THE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL

OBJECTIONS TO

SPIRITUALISM

ANSWERED IN A COLLOQUY BETWEEN A CLERGYMAN AND AN EX-PARISHIONER.

PUBLISHED BY THE SECULAR PRESS BUREAU OF THE AMERICAN SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

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EXPLANATORY.

THIS pamphlet is issued by the *Secular Press Bureau*, organized under the direction of the American Spiritualist Alliance, for the purpose of vindicating modern Spiritualism against the attacks of the Press and Pulpit.

The secular newspapers, with some regard to fairness, often admit to their columns replies to such attacks; but neither the religious journals and periodicals nor the church pulpit ever permit the other side to be heard. Though they quite frequently denounce Spiritualism with great acrimony and violence, and studiously endeavor to bring the whole subject and its adherents into reprobation, they yet positively refuse all opportunity for the correction of their erroneous statements, seeming to be rather anxious to support their own sectarian systems of theology than to advance the cause of truth.

It is on this account that the Bureau—refused a hearing where it may justly be claimed, at the tribunal before which their cause is impeached—issues this publication, the specific object of which is to show the animus with which Spiritualism is usually assailed, as well as the objections urged against it by Protestant clergymen; and to present an answer to the same by means of arguments based upon the Scriptures themselves, since these constitute the only standard of spiritual truth accepted by the assailants.

The endeavor has been to show that these clerical objections are, on Scriptural ground, untenable, self-destructive, and calculated to subvert the very system of faith which these mistaken religionists are striving to uphold, by keeping from their followers the "new light" that is now coming into the world.

In this pamphlet both sides are permitted to be heard; for the objections are such as are constantly being made against Spiritualism in the pulpit and the religious press, and usually in the very words in which they are here expressed. The perusal of the pamphlet may, therefore,

be commended to all fair-minded Christian men and women who are not afraid to exercise their own judgment, not too bigoted to look at any views but their own, nor so presumptuous as to believe that they have reached the *ne plus ultra* of religious truth, or the ultimate limits of the human intellect in its investigation of spiritual facts and laws.

The objections of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and those of materialistic scientists, require distinct treatment. Answers to these, as far as may be required, will hereafter be published by the Bureau.

NEW YORK, *April* 15, 1884.

HENRY KIDDLE, *President.*
NELSON CROSS, *Secretary.*
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COLLOQUY.

REV. DR. —— (*meeting Mr. Smith, a former member of his church, but now a convert to Spiritualism*). Brother Smith, I am glad to meet you this morning. I have for some time desired to talk with you on an important subject. If you are not otherwise engaged, I wish you would come with me to my study, where we may converse undisturbed.

MR. SMITH. With pleasure. I shall be glad to converse with you on any matter of interest.

[*After being seated in the Rev. Doctor's study, they continue the conversation as follows:*]

DR. ——. I greatly regret to learn, Brother Smith, that you have become a believer in what is called Spiritualism. I fear you will imperil the salvation of your soul if you permit yourself to be ensnared by those people. As you were once a devoted and esteemed member of my church, I feel greatly interested in your welfare, and hence take the liberty due to my former pastoral relation to offer you some friendly advice, which I trust you will receive in the friendly spirit in which it is given.

MR. SMITH. Far be it from me to take offense at any kindly expression of interest in my welfare, or at any expression of sentiments, however adverse to my own. Spiritualists, I find, accept most fully the Christian doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man; and I now, no less than formerly, regard all men and women as my brothers and sisters, and reciprocate most warmly all well-intentioned efforts to afford me instruction, whether temporal or spiritual; for I myself am always ready to impart to others the knowledge I have gained by my investigations in Spiritualism, and to teach those truths that I have found so full of encouragement and consolation in regard to the future life. I once vaguely tried to believe in that life; I accepted its reality on *faith;* but now I have a conviction of it that is tantamount to actual knowledge. I need no longer to ask with Job: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Spirit-

ualism has most truly "brought life and immortality to light" within my mind and my soul; and I rejoice with exceeding joy, thanking God for my deliverance from torturing doubt, and saying with the apostle: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Why then, my friend, should you, who always, but I must say now, vainly, tried to convince me of this fact, regret that I have found so complete a refuge for my soul, even though it be in that now despised faith called Modern Spiritualism? Do you *know* anything against the new spiritual belief? If so, I should be glad to have you tell me of it, for I desire only what is true and good.

Dr. ——. Well, that is a righteous spirit; and I doubt not, therefore, I shall be able to show you the sinfulness of this attempt (as I and many others of my brethren regard it) to revive the old practices of magic, divination, or necromancy, so strongly and clearly forbidden in the sacred oracles of God. The Bible gives us all the evidence we need, or can lawfully obtain, of the truth of immortality.

Mr. Smith. I confess I have searched through the various books of the Old Testament with anxious earnestness, and I have found scarcely anything directly bearing on the immortality of the soul or the future life. The promises made to the Jews through Moses and the prophets were temporal. Warburton, in his "Divine Legation," as De Quincey says, bases his argument on the fact that Moses assumed the *mortality* of the soul, and De Quincey adds: "The very existence of such a sect as the Sadducees proves sufficiently that no positive affirmation of the soul's immortality could have been accredited among the Hebrew nation as a Mosaic doctrine." Then in Ecclesiastes, a book said to be written by a man specially endowed with wisdom by God, I read: "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward"; and also, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; *as the one dieth, so dieth the other;* yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." It is true that in the last chapter of that singular book I find these words in reference to death: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"; but they contain no statement of any surviving personality. And the same may be said of the beast, the body goes to dust, and the life, whatever it may be, returns to its source.

In the new edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica there is a learned article, written by a clergyman, on the subject of *Eschatology* (the "doctrine

of last things," or the *future state*), and I read it with great care to find what evidence could be found by a clerical scholar to support the doctrine of immortality. It gives many myths, prevalent traditions, and superstitions upon the future condition of souls, but no texts from Scripture; and admits that "the first clear note of immortality in Hebrew literature is struck in the Book of Wisdom, the work of an Alexandrian Jew"—a book which is apocryphal to Protestants.

Then I turned to the Burial Service of Christian churches. Surely, I said to myself, clergymen will present, on such occasions, all that the Bible affords to give hope and consolation to mourning relatives and friends. But I found, besides St. Paul's statement, only one definite text from Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." These are explicit and beautiful words; they have been farther enriched by an association with magnificent music, as in the glorious anthem of Handel. But I remembered that just before this utterance, the patriarch had anxiously asked: "If a man die, shall he live again?" I, therefore, examined the context of the passage; and I found Job saying, in reply to the accusation of his friends: "Why do ye persecute me even as God doth, and are not satisfied with my flesh" [i. e. to have my flesh corrupted, but must persecute me with reproaches]? "O that my words were now written! O that they were printed in a book, graven with an iron pen, chiseled upon a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth," etc. The word *Redeemer* should rather be *avenger* or *vindicator*, as Mr. Froude has pointed out. Job felt assured in his innocence that God would vindicate him from the unjust reproaches of his "comforters," and though after his skin had all perished from the disease which afflicted him, and even should his flesh too be removed, yet God would restore him, and he should see the goodness of his Heavenly Father—he himself should see it, and not another for him. If there be any reference whatever to death in this passage it is very obscure, and certainly does not, as Christians believe, indicate the resurrection of the body.*

* Mr. Froude has shown the inaccuracy of the received translation of this passage, several words not in the original being introduced, as denoted by italics in the following: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth; and *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh I shall see God." The translators themselves say that for the phrase

And in those beautiful Psalms (xxxix. and xc.), in which the Hebrew Psalmist mournfully expatiates on the shortness and uncertainty of life, I have always been surprised to find no words of consolation in regard to the future life, but rather the contrary: "O spare me a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more."

I have, however, at least one exception to this arraignment of the materialistic teaching of the Old Testament, and that is the wonderful story of the necromantic woman of Endor, by whose means (we should now say *mediumship*) the spirit of Samuel appeared to Saul and warned him of his impending fate. Here was direct and positive proof of the survival of the intelligent personality of a human being after the death of the body; but, to my astonishment, I have found that this woman is condemned as a "witch"; and the appearance of the deceased prophet either pronounced a dreadful sin on the part of the king and the woman, or else explained away as a "sad delusion." What do you think of this affair?

Dr. ——. It undoubtedly was the crime of necromancy, which Moses forbade, under the penalty of death.

Mr. Smith. But independently of the question of criminality or sin, the fact remains, as attested by the sacred historian, that Samuel actually appeared. The exact words are: "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me," etc.; and moreover, he predicted the issue of the impending battle, saying: "The Lord will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons *be with me.*" This seems to me the strongest proof in the whole Bible of the continued existence of the soul after death; and yet clergymen try to discredit it, and to explain it away.

Dr. ——. As I have already said, all commerce between living men and the dwellers of the spirit-world, whether the spirits of the departed or those of another order, was strictly prohibited by the sacred Jewish law, especial mention being made of those who "consult with familiar spirits," practice witchcraft, divination, enchantment, charms, necromancy, or any form of magic. In Deuteronomy xviii. you will find an enumeration of all these sinful practices, which are pronounced by the inspired

in my flesh we may read (and more properly) *out of my flesh*, or *without my flesh*. "Stand upon the earth" should rather be *stand upon my dust;* that is to say, "my next of kin, my avenger, shall stand upon my grave." Here Job speaks of God as fulfilling the duty of his "next of kin," to vindicate or avenge him.

record an "abomination unto the Lord." Saul was guilty of a gross violation of that law in seeking to learn the future through necromancy, or calling up the spirits of the dead, and that sin Spiritualists are still guilty of.

MR. SMITH. And if it was so grievous and deadly a sin, why did Samuel, the holy prophet, appear, and thus make himself *particeps criminis* in the act?

DR. ——. God evidently permitted it, perhaps as a solemn warning; and Samuel significantly complained that he was disquieted. His peaceful rest was disturbed. It is a dreadful thing to disturb the sacred repose of the holy dead.

MR. SMITH. You think, then, that Samuel was compelled to appear by some magical power exercised by the woman—that he was "disquieted" because he could not resist that power? If so, how could this have been specially ordered by God, since the whole affair seems to have been brought about by the woman in compliance with the king's wishes?

DR. ——. I do not say *ordered;* I said permitted. The particular circumstances as related are difficult to comprehend rationally; but the great lesson taught is that we should not consult the dead.

MR. SMITH. I cannot so construe it. Saul learned the truth of his coming fate, and should have provided against it as he might; and he received the consolatory assurance that, after his death, he and his sons would be with the holy prophet in the world of spirits. It seems to me, sin or no sin, that this was a great boon to him; and that this fact of the return of the spirit of a human being from the "land of souls" is the most glorious that we find in the Old Testament records.

DR. ——. But I do not wish you to understand me as admitting that it really was Samuel who appeared. Many hold that it was a mere phantom.

MR. SMITH. I am aware that some clergymen discredit the Bible, which they yet assert is plenarily inspired, by holding to such a hypothesis; but I recently examined Dr. Smith's Dictionary on this very subject, and will cite the very words which are employed in regard to this point [art. *Magic*]: "Some may even object to our holding it to have been aught but a phantom of a sick brain; but, if so, what can we make of the woman's conviction that it was Samuel, and the king's horror at the words he heard, or, as these would say, that he thought he heard? It was not only the hearing his doom, but the hearing it in a voice from

the other world that stretched the faithless strong man on the ground. He must have felt the presence of the dead, and heard the sound of a sepulchral voice. How else could the doom [prophecy] have come true, and not the king alone, but his sons, have gone to the place of disembodied souls on the morrow?"

DR. ——. But the apparition might have been real, and yet not actually the disembodied spirit of Samuel.

MR. SMITH. I give to this the reply of the Bible Dictionary: "The supposition that a messenger came in Samuel's stead must be rejected, as it would make the speech a mixture of truth and untruth." Besides, Josephus, in his narrative of this event, speaks of the appearance as a reality; and in the book styled "The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach," we find a eulogium of Samuel, in which it is said of him: "*After his death*, he prophesied and showed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy, *to blot out the wickedness of the people*." This certainly was not a sinful purpose; and thus the interpretation of this transaction by the author of this book is such as to attest its reality, and to approve of its design and influence. It is true, the "Wisdom of Jesus" is an apocryphal book; but the early Christian Fathers held it in almost as high respect as the canonical books, and the Roman Church accepts it as canonical. Luther translated it, remarking, "It is a right good book, proceeding from a wise man."

DR. ——. All that may be true enough; but the laws which God gave to the Jews, as I have already said, explicitly condemned necromancy, divination, and all kindred practices as unholy, as an "abomination unto the Lord."

MR. SMITH. Am I to understand, then, that the Levitical law is still binding upon us—both Jews and Gentiles? If this is so, why do we not conform to it in all respects, including the rite of circumcision, the eating of the flesh of swine and other animals pronounced by that code as unclean, the taking of interest on money loaned to the poor, the directions as to gleanings (Levit. xix. 9, 10), sacrifices, the sabbatical year, the year of Jubilee (Levit. xxv.), and many others now entirely disregarded? You cannot have forgotten the following emphatic directions: "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard"; also, "Ye shall eat no manner of fat"; with many other prohibitions that at this time are manifestly absurd. I may also remind you that slavery of a most revolting character was permitted by this sacred code, which is represented as given in the very words of Jehovah

himself, who (in Exod. xxi.) says: "If a slave's master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." But, it goes on to say, if the hapless husband and father refused his freedom on that condition, his ear was to be bored with an awl, and he became "a slave forever." Moreover, is not God represented as saying: "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe"? Certainly, this code, which you call the "sacred oracles of God," can have no authority in the Christian civilization of the nineteenth century.

DR. ——. Of course it is not all binding, some being based on local or temporary conditions; as to the command contained in the words, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth," etc., it was especially abrogated by Christ, as you are well aware.

MR. SMITH. What! abrogate a "sacred oracle of God"! Do not the words of Christ show that he knew it was not God's command: "*Ye have heard that it was said of old*, 'an eye for an eye,'" etc., "but I say unto you," etc. How would this sound: "*God* said of old, thou shalt give eye for eye, etc., but *I* say unto you, that ye resist not evil"?

But did he not also abrogate, *by his act and example*, whatever prohibition the law of Moses contained against pure spirit intercourse in holding communion with the glorified spirits of Moses and Elias on the holy mount? Was there not a peculiar significance in the presence of the earthly author of that code on that occasion? Could any law, as William Howitt remarks, be more effectually annulled?*

DR. ——. But this was all of a special character, and designed not to abrogate the law of Moses, but to serve a particular purpose in connection with Christ's mission. It was done by an exercise of his peculiar powers as the Christ.

MR. SMITH. Possibly so; but did he not tell his disciples, "The works that I do, ye shall do also; and greater works than these shall ye do"? If he could cause the appearance of the holy spirits of the departed and talk with them, then his disciples, or those who believed on him, could and can do the same. Else why was he careful to have certain selected

* "The Lord of life, who was about to become the Prince of the spirits of the dead, broke the law prohibiting the intercourse with the spirits of the dead, and in no other presence than that of the promulgator of that law, who had long been a spirit of the dead, and at the same time in the presence of those selected by Christ to teach this great act to posterity."—*Howitt's History of the Supernatural.*

members of the twelve present at this divine séance as witnesses of the example which he set?

DR. ——. Your interpretation of the purpose of this great scene of the Transfiguration is entirely erroneous. Dr. Hanna says, very properly, its object was to show to the disciples the "harmony between their Master's teaching and that of Moses and the prophets,"—to prove to them that Jesus came not "to destroy, but to fulfil."

MR. SMITH. But Bishop Porteous said: "One great purpose of the action on the Mount was to give a figurative signification of the abrogation of the Mosaical law, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation upon which it was to be established." So that, as I perceive, clergymen are not agreed as to the design of this event.

DR. ——. You forget that the most important circumstance of that scene was the "transfiguration" of Christ. That was an exhibition which none of his disciples could imitate.

MR. SMITH. In making that statement, do you not forget the scene in the council, when Stephen was about to suffer martyrdom for his Master? The words descriptive of his transfiguration in Acts (vi. 15) are, "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." This was a partial transfiguration at least.

DR. ——. It looks to me, I must candidly say, like a profanation to construe this wonderful fact of the Saviour's transfiguration and his meeting these two holy spirits into a positive and general permission to hold intercourse with the spirits of the dead, so strongly condemned by the "law and the prophets." The latter, as you know, most emphatically condemn all such practices. Isaiah speaks against those that "seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and that mutter"; and Jeremiah tells us not to hearken to prophets, diviners, dreamers, enchanters, and sorcerers (xxvii. 9, and xxix. 8, 9). Micah (iii. 7) says "The seers shall be ashamed and the diviners confounded"; and Zachariah (x. 2) speaks of the lies and false dreams of the diviners. It is thus evident that God regards with very great disapprobation this whole business of "seeking for the living to the dead," instead of seeking "to the law and to the testimony." Men should consult the oracles of the living God rather than seek mediums that "peep and mutter," and "whisper out of the dust." It is only when people have lost their faith in God, and regard his revelation as insufficient, that they turn away from Him to listen to these voices from another world.

MR. SMITH. My attention has already been called to the passages of Scripture which you cite, and after studying them in connection with the context, it is obvious to me that what is condemned in them is a wrongful and unholy use of spirit intercourse, which the practice of divination and the magic art usually was among an ignorant and depraved people. It was a recourse to the lower orders of spirits to learn of the future in order to promote some selfish purpose, in connection with the affairs of this world, instead of promoting some great and noble object—our own spiritual improvement or that of others, or the good of mankind. There evidently was a holy, as well as an unholy, spirit communication or divination. Thus the prophet Ezekiel (xiii.) prophesies against the *legal* prophets of Israel as being false,—"that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing. . . . They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them." Jeremiah condemns only false prophets, the mediums for communication with untruthful spirits; while he himself was a medium for the higher, purer spirits, the messengers of the divine will. We have many mediums at this time who are mediums for this high order of spirits, and who are indeed as much the "prophets of God" as Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Jeremiah was. This is how I have come to view inspiration and mediumship (anciently called *prophecy*) as the result of universal and eternal laws, and therefore always the same under the same conditions. For myself I have never seen any mediums that "peep and mutter" or "whisper out of the dust." The spirits that have communicated with me have delivered messages as pure and holy as those of Isaiah and Jeremiah. They seem to be given now, as they were in ancient times, to restore to the human mind faith in God and spiritual things. It was on this account that Micah prophesied to the faithless, corrupt, materialistic Jews the absence of spirit intercourse *as a curse*, in the memorable words: "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them." While the prophet Joel, on the other hand, predicted the return of spirit manifestation, mediumship, clairvoyance, such as we have now, as a blessing to a spiritually-minded people: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." It is well to remember, likewise, that the holy prophets,—Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.,—were not the legal priestly prophets or mediums, but those

endowed with special gifts from on high. They acted and spoke with no human sanction; they were condemned and persecuted, just as the mediums are now, by the authority of prevailing laws and institutions, which upheld the "false prophets," whom these divinely gifted messengers denounced.

DR. ——. God certainly sent his prophets to rebuke sin, to prophesy what was to occur, and thus to carry out an essential purpose in connection with his great scheme of revelation and salvation; but, surely, you do not class these sacred personages with the low, ignorant, and depraved mediums of this time—the fortune-tellers, astrologers, clairvoyants, *et id omne genus?*

MR. SMITH. Of course I do not class them with "low," or "depraved," or unspiritual mediums; what I have already said shows this. All such are merely the instruments of a lower order of spirits, if they are not pretenders, as some are. We must exercise a careful and prudent judgment in these things, as, indeed, was necessary to distinguish between Isaiah and Ezekiel and the low mediums of that age. But all mediumship is a sacred gift, and, whether used by high or low spirits, may teach many useful lessons to those who are wise and good enough to receive them. In this age we are beginning to understand the principles and laws of inspiration, spirit manifestation, and communion much better than they were known in the times of Moses and the prophets.

DR. ——. Well, I perceive you have looked into these points, but I think you have sadly gone astray; and what you have urged appears to me only an ingenious apology for the grievous sin of divination and witchcraft.

MR. SMITH. Divination, according to the Bible, was not always a sin. Was not Joseph a remarkably good and pious man, and was he not specially blessed by God in the very exercise of his gifts as a dreamer, a seer, and a diviner? You know he is said to have divined by means of a cup.

DR. ——. Joseph was a *divine* prophet. He received light directly from God, and his prophetic gifts were intended to form a part of God's great design in connection with His chosen people. Thus, too, Samuel was a holy prophet, and spoke as God directed.

MR. SMITH. But what is the evidence for that statement? Which do you think is true, that Samuel was mistaken in the source of his inspiration when he selected Saul as king, or, as the record says, "the Lord *repented* that he had made Saul king over Israel"? While in Numbers (xxiii.

19) you remember it is said: "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." Here is a manifest contradiction.

DR. ——. Saul was rejected for his disobedience to the commands of God. God, therefore, dethroned him as a punishment. The word *repent* is used by the inspired writer in a figurative sense, not to imply change in the divine purpose, but the change in condition necessarily brought about by the apostasy of Saul. This does not bear upon the subject of "dealing with the dead," which has always been a heinous sin.

MR. SMITH. Spiritualists cannot be accused of any such sin; they communicate with the *living*, not with the "dead." The spirits of the departed are certainly not dead; and some of the most pious characters in Bible history had intercourse with them. Thus Abraham had such "dealing" with spirits, called *men* in the narrative. Lot was visited by these spiritual messengers in human form. Such a spirit ministered to Hagar. Manoah's wife, when visited by the spirit, told her husband that a "man of God" came to her. Ezekiel speaks of "six men," meaning spirits, who "came from the way of the higher gate"; and Daniel also speaks of his spiritual visitants as *men*. Coming down to New Testament times, we find Mark (xvi. 5) speaking of the spirit who was seen at the sepulchre of Jesus as a "young man"; Luke says, "*two men* stood by them in shining garments" (xxiv. 4). In Acts (i. 10) we read that, "as he went up, behold, *two men* stood by them in white apparel"; and in the Revelation of John the angel distinctly declares his character, saying: "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." Luke says (xx. 36) the spirits of good men are "equal unto the angels"; in fact the Greek word *ἰσάγγελοι* may mean really the *same as angels*. In Hebrews (xiii. 22, 23), the "spirits of just men made perfect" are associated with angels, and even with "God, the Judge of all."

From these texts it appears to me evident that the purified spirits of men are angelic beings. Dr. Smith says: "The angels are revealed to us as beings such as man might be, and *will be*, when the power of sin and death is removed."

DR. ——. If this is so, why is it that the angels never said who they were—never gave their earthly names, coming only in their general character as divine messengers?

MR. SMITH. Exalted and purified spirits do not, except for particular reasons, announce themselves in this way. They have no concern for, or interest in, their earthly personality after it has been merged in their

spiritual character and life. They view it as mere childhood in comparison with the more mature state of their spiritual existence. What man cares to discourse upon his babyhood or youth after he has "put away childish things"? There are very many communications from exalted spirits in these days in which no earthly personality is mentioned, the spiritual name being alone given.

DR. ——. Does not the fact that these spirits declare themselves to be the spirits of the dead show that they are evil spirits, or, as the Bible calls them, "familiar spirits"?

MR. SMITH. The facts are opposed to this theory, and common sense seems to disprove it. If the spirit of my father appears to me, and presents his earthly characteristics of face and figure, mien and speech, referring to matters known to him and me only, and giving me the advice and precepts of a father, why should I pronounce him an "evil spirit"?

DR. ——. Because we know that the blessed dead do not leave their state of repose to visit the children of earth. Hence, it is obviously a deceiving spirit, an emissary of Satan, coming (to use the words of the apostle) as an "angel of light," to seduce you from Christ and his church.

MR. SMITH. But we know that the "blessed dead," as you call the purified spirits of the departed, do visit the children of earth. The instances already referred to of Samuel, Moses, and Elias, should prove this to you. Then, again, there was the appearance of Jesus to his disciples, after his death.

DR. ——. But Christ was the Son of God, and his resurrection was a special and peculiar event. You cannot reason from that in regard to ordinary persons.

MR. SMITH. I see no reason why we should not. You admit that Jesus was man as well as God, partaking of our common human nature, subject to temptation, to sorrow, to pain, to physical agony, even to fear (as in Gethsemane). Thus did he appear in his mortal life, and it was as a man, and only as a man, that he appeared in what is called his resurrection. Indeed, in his expressive words to Mary, he seemed to repudiate any other nature than that of humanity: "Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father, and to *my* God and *your* God." Dr. Channing said: "The great object of such a manifestation was, no doubt, to prove that the soul lives after death; that it has the power of mingling in the scenes of this world, and of communing with those in this stage of being for wise and ennobling purposes." Was not this St. Paul's belief? He preached "Christ *and the Resurrection*,"

laying great stress upon the latter. "If Christ be preached," he said to the Corinthians, "that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" And again, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain."

Moreover, Christ appeared to the persecuting zealot Saul in his earthly character, saying, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," and thus, by a spirit manifestation, converted the bigoted Jewish enthusiast into the earnest Christian apostle Paul. Many clergymen, at this time, who are persecuting Spiritualism might, even "at noon-day," be converted in a similar manner to the truth, if they would consent to look at the radiance which it brings. Indeed, many are being converted in this way continually, as the cases of Dr. Davies, Dr. Newman, Mr. Samuel Watson, and numerous others show. Did not Christ also appear in his personal human character to Ananias; and subsequently to Paul and Timothy in Mysia, as is stated in Acts (xvi. 7), the words being, "And when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, and the *spirit of Jesus* suffered them not"?

DR. ——. In my Bible it is, "the spirit suffered them not." You do not quote the passage correctly.

MR. SMITH. I am quoting from the Revised Version, in which the significant omission of the former translators is supplied, as it had been long before in Dean Alford's translation. The "spirit of Jesus" is a phrase of peculiar significance, and I am not surprised that the extremely orthodox should desire to change it.

If St. Paul lived in these days we should be obliged to call him a Spiritualist. He was peculiarly the apostle of immortality, as the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians shows. It is spiritualistic in its reasoning and philosophy, and based on the spiritualistic fact of the reappearance of the "spirit of Jesus," announcing his name and personality, and proving his identity even to the skeptical Thomas. St. Paul also had seen the exercise of the spiritual gifts (*χαρισματα*), and enumerates and describes them in such a way as to show that they, in the main, corresponded to many of the phases of mediumship now so often seen. He did not condemn their exercise, but said, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues?" and also, "Of spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

DR. ——. Your mediums do not "prophesy," they do not foretell, although some claim to do so, and usually, by the utter failure of the prediction, show that they are deceivers or deceived.

MR. SMITH. The mediums do very often foretell future events, and their predictions come true; but, as you should be aware, the word *prophesy* in the Scriptures does not necessarily mean *foretell*, but rather to exercise any of the spiritual gifts, or, in present parlance, to use mediumship. Thus, in Dr. Smith's Bible Dictionary (art. *Prophet*) I find the following: "Neither prescience nor prediction is implied by the term *prophet* as used in Hebrew, Greek, or English." In the Old Testament a prophet is a *seer*, as is expressly stated (1 Samuel, ix. 9). In the Acts (xxi. 9), it is stated that Philip the Evangelist, one of the holiest and wisest of the early Christian proselytes, "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy"; that is, evidently were *mediums*, such as we find in so many families,—even Christian and refined families,—at this time.*

DR. ——. St. Paul and the other apostles condemned all spiritualistic performances in their presence, as the case of Elymas the sorcerer shows.

MR. SMITH. It was the abuse of spiritual gifts, their prostitution to selfish, unholy purposes, that they condemned. Hence, while they spurned such as Simon and Elymas, and the maid that had a familiar spirit, "which brought her masters much gain," they respected the daughters of Philip. Peter heeded the holy spirit that appeared to him; and it was a "spirit of the Lord" that caught away Philip (Acts, viii. 39). Thus, there were two distinct kinds of spirit manifestation then as now,—the one pure and holy, the other impure and selfish. The church should acknowledge the facts, and teach its members to distinguish between them, instead of vainly endeavoring to crush out all such manifestations.

DR. ——. The church has something better to do. It has its divine mission, and if men will heed it they will be saved; if not, they must inevitably go to perdition. They have been warned not "to give heed to seducing spirits," or listen to the "doctrines of devils"; and, if they reject the warning, they alone will have to suffer the sad consequences of their infatuation and sin. I regret to find that your mind is so permeated with the sophistry of Spiritualists. Indeed, much of what you have said seems to me akin to blasphemy.

* "Hebrew prophecy never was the synonym for prediction, it meant forthtelling. The prophets were 'men of the spirit,' whose pure nature mirrored the supreme laws of earth, the moral laws; whose intuitions made application of those laws to the policies of statecraft, and enabled them to divine the issues of the stirring events amid which they lived. . . . . In these predictions they were often mistaken; nearly as often in error as in the right . . . . I believe I know of no one passage of the prophets which can be certainly said to point to any event beyond the near future of the writer."—*Rev. R. Heber Newton.*

MR. SMITH. I am prepared to listen to a specific refutation of the arguments I have presented, but mere general assertions and sweeping condemnations cannot convince me of error. The church and its supporters pursue a mistaken policy, in these days, when they attempt to use authority instead of argument. Millions now think for themselves—they reason and they compare, and if they find contradictions in what is presented to them as infallible truth, coming directly from the divine mind, they cannot be satisfied, as they once were, by being told that only an inspired and divinely-called priesthood can understand and explain these things, or possess the power to prescribe them as mysteries, or "articles of belief."

You must confess, my friend, that the creeds of the churches are fast becoming a dead letter. Science and philosophy trample them under their feet; while Materialism and Atheism stalk about with head erect, scoffing at all spiritual teaching. The church, as you admit, has no message which they will heed; but the simple "rapping" of the lowest of spirits is sufficient to shake their lofty citadel to its foundations. It seems to me that the church should use every means offered, in the providence of God, to save human souls.

DR. ——. Do you think that the church of Christ can employ *demonism* to save men's souls?

MR. SMITH. What do you mean by *demonism?*

DR. ——. I mean having anything to do with low, devilish spirits, such as those which Christ cast out by the exercise of his divine power.

MR. SMITH. Then Christ had to do with them, and he told his disciples to do the same. Don't you profess to be a disciple of Christ?

DR. ——. I do; a very humble and unworthy one, however; but the age has changed since he came. There are no miracles now such as he wrought.

MR. SMITH. You admit that there are *demons*, or spirits, that possess persons, as they did of old, according to the New Testament, and you think the mediums are influenced by such spirits, and such only?

DR. ——. So it appears to me, if they are under the influence of any spirits except Satan himself.

MR. SMITH. Are you following your Master's example, then, in railing at these unfortunate victims of diabolical malice, instead of going to them, and casting out these possessing spirits? Jesus, it seems to me, was wiser, as well as more charitable. He relieved these sufferers, and taught his disciples to do the same. He even violated the sabbatical

law of the Jews, in order to cast out the devilish spirit, saying to his priestly accuser: "Ought not this woman whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" And you remember that in Luke (ix. 49) we read that, on one occasion, John said: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us."

DR. ——. And you should not forget that, on one occasion, the demons said to Christ: "We know thee, who thou art, the holy Son of God," thus recognizing the divinity of Christ, and trembling with fear lest he should consign them at once to the *abyss*—in Hebrew, *abaddon;* in Greek, *apoleia;* in the Revelation of St. John, the "Lake of Fire."

MR. SMITH. Of course, the unprogressed spirits recognized the high spiritual character of Jesus; but he did not claim to exercise the special powers of God in casting them out. You remember that the man who brought to Jesus his son that had a dumb spirit stated that the disciples had failed to cast him out; and Jesus exclaimed, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?" meaning, I suppose, What will you do without me? And after the spirit had been cast out, the disciples asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" His answer was, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." He did not tell them that it was because they were not of the same divine nature as himself, that they were not God, but because their spiritual powers had not been properly developed. The word *demon* does not necessarily mean a bad or low spirit. You will find, if you investigate this subject, that the spirits (Greek, *δαιμονες*) who control mediums are of various grades, some as pure as angels, others as low, ignorant, and depraved as many of the spirits whom we see in the flesh. This is what we might expect, since disembodied spirits pass into the future life with their earthly characteristics.

DR. ——. I don't believe any good spirits communicate through mediums, for they know it is a sin to do so, even if they could. Mediumship is a device of Satan, and is doing only his work in these times. It is not of God.

MR. SMITH. This is a sweeping assertion. Are you prepared to prove that no medium, in this age, has ever been controlled by a spirit of God, that is, a spirit acting in his will and obeying his laws? Allow me to ask you, how many mediums have you consulted?

DR. ——. What! I consult with mediums? I am a minister of God.

I do not seek those that "mutter and peep"; but I have read of their doings, and I know what vile stuff they communicate. Let me say again, it is "strong delusion," to use the words of St. Paul. Those who consult mediums are taken captive at the will of Satan. "Not liking to retain God in their knowledge, God gives them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," as St. Paul said of the Romans.

MR. SMITH. Then you have never investigated this subject yourself? You have never witnessed any of the spirit manifestations? How, then, can you justly condemn them?

DR. ——. I may never have seen murder, or robbery, or other heinous violations of the laws of God, yet it is my duty to condemn them, and preach against them. Your apology for this modern necromancy is very plausible, but no true servant of God should be influenced by it.

MR. SMITH. In asserting that all spirit intercourse is sinful, notwithstanding the many arguments I have advanced to the contrary, which you have scarcely attempted to refute, you beg the whole question. Let me say, there are many able and worthy clergymen, both in this and other countries, who have investigated this subject, and have publicly borne witness to its importance, as well as to the reality and purity of the spirit communications. Dr. Maurice Davies, of the Church of England, in 1881, addressed a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he said: "I have been for thirty years an ordained minister of the Church of England, and for twenty-five out of those thirty years I have been an investigator into what is called Spiritualism, though it was only after long delay and diligent use of all the powers I could bring to bear on the question that I at length yielded my tardy and almost reluctant assent." And he goes on to say: "I asked what the power was that communicated, and was told that the spirits of the departed had the power given them. I asked for what purpose, keeping my written question concealed from all but myself; and the answer given to me was, 'It may make men believe in God.' And this is what I find, as a fact, it has done. I have seen men, young men especially, who would be sobered and chastened by nothing else, sobered and chastened by this." And he very pertinently asks: "Can we, my Lord, afford to depreciate an instrumentality which accomplishes such a result, even though we feel we should prefer to work with other machinery?"

In November, 1882, Rev. Dr. J. P. Newman, of New York, preached a discourse on the question "Do the Dead Return?" in which he took decided Spiritualistic ground; and subsequently, in an interview with a reporter of the *New York Tribune*, he expressed his belief,—as founded on the event narrated in the Bible, and on the recent experience of many persons,—that the spirits of the departed return and communicate with us. He said: "Nothing is more clearly taught in the Bible, not less than five persons being recorded there as having returned"—including Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and Samuel, with St. Paul, who was taken to heaven and saw unutterable things. Dr. Newman added that he had been a believer in spirit communication for twenty years. Very many other clergymen, some of great distinction, could be cited; but here are *two witnesses* who speak, after a long and careful investigation, not like you, who refuse to investigate. They speak, too, as ministers of God, and they speak with confidence.

Dr. ——. I do not submit my conscience to other men. My judgment of Spiritualism has been formed with care, though I have not dabbled with mediums, and I will not. Let me briefly summarize my objections to it:—

1. It is, as I have said, akin to, if not the same as, the ancient necromancy which the Bible condemns. It is *demonism*, for it is wholly based on communications not from God, but from spirits, and I believe from the fallen spirits, the agents of Satan.

2. It can be the source of no reliable information, and hence its books are full of contradictions. It is admitted that the spirits are good, bad, and indifferent, and those who listen to them must judge between them. Thus, one spirit commends the Bible, and speaks reverently of God and the Saviour; and the next one that comes along talks like an arrant atheist or infidel. Whom shall we believe? Which shall we trust? How can we know that any are trustworthy?

Moreover, how are we to know that any of these spirits are what they assume to be? They say they are the spirits of certain deceased persons, but it has been proved that some spirits often *personate* others. When a person goes to a medium to obtain a communication from a relative or friend, or from the spirit of some good and holy man, there can be no certainty that the one responding is the one called for. It may be a wicked spirit, or a demon, passing himself off for the person whose presence is desired. I know many persons who have been imposed upon in that way. The very idea that religious truth, the truth neces-

sary for salvation, can be obtained from such a source, seems to me not only absurd but really shocking.

There is an additional element of uncertainty in the well-known law of mesmerism or psychology, that it is possible for the medium to be so completely *en rapport* with the inquirer as to be able to obtain from his mind all those facts which so startle him, and convince him of the supernatural origin of the information he receives. Dr. G. W. Samson, in his learned book on the subject, says, indeed, that nothing is ever communicated through a medium which is not known either to the medium or the inquirer, and others have said the same thing. Thus it is obvious that this consulting of spirits through mediums is utterly unsafe and unreliable, presenting no practical guide for the present life or the life to come.

3. It is opposed to God, to the revealed word, and to Jesus Christ. This is clearly shown by the fact that most Spiritualists repudiate the divine authority of God's word, reject its teachings concerning sin and its consequences, disbelieve in Christ's atonement and in a spiritual regeneration, deny the divine nature, sometimes even the existence, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the absolute truth of his teachings, his sacrificial death, and his resurrection life in heaven. Thus this modern spiritism is, like that of old, against God, his Word, and his Christ.

4. Its tendency is immoral. In ancient times it was connected with the pollutions of the heathen, and its character is now the same. Through its infamous doctrines of "spiritual affinities" and "free love" it has often invaded and destroyed the sanctity of the domestic relations and separated husbands and wives. The marriage relation has thus been weakened and debased, greatly to the injury of society. The teachings of the spirits have most truly been, in the words of St. Paul, the "doctrines of devils."

Besides, it removes the restraints of true religion, and thus weakens the proper basis of morality. For the fear of God, the love of Christ, the promised joys of heaven, and the dread of condemnation and perdition, spiritualism substitutes—what? A material, natural heaven, and an endless progression in good as the common destiny of all souls, whether good or bad, whether their lives here were holy or unholy, sanctified with works of goodness and piety or steeped in iniquity and crime. All have the same fate, saints and sinners alike; all go to the same place, and receive the same reward. Is it at all surprising that many of those who believe in this monstrous doctrine should

become immoral? The only wonder is, that good men should accept and justify it. The absolute standard of God's laws being abrogated, and nothing supplied in its place but the uncertain and contradictory testimony of the spirits, each man must be left to his own view of right and wrong; he is a law unto himself, to do what seems good in his own eyes.

5. I should add that Spiritualists themselves acknowledge that it is mixed up with frauds and delusions. It invites to its ranks all sorts of impostors, from the mere sleight-of-hand tricksters to the adept in the mysteries of the black art. Its secret séances, darkened chambers, and all the mummery and paraphernalia of the "circle"—floating guitars, ringing bells, banging of tambourines, and thumping on floors, walls, and tables, besides its masked and dressed-up effigies palmed off for the sacred spirits of the departed—all these so-called "manifestations" are not only a mockery of decency and truth, but naturally favor fraud and imposition, especially when they are exhibited at a dollar or more a-head; while the poor deluded victims' minds being in an emotional phrensy, they see what they wish to see. As Professor Carpenter says, they are victims of "expectant attention."

Such, in my view, Mr. Smith, is Spiritualism. Where it is not a stupendous delusion it is the work of evil spirits—a snare of the devil. The only safe course for any one to take who would not be captured by it and led astray from eternal life, is to *let it entirely alone*. I most sincerely hope you will take this course.

MR. SMITH. If you could prove all the allegations which you so confidently make, if you spoke from experience and not from prejudice, your statements and admonitions would have great weight with me. But these accusations of yours against Spiritualism have no originality or novelty; they are the stereotyped charges of the clergy, and have been answered and disproved over and over again by eminent defenders of modern Spiritualism, men of the highest reputation for intellectual ability, scientific or scholarly attainment, moral worth, and religious fervor, among them, as I have already shown you, some of the most eminent of your own vocation.

With your permission, I will explain to you what I regard as the truth in relation to each point you have made against Spiritualism; for I have earnestly and anxiously considered every one of them, and should not have given my support to this doctrine had I not been satisfied that these objections have no real force, being the offspring of old associations and prepossessions, causing the mind to cling by mere habitude

and mental inertia to accustomed views, instead of fairly and freely looking at the facts presented. The human mind can obtain only distorted views of truth when it gazes at it through the haze of prejudice. Let me, therefore, ask your patient attention to the considerations which I shall now present.

1. You object that the communications come from mere spirits, and not directly from God; but that very "law of God"—those "divine oracles"—which you cite against Spiritualism came directly from spirits, though in a certain sense, and indirectly, it might be said to emanate from God. In the peculiar language of the Bible many things are said to come from God which could only come as permitted by his general laws. Thus it is said (1 Samuel xvi. 14), "An evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul"; and it is also said (1 Kings xxii. 23), "Behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these thy prophets." Certainly, He who is Truth itself could not do that. So the Jewish law, which afterward had to be abrogated on account of its errors and imperfections, as I have already shown and you admit, could not have come from God, though it might have come from finite spirits.

DR. ——. This is a mere Spiritualistic hypothesis; the Bible declares it did come from God directly.

MR. SMITH. I am surprised to find you so imperfectly acquainted with the Scriptures. St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, says: "The law was *ordained of angels* in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. iii. 19). Stephen, in his discourse (Acts vii. 53), told the Jews they had "received the law by the disposition of angels." In Hebrews (ii. 2, 3) it is said, "If the word *spoken by angels* was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Spiritualists can say this now most truly. Thus your first point is valueless, as shown by the infallible inspiration of the Bible itself. Moreover, according to the New Testament records, the Gospel itself is due to spirits. An angel of the Lord, giving his spiritual name, Gabriel, appeared to Zacharias, and subsequently to Mary and Joseph; an angel, and also a host of spirits, appeared to the shepherds, and announced the birth of Jesus. The life of the infant Jesus was saved by the warning given to Joseph by a spirit.

DR. ——. But it was not a mere spirit, but, as the Scriptures say, "an angel of the Lord."

MR. SMITH. It was not, however, God himself. And is not every spirit that comes to the earth on an errand of mercy and goodness an "angel

of the Lord"? Don't you call yourself a "minister of God"? Are you not supposed to have been "called of God," and sent on a mission of "peace and good will," like the Bethlehem angel? If so, you, although a spirit in the flesh, are a messenger or angel (Greek, *αγγελος*) of God. Thus your argument is based on a mere association of ideas, habitude of thought, or prejudice.

Now in regard to the different grades of spirits who communicate, and the want of agreement in their communications. You assert that this renders Spiritualism an unreliable guide and source of information. But if contradiction renders a source of religious knowledge unreliable, the Bible must be wholly so, for it is absolutely filled with contradictions, so gross that no human mind can harmonize them. There are contradictory statements (1) in relation to God and his attributes, his dealings with his creatures, and his commandments; (2) in respect to the immortality of the soul; (3) as to the future life and its conditions; (4) regarding the proper offices of religion and the methods of pleasing God; (5) as to social and moral duties, and the characters that are presented to exemplify them; and (6) in respect to scientific facts and historical events. Thus, according to your reasoning, the Bible is not a fit guide to religious truth. This can easily be illustrated by abundant citations; but it has already been done, and you must be aware of the fact. The Roman Church condemns the Bible as a general spiritual guide, on that account claiming to be the sole interpreter of its obscure and contradictory statements, and basing its authority on tradition. The Protestants pretend to surrender all to private judgment, and are, consequently, divided into innumerable sects, each having a different creed, and presenting an array of infallible texts from the "word of God" to prove its own correct and all others erroneous. Besides, what heresy or false doctrine is there, whether religious or moral, which men do not find authority for in the Bible? The slave-holders were sure, from the clearest citations from the Holy Scriptures, that slavery was a divine institution. The drinking of wine seems to be sanctioned by both example and precept; and Mormonism, with its beastly polygamy, rests on the solid foundation of the "sacred oracles," fortified by the example of the Jewish patriarchs, the man "after God's own heart," and the great king whom God endowed with divine wisdom. Certainly, no spirits that have communicated to any people in this age have ever sanctioned the practice of "free love" as the Bible does, if we are to accept it all as true, and if the Jewish law is divine and still in force. Thus, the "sacred oracles"

say (Deut. xxiv. 1): When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that *she find no favor in his eyes*, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. [No judicial investigation or decision required.] And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." Is not this a typical case of "free love"? And if spirit intercourse is wrong, because it is prohibited by the "sacred laws," then "free love" is right, because it is permitted by them. How do you get from the horns of that dilemma, Doctor?

DR. ——. Christ expressly abrogated that part of the Mosaic law.

MR. SMITH. Yes, and in doing so repudiated its alleged divine authority; and thus, too, he abrogated the law against pure spirit intercourse, if any such existed, which is extremely doubtful.

How different must have been the grades of the spirits who inspired those hateful practices and those abominable principles to which I have referred,—that instigated David to curse his enemies, and on his very death-bed to impose a murderous injunction on his son: "Now, therefore, hold him not guiltless; for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood" (1 Kings ii. 9)—how different, I say, must they have been from those who inspired some of the Psalms and the utterances of the prophets; such, for example, as that of Isaiah (lviii. 6): "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?—to loose the band of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke"? Or that of Micah (vi. 6–8): "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

You ask, how are we to judge between the false and the true, the bad and the good of spirits and Spiritualism? I answer, in the same way as you and all good Protestants judge between the false and the true, the good and the evil in the various and contradictory books and passages of the Bible,—by enlightened conscience, and by the "inner light," which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." I find that many clergymen are getting tired of defending everything in every one of that bundle of ancient writings called the Bible (*τα βιβλια*—the books) as the word of God, and assuming that fa more reasonable position, that the

Bible "contains the word of God."* If this be true, and the basic principle of Protestantism is correct, then every one must, by the exercise of "private judgment," determine what part of it is and what part is not that word; and thus you are in the same condition as the Spiritualists who are called upon to judge what spirits are good, or "of God," and what communications are pure and truthful. No other test is safe; each one must humbly and prayerfully apply it, and not surrender his divine birthright and his God-given freedom and sacred individuality, absolutely and unthinkingly, to the priest or Church, thus making himself a bondsman to haughty and pretentious sacerdotalism or ecclesiasticism, which has been the darkest curse to mankind in every age and clime of the world.

In apostolic times there were spirit communications, and they played an important part in the early history of the Christian churches. Evidently the spirits who manifested then were like those who manifest now —as you say, "good, bad, and indifferent." Hence, we find John saying: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets [mediums] are gone out into the world." And he significantly said: "They are of the world: therefore, speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 5, 6). Here the spiritually-minded John evidently referred to that "inner light," that divine illumination, with which all are endowed, and by which, if they cultivate and heed it, all may be guided. It is the "spirit of truth," which will "guide into all truth."

Again, in this connection, you ask how we are to know that any of these spirits are really they whom they assume to be. A very pertinent question. I answer, we know this in the same manner that we distinguish between truth and falsehood. We judge of the character of the spirits by our reason and intuition. If they speak truth and purity we accept their utterances; but if they speak nonsense or immorality we reject and reprove them, for we know they are not of God. If they come with flattering words, addressing our vanity, our pride, or our avarice,

* In the January number of the *Andover Review*, the Rev. Professor George Harris says: "The old theory that the Bible is perfect in all its details, inspired in every expression, and equally authoritative in all its parts, put a tremendous strain upon faith. In this sense, the Bible is not the word of God; *it contains the word of God.*"

"speaking great things," or tempting us with worldly treasures, we heed them not, except to admonish them of their unprogressed state, and try to turn their thoughts to a higher plane, the plane of true spirituality, the kingdom of God. If they are manifestly good spirits we believe in their identity as presented, if what they say and the manner of their appearance do not contradict it. The surroundings and conditions of a spirit manifestation to a great extent determine its reliability. The "law of affinity" applies. Good persons usually attract good spirits, and *vice versa*. There are, it is true, "personating spirits," but they come only into an atmosphere of deceit. The love of truth, the fervent aspiration for goodness and purity, and an unselfish regard for the good of others, in seeker and medium, will infallibly cause the presence of good and truthful spirits. When persons have been deceived or led astray it has been from some weakness or sinfulness in themselves that admitted the tempter, and, by this means, they have learned a needed lesson. Wicked spirits came to Jesus and tempted him, but he was too pure and too strong spiritually to be led astray. Deceiving spirits may come to all, whether spiritualists or not, and, if they are not resisted, they will lead into error and wrong-doing. The church should teach these important truths, and show the *rationale* of temptation, which can be done only by studying the spiritual phenomena of this time.

You think "the truth necessary for salvation" cannot be obtained from spirit communication; but, according to Christ's own words, it can. He was expressly asked the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" Or, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The records which you consider infallible, or without error, give the answer from his own lips: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." The spirits of this age say the same, and they say: Follow Christ's precepts, and his example of unselfishness, and you will "inherit eternal life," or, as they interpret it, eternal happiness. In this respect Spiritualism has been shown to be coincident with the Christianity taught by Christ in his doctrines and his life. Besides, as I have already shown, the Law was given by spirit communication. Undoubtedly, the prophets were inspired by holy spirits; and the apocalypse was confessedly given by a spirit who refused to be worshipped, stating that he was but a "fellow-servant" of John and the prophets. Besides, I have clearly proved that the gospel plan of salvation was carried out in great part, if not wholly, by spirit intervention and communication. You do not perceive how self-destructive your proposition is.

DR.——. Why do you need Spiritualism, let me ask, if it coincides with Christianity?

MR. SMITH. It brings new incentives to a spiritual life. It affords demonstrative proof of the future state and more clearly shows the nature of that existence and its relations to our present life. It antagonizes the materialistic spirit of this age by means which this age requires, and thus converts those whom the Christianity of the churches, impaired by the corrupt incrustations of less enlightened times, cannot reach. To this I have already referred. It is the beginning of a development the full nature and extent of which can at present be scarcely conceived. But let me reply to your objection based on mesmerism or psychology.

Without a very careful study of the subject of modern mediumship that is an objection which you cannot intelligently or fairly make. It belongs to that class of objections which ignorance always makes to science. The *occult* operations of the human mind, known as *psychology*, or *psychism*, or *mesmerism*, have been carefully contrasted with the phenomena of mediumship or spirit control; and while it is admitted there is a vast field as yet unexplored, yet much has been done, and many, if not most, of the phases of genuine mediumship are perfectly distinguishable from psychological action, or the action of embodied minds on one another. Dr. Samson, in the statement which you quote, spoke in opposition to the truth —in disregard or defiance of facts. The instances in which facts wholly unknown to the medium and all others visibly present have been communicated are so numerous that it is amazing that any educated man should make such a statement, or any person claiming to be intelligent be so ignorant as to accept it. This objection is so far from weakening my faith in Spiritualism, that it gives it a greater hold upon my mind, because it proves to me that you know too little of the subject to form any opinion in regard to it that is of the slightest value. Excuse my plainness of speech. You say, "it is opposed to God, to the revealed word, and to Jesus Christ"; but this is a mere form of words. You would say the same, without doubt, of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Roman Catholicism; but you should rather say, it is opposed to my, or our, ideas of God, the word, and Christ. The ideas entertained and formulated by different evangelical denominations in regard to these subjects show considerable diversity, and some must therefore be "opposed to the revealed word." You say, most Spiritualists repudiate certain tenets in regard to the divine authority of the Bible, to sin, to the atonement, and to regeneration. Well, if that is true, they do no more than is done by denominational

Christians. When all Christians agree upon these dogmas it will be more consistent in you to censure Spiritualists for not accepting them. Spiritualists have not, as a body, formulated any profession of faith: they differ in their religious views quite as much as Protestant Christians, and for a similar reason.

DR. ——. What! differ, and yet be taught by spirits!

MR. SMITH. To this I might reply: What! differ, and yet be taught by the infallible "word of God"! Spiritualists lay no claim to an infallible source of truth. They do not consider the spirits as possessing truth absolute. They assert, in all cases, the unreserved right of private judgment—the foundation-stone of Protestantism; and they protest, as strongly as Luther, or any of his followers, ever did, against the absolutism of any church, pope, or priesthood. Mere blind assent to dogmas not understood, and therefore not truly believed or accepted by the mind, they hold to be mischievous, retarding both mental and spiritual progress. The faith that is forever haunted by the spectre of doubt, that trembles at examination or free-thought, that can subsist only by rocking the mind to sleep in the ecclesiastical cradle, with the priest or minister of the gospel lulling its restless slumber by repeating the worn-out creeds and myths of departed generations, is a foolish figment of the clerical imagination, rapidly passing into the limbo provided for the childish conceits of less enlightened ages.

Again, you say that Spiritualism has an immoral tendency. What is your evidence of this? Spiritualists, as a class, are as moral as any class of Christians. It is true that some have been guilty of conduct that cannot be approved; and this may be said of professing Christians. They do not live up to the principles which they profess, nor do all Spiritualists. You speak of the doctrines of "spiritual affinities" and "free love." But these are the vagaries of Spiritualists, not the doctrines of Spiritualism. They have been most strongly condemned by the great body of Spiritualists, and are not favored by its literature, its journals, or its public teachings. In the commencement of a new movement like that of Spiritualism there is always a tendency to extravagance and excess in certain minds. This was so in the early history of Christianity. It is the natural recoil from long established errors. St. Paul was compelled to admonish the Corinthian converts against very improper conduct. You remember his words: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife" (1 Cor. i. 5).

Further on, in the same epistle, he says: "I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it" (1 Cor. xi. 18). Moreover, he is obliged to condemn their riotous and sensual mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper: "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" (1 Cor. v. 22). Were these some of the "pollutions of the heathen," of which you spoke as the concomitants of Spiritualism? Let us have charity, knowing the weakness of human nature, and let us beware of sweeping condemnations. As to "free love," it did not originate with Spiritualism; the doctrine, as I have already shown, exists in the Mosaic law, and is there attributed to God himself. In this country it was the doctrine and practice of the Oneida communists, a sect of professing Christians, to which Charles G. Guiteau once belonged; and at different periods of the history of Christianity we find this corruption cropping out, although so much opposed to Christ's teachings. The sect called Nicolaitans, spoken of in Revelation, were characterized by the grossest impurities of this kind; and, in that day, an enemy of Christianity could have used that fact against it just as you now, most unjustly, charge "free-loveism" upon Spiritualism.

Rev. William Fishbough, one of the most prominent of Spiritualists, from the commencement of the movement till his decease in 1881, said, in a public address in 1879: "After the free-love doctrine had, in the person of a certain notorious woman, obtained a representation in the presidency of one of the largest conventions of Spiritualists ever held in the United States, the better portion of Spiritualists, alarmed and horrified, to their great credit, arose in arms against it, indignantly hurled it from the eminence to which it had attained, and forced it to hide itself in the dark dens and secret chambers, where its polluting influence is reduced to a minimum." It is no more taught by Spiritualism than Nicolaitanism, or a community of wives, was taught by Christianity; and the one has been condemned by the communicating angels of this generation as strongly as the other was by the angels of the apocalypse speaking through John the Divine. It is an abominable excrescence inspired by animalism, as doubtless were the "pollutions of the heathen." Undoubtedly the old Christian sect of Nicolaitans were the conservators of some of these abominations; for their *agapæ*, or love feasts, closely resembled the Bacchanalia of Italy, and reproduced, as Dr. Smith says, "the trance of the son of Beor, and the sensual debasement into which he led the Israelites." They were indeed followers of Balaam, as Peter said (2 Peter ii. 15), and permitted the "eating of things sacrificed to idols," a most flagrant "pollution of the

heathen." They were condemned, it is true, by the real Christians of their time; and so have the Free-loveites by the true Spiritualists; for Spiritualism, rightly construed, does not antagonize Christianity in its highest spiritual and ethical principles. If, as you say, "the marriage relation has been weakened and debased," it has not been by the influence of Spiritualists. Orthodox church members, and even orthodox clergymen, have figured in the divorce courts to a far greater extent than Spiritualists, and have had an unfortunately large representation among those charged with the seducing of innocence. The unrestrained passions of men, not Christianity or Spiritualism, are accountable for this. Let us be just, reasonable, and logical.

You charge that Spiritualism removes the restraints of true religion—the fear of God, the love of Christ, the hope of heaven, and the dread of hell. In no just sense is this true. But do you really believe that any man can be spiritually improved by the mere selfish hope of reward or the fear of punishment? It is true, he may measurably be restrained from committing outward acts of criminality by the fear of hell, and impelled to perform acts which have a semblance of philanthropy by the hope of an eternal recompense; but his spiritual nature must remain the same. Did not Christ plainly teach this? Did he not enjoin inward purity and the love of God and man, with absolute self-abnegation, as the source of real goodness and the means of salvation? And did he not utterly condemn the Pharisees for their outward acts because devoid of that inward goodness? The same standard is presented by Spiritualism: "Do good, hoping for nothing in return." The judgment and enlightened intuitions of men of the strongest intellect and the most finished culture approve this principle. Sir James Mackintosh said: "Virtue is not the conformity of outward actions to a rule, nor is religion the fear of punishment or the hope of reward. Virtue is the state of a just, prudent, benevolent, firm, and temperate mind. Religion is the whole of these sentiments which such a mind feels toward an infinitely perfect being."

But it is not true that Spiritualists believe, as you allege, that "saints and sinners all have the same fate or go to the same place." Each gravitates by spiritual law to the place to which he spiritually belongs—it may be to darkness and misery, or to light, happiness, and glory. The sphere of remorse is proved to be as full of torment to the spirit as the hell-fire of the theologians; but Spiritualism teaches that it is not eternal, nor is it vindictive punishment inflicted by the Heavenly Father, but the chastising, corrective suffering which naturally follows, both on earth and in

the spirit world, the violations of His laws of whom it is said, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6).

So far is it from the truth that "the absolute standard of God's law is abrogated" by Spiritualism that it really substitutes that standard for one that is fictitious, unreliable, and misleading, namely, the supposed standard set up by a book so full of contradictions that it has been for centuries, and still continues to be, quoted in support of, or apology for, the most heinous injustice and inhumanity and the most revolting crimes and wickedness. Men abrogate the sacred standard of conscience to find in the "sacred oracles" a literal excuse for wickedness. I have referred to this already in the Biblical plea of slaveholders, Mormons, and others; but this truth takes even a wider range in the direction of fanaticism, as illustrated by the Pocasset murder, the Guiteau inspiration, and hundreds of such cases, in which conscience, God's absolute standard, has been abrogated to give place to an idolatrous reverence for Biblical sanctions. Spiritualism rejects and condemns all such unnatural, and therefore unholy credulity, idolatry, and superstition, and appeals to men's enlightened conscience and that illumination which comes from spirit culture. The church, if it analyze the matter truly, will see that it has no other standard; for when it endeavors to transcend the conscience, it accomplishes nothing but a seeming and ephemeral triumph. The character of clergy and laity clearly shows this. The church does not stand in the place of the civil law: it is the office of the latter to restrain by force; but the former must go to the heart, the secret springs and motives of human conduct, and help to reform the "inner life," by fostering the powers of the soul, so that these, and not earthly passion, may have the control. This, I take it, is the difference between the Law and the gospel of Christ.

Besides, your doctrine of "vicarious sacrifice" seems in many cases to paralyze the human conscience. Men are made to believe that the consequences of sin can be avoided by an acceptance of Christ's atonement; and thus the vilest criminals often receive, from an officiating clergyman, a passport direct to heaven, and expect to be received at once into the arms of Jesus. Spiritualism, on the other hand, teaches that the consequences of sin must be outgrown in spirit life, that there is an individual judgment and condemnation at the bar of conscience from which no spirit can escape, and that every wrongful act must be atoned for by its perpetrator. Now, which presents the greater encouragement to wrong-doing,

Modern Spiritualism or official Christianity? The former, with Christ, says to the sinner who does not atone for his offense: "Thou shalt by no means come out of prison till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matt. v. 26). As to the Spiritualists' heaven, it is at least conceivable, which cannot be said of that presented by Christianity. It is not, however, material, the descriptions of it being true only in a spiritual sense.

As to your fifth objection, relating to the alleged frauds and indecorous manifestations at circles, I would ask you to name any department of human affairs—any profession, business, or social arrangement, or any human institution whatever, that is not "mixed up with frauds and delusions." As far as these are found to exist in the church, or churches, you would properly say that they are not Christian, but anti-Christian; and so say we: "frauds and delusions" are not Spiritualism, but utterly opposed to it. Its claims to acceptance rest upon impregnable truth, established by men of the greatest talents, the keenest intellect, and the purest character. Spiritualists condemn and oppose all fraudulent practices, all deception and hypocrisy, and endeavor to guard against them. They, however, do not claim that their mediums for spirit manifestations are perfect or immaculate, any more than Christianity makes that claim for its ministers, who are supposed to be the recipients of a divine call and the mediums of a holy inspiration while they officiate at the altar or preach the truths of Christ's gospel.

As you confess that you have never been present at a spiritual séance you can scarcely speak fairly of these manifestations as a whole; and certainly you should not sweepingly condemn them. Some things may seem undignified to your mind, owing to your preconceptions, as would seem, probably, if you should behold it now, David dancing before the Lord, or the arisen Christ eating a piece of broiled fish, or the figure of Jesus standing *knocking* at the door (as the spirits do now), or Balaam's abused beast expostulating in human speech at the "madness of the prophet," and a thousand other things spoken of in the "sacred oracles." Many things appear to be undignified because they were strange. Dignity is entirely conventional.

It is proper to say, however, that the alleged frauds, etc., of mediums are often mere fabrications of the enemies of Spiritualism, and are always more or less exaggerated. Sensitive mediums are often corrupted by the vices, immoralities, and perversities of those who go to consult them; besides which, it may be said, that a set of unconscionable adventurers who call themselves "exposers of Spiritualism," are encouraged in their

trade of falsification by ministers of the gospel, who refuse to investigate the subject through pure and honest mediums. Thus, a premium is put upon lying, and the Truth is crucified between thieves, and always with ecclesiastical sanction and exultation.

The fact that the mediums receive a fee, whether a dollar or fifty cents, has as little to do with the real issue as that clergymen of exceptional gifts must be paid in proportion to them, or their services will not be rendered to save souls. The followers of St. Paul, the sailmaker, are as few in the Christian church at this time as the public moneyless mediums who exercise their gifts solely for love, while they live on locusts and wild honey, or—the east wind, or patiently wait for the "angels to minister unto them." There are, however, private mediums, a great host, who exercise their sacred functions as intermediaries between spirits and mortals, without fee or reward of any kind. They officiate at the private altar of a sacred religion, which opens the gateways of the eternal world to the gaze of mortals; and from them issue the angels of the New Dispensation, guided by the "spirit of truth," and coming to dispense spiritual instruction to those who will receive it, hope and consolation to the mourners by a restoration of the "loved and lost," and "peace and good will" to all mankind.

In regard to the *emotional victims of expectant attention*, they are about as pitiable, though not quite so numerous, as those of the revival phrensy, and probably represent Spiritualism nearly as well as these do Christianity.

But it is time we adjourned this long colloquy. I am thankful for your kindly-intentioned advice, and for the opportunity you have afforded me of giving my "reasons for the faith that is in me." I am afraid I have not convinced you that I am in the pathway of truth, any more than you have me that I am in the way that leads to darkness and perdition.

You ask me to abandon this faith that has been to my soul so grand and beautiful an illumination; that has made every hour of this mortal life precious to me, because I recognize its purpose as a means of preparation for the great hereafter; that has lifted from my soul the black pall of death which your theology—of man's fall, original sin, election and predestination, an angry God, an almighty devil, and an eternal hell—had laid over all God's creation, and made human destiny a mystery irreconcilable with a God of love and mercy. I cannot consent.

I feel the joys of emancipation—of soul emancipation; and you ask me to come back into the bondage from which I have emerged—to resume

the chain that I have broken and cast off. I answer you, as Simon Peter replied to his Master when the latter said to his few remaining disciples, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE."

DR. ——. That is just what Christianity, as preached by the Church, offers to all who will accept it; and, therefore, I see no need of any such supplementary revelation as you profess to have received.

MR. SMITH. Yes, but your revelation must be accepted on *faith*, without knowledge, and that we cannot do. We must, as St. James said, add knowledge to our faith. When you repudiate Spiritualism you give up the very foundation of Christianity—the "signs and wonders" of Christ and his reappearance after his crucifixion. The latter event is especially vital, because you must admit that, had not Christ reappeared, there would have been no such thing as Christianity. When he was condemned and executed as a malefactor, "all forsook him and fled." They expected him to exercise some supernatural power for his deliverance: they naturally thought that a man who could raise others from the dead could save himself from a violent death; and even the unbelieving Jews jeered at him with: "Come down from the cross, and we will believe on thee." Hence, if he had not shown himself to the disciples they would have given it all up as a delusion. This, probably, was the reason that Paul laid so much stress upon the "resurrection," as the foundation-stone of Christian faith, and especially as the evidence of a future state. Thus, you see, Christianity rests upon a spirit manifestation.

DR. ——. I must protest against that view. Christ was the son of God, and equal with God—the same as God; hence, the "resurrection" has nothing to do with the manifestations of mere human spirits.

MR. SMITH. In saying that, you take away the last and greatest support of immortality afforded by the Bible; for the fact that God himself rose from the dead (if it is not absurd to use such an expression) is no evidence that human beings will rise from the dead. But I wish only to add now that, if I am not to believe the spirit manifestations of this time, attested by so many living witnesses, and also proved by the evidence of my own senses, how am I to believe the spiritual phenomena recorded in the Bible, the evidence in support of which is so imperfect? Hence, to abandon my spiritual faith would be to fall back into the utter darkness of materialism. This I cannot do. Consequently, I must cling to the New Dispensation, which I know to be true, without regard to the Church or the Bible; for modern Spiritualism does not de-

pend upon the Bible for support, though it demonstrates the plausibility and reasonability of many statements contained in that book which are utterly incredible and absurd without such a means of illustration. I hope the Christian Church will soon see the advisability of calling in the aid of Modern Spiritualism to sustain its now tottering system.

DR. ——. The Church cannot and will not do any such thing.

MR. SMITH. Perhaps not; but, as the French say, *Nous verrons*. Good-day, sir.

DR. ——. Good-day, Mr. Smith, and may God's blessing attend you, and lead you into the true path to immortality and salvation.

MR. SMITH. To that I say AMEN.

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