained may be movements of the table, raps, or some person present may be influenced to write, be thrown into the trance, or made to see spirits. If we give our spirit-friends the necessary conditions, they will soon avail themselves thereof. There is not space here to give full instructions in this matter, but the reader is referred to the following publications:

- RULES for the SPIRIT-CIRCLE. By Emma Hardinge. 1d.  
 THE SPIRIT-CIRCLE and LAWS of MEDIUMSHIP. 1d.  
 MEDIUMSHIP. By Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan. 1d.  
 A SCIENTIFIC VIEW of MODERN SPIRITUALISM. By  
 T. Grant. 1d.  
 MEDIUMS and MEDIUMSHIP. By T. Hazard. 2d.  
 THE PHILOSOPHY of DEATH, describing the Passing of  
 the Spirit from the Body. By A. J. Davis. 2d.  
 WHAT IS DEATH. By Judge Edmonds. 1d.

Applications for Literature, or information on the subject, should be addressed to

J. BURNS, SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.

## WORKS ON SPIRITUALISM AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

- MIRACLES and MODERN SPIRITUALISM. By A. R. Wallace, F.R.S. 5s.
- RESEARCHES in the PHENOMENA of SPIRITUALISM. By W. Crookes, F.R.S. Illustrated. 5s.
- REPORT on SPIRITUALISM of the COMMITTEE of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY. 5s.
- THE LETTERS and TRACTS on SPIRITUALISM of JUDGE EDMONDS. Memorial Edition. Cloth 3s. 6d.
- CONCERNING SPIRITUALISM. By Gerald Massey. Cloth 2s.
- SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM CALMLY CONSIDERED: A Reply to Professor Tyndall's Belfast Address. By Dr. Sexton. Cloth 2s. 6d.; paper 1s.
- RESEARCHES in MODERN SPIRITUALISM. By M.A. (Oxon), appearing monthly in *Human Nature*, 6d. Partly illustrated with spirit-photographs.
- THE IDENTITY of PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY and MODERN SPIRITUALISM. By Dr. Crowell. 10s.
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- THE ARCANES of SPIRITUALISM. By H. Tuttle. 5s.
- ANACALYPSIS: The Great Work of Godfrey Higgins. In Parts, 2s. 6d. each.
- WHERE ARE THE DEAD? or Spiritualism Explained. By Fritz. 3s.
- SPIRITUALISM, its Facts and Phases. By J. H. Powell. 2s.
- OUTLINES of MODERN SPIRITUALISM. T. P. Barkas. 1s. 6d.
- SPIRITUALISM; or the EXPERIENCES of a SCEPTIC. 1s. 6d.; cloth 2s. 6d.
- THE MIND: its VARIED CONDITIONS and CAPACITIES. By J. Hands, M.R.C.S. 2s. 6d.
- THE MENTAL: a MODE of ORIENTAL DIVINATION. By E. B. B. Baker, a British Vice-Consul. 7s. 6d.
- SUPERMUNDANE FACTS in the LIFE of Rev. J. B. FERGUSON, D.D. 3s. 6d.
- THE HISTORY of the SUPERNATURAL in all AGES and NATIONS. By W. Howitt. 18s.
- THE TWO WORLDS. By T. Brevior. 9s.
- THE SPIRITUAL LYRE: a Collection of Hymns and Songs for Spiritualists. 6d. and 1s.
- THE SYMPATHY of RELIGIONS. By J. W. Higginson. 2d.
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