

God Speaks To Modern Man

Through the centuries humanity has found that the end of life's road is at the cemetery. In silence these "cities of the dead" await the voice of the Creator.

God never purposed for men to believe that He operates a brimstone concentration camp, under the direction of the devil.

The dead, good and bad, rest in silent slumber. There is no consciousness, no pain. Resurrection day is coming. Those who sleep in Christ will be raised to reign with Him. The wicked will be raised for the execution of final penalty. Then sin and sinners will be no more.

"No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin. One reminder alone remains: our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet... 'He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.' Through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise, and declare His power." *The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

A woman who was sharply denouncing the Bible said, "I'm going to heaven whether God wants me there or not." The simple truth is that God will not close the door of heaven to any soul who could be happy there. All who reach hell would be dissatisfied in heaven. That is why we must prepare for heaven now.

In a foxhole, by a hidden light, a soldier wrote, "The shells are exploding so near they shake my paper as I write. . . . Sometimes I wonder if my world will ever again be filled with peace and quiet, with laughter and love. I want to go home once more. If only for a little while, I want to go home."

In the human breast God has planted a deep desire for the heavenly home. The warfare of earth will one day be past, and Christ will come again.

When darkness overshadowed the cruel cross, and the outlook was black, the suffering Savior took time to say to a repentant thief, "Thou shall be with me in paradise."

"Through the gates to the city, in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall;
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Savior first of all."

FANNY J. CROSBY

48. Can the Dead Communicate With the Living?

SPIRITUALISM, or spiritualism, is the belief that living persons may communicate with the spirits of those who have died. The method may be anything from ouija boards, table tipping, rapping, snapping, slate-writing, and music to trances, seeming ghostly apparitions, occult voices, and the touch of invisible hands.

MODERN SPIRITISM

In Christian lands modern manifestations of psychic phenomena as connected with spiritualism. are more or less recent. It is generally agreed that 1848 is the time, Hydesville, New York, the place, and the Fox sisters the first participants.

M'Clintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia, under the topic "Spiritualism," quotes Mr. Dale Owen as follows:

"In the month of January, 1848, the noises assumed the character of distinct knockings at night in the bedrooms, sounding sometimes as from the cellar below, and resembling the hammering of a shoemaker. These knocks produced a tremulous motion in the furniture and even in the floor. The children (Margaret, aged 12 years, and Kate, aged 9 years) felt something heavy, as of a dog, lie on their feet when in bed; and Kate felt, as it were, a cold hand passed over her face. Sometimes the bedclothes were pulled off. Chairs and the dining-table were moved from their places. Raps were made on doors as they stood close to them, but on suddenly opening them no one was visible. On the night of March 13 (or 31), 1848, the knockings were unusually loud, whereupon Mr. Fox tried the sashes, to see if they were shaken by the wind. Kate observed that the knockings in the room exactly answered the rattle made by her father with the sash. Thereupon she snapped her fingers and exclaimed, "Here, old Splitfoot, do as I do." The rap followed. This at once arrested the mother's attention. "Count ten," she said. Ten strokes were distinctly given. "How

old is my daughter Margaret?" Twelve strokes. "And Kate?" Nine.' Other questions were answered. When 'she asked if it was a man? No answer. Was it a spirit? It rapped. Numbers of questions were put to the spirit, which replied by knocks that it was that of a travelling tradesman [Charles B. Rosmal, who had been murdered by the then tenant, John C. Bell, for his property. The peddler had never been seen afterwards; and on the floor being dug up, the remains of a human body were found.]"

In fact, the rappings indicated just where to dig in order to find the body. It was afterward ascertained that a man answering the description of the murdered Rosma had been seen to enter the house of Mr. Bell, and had not been seen again.

Neighbors at first scorned the rapping idea. However, when their secrets were revealed and lost articles found, it was a different story.

Margaret Fox developed unusual occult powers. The next year she and her sister Kate gave public exhibitions, and proceeded to New York the following year. Three years later there were thirty thousand spiritualists, it is said, and the movement spread like wildfire. They claim fifty million believers.

Believers in spiritualism come from the ranks of scientists, literary leaders, prominent preachers, and political figures, as well as from nearly all walks of life.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, literary genius and creator of the fictional Sherlock Holmes, was a vigorous promoter of the faith.

Sir Oliver Lodge, great scientist, was certain that his son, killed in World War I, returned in spirit form. He claimed to have many times seen a figure appear and glide about the room, playing an accordion. The Reverend A. J. Callahan, S.J., is quoted in the *Western Watchman* (Catholic), March 12, 1920: "The dead can come back to life, but only through God's extraordinary permission.... There are cases where a dead mother has come to her wandering boy, but always for the best of reasons and for the boy's welfare."

Dean Welldon, of Durham, at a congress of the Church of England, held at Leicester back in 1919, said, "Spiritualism has come to fill a void in church practice because of the coldness of the old services." - Cited in *Current Opinion*, December, 1919, p. 317.

The noted Dr. Russell H. Conwell, pastor of Baptist Temple in Philadelphia, believed that his deceased wife held converse with him on several occasions. (See *Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, Dec. 22, 1919, p. 1.)

Dr. Isaac Funk quotes the *War Cry* of November 27, 1897, to the effect that General Booth, of the Salvation Army, spoke of regular communion with his dead wife.

The former Russian minister of war in World War I, General Sukhomlinoff, is quoted in the *Washington Post*, July 2, 1918, page 4, as saying concerning Grand Duke Nicholas: "In addition to his weaknesses as commander-in-chief, he was so influenced by his passion for spiritualism, in which his wife, Anastasya Nikolayevna, believed blindly, that he frequently sought in spiritualism solutions for some of the most serious military problems."

The Kaiser of Germany during the same war is reported to have followed the same practice, consulting the famous German medium Augusta Schoen and others. He purportedly contacted the spirit of his grandfather, the founder of the German Empire through spirit mediums.

Sir William Crookes, famous chemist and physicist of his day, said, "I have talked with the spirit of Katie King scores and scores of times, saw her form appear and disappear, and photographed her many times."

Flammarion, the celebrated French astronomer, asserted that "any scientific man who declares spiritualistic phenomena to be impossible is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about."

Emperor Hirohito, of Japan, went from his palace in Tokyo to the tomb of his father, Emperor Yoshihito, to tell him that Japan lost the war in 1945.

It has long been a master stroke of Satan to promote the theory that the living can communicate with the dead in some way. Thousands today are deceived on this point.

HOW OLD IS SPIRITISM?

That spiritualism is not actually new or modern in origin is attested by all. Dr. James H. Hyslop, in his *Contact With the Other World*, writes, "Ancestor-worship, in most cases simply the Spiritualism of the East, survives as the exponent of immortality." Page 14.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says, "The thing itself, in one form or another, is as old as history." -*The Vital Message*, p. 30.

WHY DOES THE BIBLE CONDEMN SPIRITISM?

The Bible condemns spiritualism for three reasons: First, spiritualism's belief in establishing contact with supposed spirits of the dead is unsound. The Bible says that "the dead know not any thing.... Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

This is in full agreement with Psalm 146:4, that "his breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." It is evident to all that since the Bible teaches the cessation of thought at death, so much so that the dead know not anything, and since they have nothing more to do with earthly affairs, it is indeed reasonable that the Bible should condemn spiritualism, which claims communication with the dead.

The second reason why the Bible is against spiritualism, is that Satan, the archenemy of God, claims that death is not real. To Eve, mother of all, he said, "you shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods." Genesis 3:4, 5. In the eternal conflict between Christ and Satan here is an issue. God says death; Satan says life. Satan says a higher plane—"you shall be as gods." Satan's lie about death led the human race into sin and woe. The God of truth is against Satan, "for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

The third reason the Bible opposes all forms of spiritualism is that its general influence is not good.

It uproots faith in the Bible. Spiritualists purport to call up John Wesley, and he renounces his Bible preaching. They teach that infidels and saints share everlasting life and honor alike. They call up Thomas Paine, and he says he lives with John Bunyan. Talmage is reported to have said, "First it makes a man quarter of an infidel; then it makes him half an infidel; then it makes him a whole infidel!"

Dr. L. S. Forbes Winslow, lecturer on mental diseases, once wrote, I could quote many . . . instances where men of the highest ability have, so to speak, neglected all, and followed the doctrines of spiritualism, only to end their days in a lunatic asylum." - *Spiritualistic Madness*, p. 29.

In one State four persons were committed to an insane asylum after a twenty-four-hour steady siege at the ouija board.

I. Godfrey Raupert, K.S.G., Catholic specialist on spiritualism, stated: "Let it once be clearly and fully known that these 'dear ones' on the other side of life ruin and desolate homes, that they drive men and women to destruction and to the madhouse, that they undermine religious faith and confidence, and that in a thousand instances, they bring about an utter weariness and detestation of the duties of the present life. . . . I have, during the last ten years, spent much of my time in answering the inquiries of persons whose lives have been shipwrecked by spiritualistic practices, and it is upon painful facts and incontrovertible evidence that I base my conclusions and opinions."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

In the Old Testament strictest command was given against the practice of spiritualist mediums or the consulting of the same by the people.

"When you art come into the land which the Lord thy God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God does drive them out from before you." Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

Sweeping condemnation is here passed upon astrology, fortune telling, charms, spiritualist mediums (consultant of familiar spirits), and all pseudo prophets and pretended wise ones. I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers." Malachi 3:5.

In the New Testament the prophecy is made that in our day there would be a special manifestation of this work of Satan. "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4:1.

We have already noted how leaders of nations have given heed to such seducing spirits in the conduct of war. One cannot resist quoting Revelation 16:14 "They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of

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that great day of God Almighty.”

The Bible clarifies the whole issue. The dead are unconscious; therefore they cannot make intelligent contact with anyone. The purported communications from the dead are faked. They are the fakery of the medium or fakery performed by the “spirits of devils,” “seducing spirits.” Concerning the deluded Jews in ancient time, the Bible says, “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.” Psalm 106:37.

Satan and his angels, who were “cast out into the earth,” have great power. They possess information that may be known only to the dead loved ones and their kin or friends. When such is revealed through mediums people believe the messages actually come from the dead. Evil angels may appear in the form of a deceased loved one.

Whether these things are faked by mediums or by “seducing spirits,” through mediums or apart from mediums, it is well to remember that “the dead know not any thing.” It is also wise to recall that even the most intelligent may at times suffer from hallucinations, and all of us have a way of seeing what we want to see and hearing what we want to hear.

Consider these four Bible verses:

“Satan, which deceives the whole world.” Revelation 12:9.

“Take heed that no man deceive you.” Matthew 24:4.

“We deceive ourselves.” 1 John 1:8.

“Let no man deceive himself.” 1 Corinthians 3:18.

He who plays with spiritualism is like a man who puts his head in a crocodile’s mouth. Not long ago a young man, putting on his regular act at a circus, thrust his head into an alligator’s mouth before a body of spectators. Suddenly the alligator’s mouth snapped shut as his powerful jaws went into action. The father rushed out with a crowbar, inserted it, and finally succeeded in prying the mouth open. The boy was rushed off to the hospital.

There is a lot of show business in spiritualism seances, but it is no place for a Christian to seek counsel, show his face, or risk his soul. “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” Matthew 24:26.

Americans spend literally millions of dollars with fortunetellers of one kind or another. “Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread?” Isaiah 55:2.

“When they tell you to consult mediums and ghosts that cheep and gibber in low murmurs, ask them if a nation should not consult its God. Say, ‘Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?’” Isaiah 8:19, Moffatt.

Then Isaiah adds, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Verse 20, K.J.V.

Arthur Greenwak tells of a Sunday school teacher who asked a class of boys, “Where do you keep your Bible at home?” One lad, quick on the draw, chirped, “In the cellar.” “What a place for the Bible,” replied the teacher. “Oh, the Bible,” the lad replied. “I thought you said bottle.”

“Many men today, trying to find an answer for their problems and troubles, make the same mistake. They try to answer with a bottle instead of the Bible.” - Pulpit Digest, September, 1948.

Thousands have tried the spiked wine of spiritualism to comfort the soul, to stimulate a lagging interest in life, to reach the solution of riddles, and to solve the mystery of the grave.

What the world needs today is with open heart to look within an open Bible.

“An open Bible for the world!
May this our glorious motto be!
On every breeze the truth unfurled
Shall scatter blessings rich and free.

“It tells of Jesus and His death,
Of life for dying men;
And to each soul of humble faith,
Gives son ship with the Lord again.

“It offers rest to weary hearts;
It comforts those who sit in tears;

To all who faint it strength imparts;
And gilds with hope the eternal years.”

HENRY M. KING

49. Puzzling Questions About Death

THE late Clarence Darrow, famous criminal lawyer, once held a debate with a rabbi, a priest, and a minister on the subject of immortality. The clergymen summoned similies and allegories to set forth the theory that the soul of man is indestructible, not subject to death. When the lawyer rose he said, “These gentlemen never once used the Bible to prove their assertions, much less did they quote from its pages.”

We who preach from a Bible text often wander a long way from Biblical teaching. Yet in all fairness it may be said that there are some things in the Good Book “hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:15,16). When there is apparent contradiction or seeming difference of meaning, two things should be borne in mind. One is that difficult texts should be studied in the light of the general teaching of the Bible; the other, that all lines of Bible doctrine should run parallel. For instance, if as the Bible teaches, judgment takes place after death, then we would be out of harmony if we believed God took good people to heaven at death and consigned bad people to hell at death, when as yet they had not been judged.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

Did not Jesus on the cross say to the penitent thief, “Verily I say unto you, To day shall you be with me in paradise”? Luke 23:43. The answer is Yes. But it must also be noted that Jesus did not go to Paradise that day. Paradise is where the tree of life is (Revelation 2:7). That is in heaven at the throne of God (Revelation 22:1,2). Jesus did not ascend to heaven on His crucifixion day. To Mary He said at that time, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” John 20:17.

What, then, did Jesus mean by His promise to the thief? Only this: “You ask me to remember you in my kingdom. I say to you today (in this dark hour), you shall be with me in paradise.” The comma in this verse should be after today, not before it. When Luke wrote the record there were no punctuation marks at all. Men have supplied these. In this instance the comma is not in the proper place.

“Me thought beneath the lurid sky
I saw three crosses lifted high;
And round one cross I saw the light
Of heaven’s own glory beaming bright,
And from the patient Sufferer’s side
A trembling voice in anguish cried:
‘O Lord, and must I he forgot?
Thou pitying Christ, forget me not!’

“And then above the din I heard
The Godlike Sufferer speak the word:
‘Thou shall be with me by and by,
Beneath the star-bespangled sky,
When in my kingdom bright and fair
I reign in endless glory there.”
MRS. L. D. AVERY STUTTLE

SHALL NEVER DIE

What did Jesus mean when He told Martha that those who believed in Him would never die? The full text makes it clear:

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” John 11: 25, 26.

Both righteous and wicked will be resurrected, but only those who believe in Christ will live forever. The rest will die the second death (Revelation 20:13-15).