

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

Matthew 8: 29. Though the judgment of that last day was originally set for Satan and his angels, unrepentant men will have a part in it, because they have joined Satan in his lawless rebellion. To the wicked it will be said:

“Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Matthew 25:41. Satan sees that the day is hastening; and the shorter the time in which to work, the greater his fury in seeking to draw souls to perdition. The warning comes to us in these last days:

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time.” Revelation 12: 12.

Christ's Second Coming ends the reign of Satan in this world. The wicked are slain by the consuming glory of Christ's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8); and the righteous are taken to heaven, beyond the reach of Satan's arts (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). The archenemy and his angels are thus left upon an earth devoid of human beings. Here he is chained for a thousand years, in this pit of desolation (Revelation 20:2,5), his only companions the angels who fell with him, his only occupation the contemplation of the ruin he has wrought and the destruction that still awaits him. By the second resurrection. That of the wicked dead, after the thousand years, Satan is again set free to ply his arts upon his subjects. As the holy city comes down out of heaven from God, with all the saints, Satan gathers his angels and all the forces of the lost of all the ages, to make an assault upon the city. The result was shown to the prophet in vision:

“ They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceives them was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:9,10. That is the fate awaiting the author of sin. In the account of Satan's pride and self-exaltation, uttered by the prophet in the message to Tyre, there occurs also this prophecy of the utter destruction that awaits him, when he shall bring his forces against the city of God in that last conflict:

“I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shall thou be any more,” Ezekiel 28:18,19. This is the final victory of Christ over evil, in the great controversy that began in heaven. Satan exalted himself and lost. Christ humbled Himself, even unto the death and won the eternal triumph.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2: 14.

25. SPIRITUALISM: ANCIENT AND MODERN

THE essential claim of Spiritualism is its assertion of power to hold communication with the spirits of the dead; or rather, it claims to have demonstrated that really there is no death. “There is no death. What seems so is transition.”

The late Prof. Alfred Russel Wallace, the English scientist, said of Spiritualism: “It demonstrates, as completely as the fact can be demonstrated, that the so-called dead are still alive.” – “On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism” (London, 1875), p. 212.

First Declaration of the Doctrine

In the very first book of the Bible is a similar claim: “You shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4. But this declaration, while recorded in the Scriptures, is not the word of God. The Lord had declared to man that disobedience would bring death. But Satan, as the tempter in Eden, caused the woman to doubt the word of God: “The serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die,” And the woman believed the tempter rather than God, and so sinned against the Creator.

Having tempted man to disobedience, so bringing death into the world, what more natural, in the course of deception, than to endeavor to persuade the human family that, after all, there is no death; that what appears so is only an introduction to fuller life and activity? “You shall not surely die.”

As mankind departed from right and lost the knowledge of God, dead heroes were deified as gods, and much of the pagan worship consisted in sacrifices to the spirits of the dead, supposed to be living still

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and concerned with affairs in the land of the living. When Israel fell away from God and joined the Moabites in the worship of Baal-peor, the record says of the nature of the service:

“They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.” “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.” Psalm 106:28,37. Instead of dealing with the spirits of the dead, the idolatrous worshipers were really putting themselves in direct touch with the agencies of Satan, the fallen angels.

Divine Warnings

This explains the severity of the divine warnings against the' ancient practice of necromancy, or mediumship. The Lord said:

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:31.

“When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God gives thee, thou 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.” Deut.18:9-12.

The ancient seance, where the living sought unto the dead for knowledge, was denounced by the prophet Isaiah: “When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not A people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? “ Isaiah 8: 19, A. R. V.

“To the law and to the testimony!” the prophet cries. To seek unto the dead for knowledge is to turn from the law and the testimony, and to take the counsel of the direct agencies of Satan, the great deceiver.

Modem Spiritualism

What Spiritualism is may best be understood by the prophetic warnings concerning the revival of this great deception in the last days. The apostle spoke of these days as a time when seducing spirits would lead many away from the faith:

“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. This deceptive working is an indication of the nearness of Christ's Second Coming:

“Whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 Thessalonians 2: 9, A. R. V. True to the sure word, now that the last days have come, there has arisen the movement of modern Spiritualism, with its signs and wonders, purporting to be wrought by the spirits of the dead. Professor Wallace says:

“Modern Spiritualism dates from March, 1848; it being then that, for the first time, intelligent communications were held with the unknown cause of the mysterious knockings and other sounds similar to those which had disturbed the Mompesson and Wesley families in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”- “On Miracles and Modem Spiritualism' (London, 1875), p. 146.

It was in Hydeville, N. Y., in the family of Mr. Fox, that the modern cult originated, it being found that by mysterious but clear sounds of knocking, an unseen intelligence was able to communicate answers to questions asked. The rapidity of the spread of the great deception was remarkable. One of the Fox sisters, Mrs. A. Leah Underhill, wrote:

“Since that day, starting from a small country village of western New York, Spiritualism has made its way - against tremendous obstacles and resistance, but under an impulse and a guidance from higher spheres - round the civilized globe. Starting from three sisters, two of them children, and the eldest a little beyond that age . . . its ranks of believers, privately or publicly avowed, have grown within thirty-six years to millions.”-” The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism,” Introduction.

Many at the time thought, as have many since, that the “rappings” with which the manifestations began were caused by some trickery on the part of the Fox sisters, but men of unimpeachable standing and intelligence certified to the contrary. Horace Greeley, famous editor of the New York Tribune, wrote in his

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paper that the sisters had visited him in his home and courted the fullest investigation as to “the alleged manifestations from the spirit world.” As the result of his observations, he wrote: “Whatever may be the origin or the cause of the 'rappings,' the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly and to our entire satisfaction.”- *Id.*, pages 160, 161. .

It was no mere sleight of hand that launched this cult upon the world as the last days came. Beyond all the physical manifestations, the religious idea in Spiritualism has leavened the religious thought of millions. No one can deny that the basic idea is the one that the serpent promulgated in Eden, You shall not surely die.”

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, another of the Fox sisters, says of the discovery of 1848: “On the night of the thirty-first of March, 1848, we found beyond a shadow of a doubt or peradventure, that death had no power over the spirit. . . . In a word, we found our so-called dead were all living.” “Nineteenth Century Miracles” (Manchester, England), p. 554. Now the Scriptures teach plainly what these agencies in Spiritualism are not, and what they are.

What They Are Not

They are not the spirits of the dead communicating messages to the living. In one of the earliest written portions of Holy Scripture, the Lord declared plainly that the dead have no knowledge of the living: “He passes: Thou changes his countenance, and sends him away. His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.” Job 14: 20, 21. The dead have no part in any communications with the living on earth: “Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9: 6

What They Are

Already we have told what they are in quoting the warnings of prophecy concerning the special deceptions of Satan in the last days. “The working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9. “Seducing spirits.” 1 Timothy 4:1. And as they were shown to the prophet John in a vision of the very end, he declared: “They are the spirits of devils, working miracles.” Revelation 16:14.

These are the agencies through which come the supernatural manifestations of Spiritualism. It is a terrible deception that leads men and women to seek to satanic agencies, supposing that they are communicating with the spirits of their dead friends. Satan and his angels can readily simulate the personality of the dead, and so deceive those who disobey God in seeking to the dead for knowledge.

The Climax of Deception

That the marvels of Spiritualism would increase as the end nears, was plainly taught by our Savior in describing the workings of Satan just before the Second Advent. He left us the warning: “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:23, 24.

Evidently, then, by the miracle-working power that he possesses, Satan will work mighty deceptions through both human and supernatural agencies. And the crowning deception will be his own manifestation as the Promised One, simulating Christ's Second Coming. But the power and glory that will fill all earth and the heavens at Christ's coming, cannot be copied by Satan, with all his miracle-working skill. That is why it is so important that we understand the Bible teaching as to the nature and manner of Christ's second advent. The doctrine of the silent, secret, mystical coming is all abroad in the world, the teaching exactly calculated to prepare the way for Satan's purposes of deception. Therefore Christ forewarns us:

“Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24: 25-27. The teachings of ancient theosophy and spiritualism the mysticism of the East - have been permeating

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Christendom in recent years. Mme. Jean Delaire, writing in a London review, said some years ago:

“India has apparently still a mission to fulfil, for her thought is slowly beginning to mold the thought of Europe and of America; our keenest minds are today studying her philosophy; our New Theology is founded upon the old, old Vedanta.” - National Review, September, 1908, p. 131.

This flood of ancient spiritualism from the East has come about according to Isaiah's prophecy of things that were to come to pass in the latter days:

“Thou has forsaken Thy people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with customs from the East, and are soothsayers like the Philistines.” Isaiah 2: 6, A. R. V.

In 1909 one of the leading representatives of theosophical thought, Mrs. Annie Besant, of India, toured America with the message of a coming messiah. She announced:

“My message is very simple: 'Prepare for the coming Christ.' We stand at the cradle of a new sub race, and each race or su brace has its own messiah. Hermes is followed by Zoroaster; Zoroaster by Orpheus; Orpheus by Buddha; Buddha by Christ. We now await with confidence a manifestation of the Supreme Teacher of the world, who was last manifested in Palestine. Everywhere in the West, not less than in the East, the heart of man is throbbing with the glad expectation of the new avatar.”

The leaven of the spiritualistic philosophy has been working its way through Christendom during this generation. We see clearly that the evil one is preparing the way for his final work of deception.

“Because I live, you shall live also.” John 14:19.

26. LIFE ONLY IN CHRIST

MAN'S NATURE AND STATE IN DEATH

A WIDE-OPEN door for Spiritualism is afforded by the teaching that man has life in himself - immortality by nature; and that death is not really death, but another form of life. The Scriptures close this door of false hope, teaching us that man is mortal, that death is really death, and that immortality is the gift of God through Christ by the resurrection from the dead.

Clearly and definitely the Bible teaches that God only has immortality, styling Him “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality.” 1 Timothy 6:15,16. This scripture disposes of every idea that man is immortal by nature, and opens the way for a consideration of the Scripture teaching concerning man's nature, his state in death, and the promise of life and immortality in Christ.

Man by Nature Mortal

The word “mortal,” as used in that ancient question by Eliphaz, describes man's nature: “Shall mortal man be more just than God?” Job 4:17. In the creation, life was conditional upon the creature's relation, to Christ the Creator, in whom all things consist: “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life.” John 1:3,4.

He was, and is, as the psalmist says, “the fountain of life.” Cut off from vital connection with Him, there could be no continuance of life. The Lord warned Adam that his life was conditional upon obedience. “In the day that thou eats thereof,” He said of the forbidden tree, “thou shall surely die.” Genesis 2:17. It was a declaration that man was not immortal, but was dependent upon God for life.

When by unbelief and sin man rejected God, the sentence of death eternal must have been executed had not the plan of salvation intervened. But as the stroke of divine justice was falling upon the sinner, the Son of God interposed Himself and received the blow. “He was bruised for our iniquities.” In the divine plan, the great sacrifice for man was as sure then as then, later, it was actually made on Calvary. Christ was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

And there Adam, the sinner, now with a fallen human nature, which would be perpetuated in his descendants in all subsequent time, was granted an extension of life, every moment of which, whether for him or for his posterity, was the purchase of Christ by His own death, in order that in this time of probation man might find forgiveness of sin and assurance of life to come. Adam was not created immortal, but was