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By D. M. PANTON.

# PERILS OF THE AGE.—6. SPIRITUALISM.

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# TESTS FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

By D. M. PANTON.

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# SPIRITUALISM.

**S**PIRITUALISTIC manifestations, among the most obstinately recurring phenomena of our time, have wrought a subtle and profound revolution in contemporary thought. "The evidence," says Sir Oliver Lodge, speaking from the chair of the British Association (1918), "to my mind goes to prove that discarnate intelligence, under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, thus indirectly coming within our scientific ken. A body of responsible investigators has even now landed on the treacherous but promising shores of a new continent." So the more thoughtful journalism accurately reflects the change from a mocking scepticism to sympathetic inquiry. "Though no verdict of 'proven,'" says the *Spectator* (December 4, 1909), "can yet be given, there is very considerable ground for believing that if investigations are pursued in the future as bravely and as patiently as in the past, proof may be achieved." The *Contemporary*

## Tests For The Supernatural.

**T**HE Church to-day is confronted with an inrush of the supernatural. Tremendous spiritual movements are rising in every part of the world; at any moment the individual disciple may be confronted by the miraculous. Consequently it is impossible to avoid a grave dilemma. If we assume that all that is superhuman is Divine, or at least good, we risk falling into the embrace of Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 9): if, on the other hand, we dismiss the supernatural as necessarily evil, we risk condemning as Satanic true miracles of God, if such should occur. Involved as we are, whether we will or no, in the last conflicts between Heaven and Hell, the discovery of a criterion that will discriminate Divine from Satanic miracle becomes obviously of supreme importance.

Moreover it is certain that grace alone is no sufficient criterion. In spite of acknowledged piety, sincerity and prayer, God has not prevented believers from falling into

*Review* goes farther: "There is reason to believe that through this investigation we are about to gain knowledge of extreme importance."\* No critic of Spiritualism is better informed, or more acutely critical, than Mr. Podmore, yet it is Mr. Podmore who says: "It is certain that no critique has yet succeeded in demonstrating the inadequacy of the evidence upon which the Spiritualists rely." || Sir Oliver Lodge is one more worker in the front rank of science to discover that the phenomena are real. "The time for suspicion," he says, "is over with most of us investigators. It is a judgment which I hold, for my own part, to be fully justified: intelligent co-operation between other embodied human minds and our own has become possible." †. Fresh evidence is ever accumulating. The Hon. Everard Fielding, who confesses to "a fairly complete education at the hands of fraudulent mediums, my unbroken experience of whom

\* *Contemporary Review*, Jan., 1910.  
|| *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., p. xiii. 1902.  
† *Survival of Man*, pp. 278, 333. 1909.

had led me into an attitude of entire scepticism," yet now acknowledges, after careful and exhaustive investigation, that "we have obtained evidence of unimpeachable validity." \* "It has been found," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "that whenever a scientific man has thought proper to devote his mind to a thorough examination of occult or unaccepted or twilght phenomena, he has, I believe, historically without exception, become convinced of the occurrence of some of them, and has allowed the evidence to assure him of the reality of phenomena worthy of further investigation." The work in the past accomplished by such investigators as Professor de Morgan, Sir William Crookes, and Sir Alfred Russel Wallace—"the facts," Sir Alfred says, "beat me"—is supplemented by evidence ever freshly recurring. "The old foundations of Spiritualist belief," Mr. Podmore acknowledges, "have been undermined by recent additions to our knowledge. But just as the faith might

But to a Christian judgment evidence less overwhelming than the mass of literature which the last half century has produced would be sufficient. For we approach Spiritualism, not as Agnostics, but as Christians,—that is, as those who hold in their hand an infallible revelation from, and concerning, the unseen; and a revelation, unlike an induction, requires no elaborate accumulation of experimental data, although it corresponds, with perfect exactitude, with all data that can be accumulated. The Bible has always asserted the existence and

have seemed to be tottering to its final fall, it has been buttressed anew out of its ruins, and now stands to the eye more firmly established than before." \* "However doubtful each separate case may appear," says Professor Lombroso, "in the ensemble spiritistic observations form such a compact web of proof as wholly to baffle the scalpel of doubt." ||

gross errors in the realm of doctrine: why then should we expect, on the ground of an identical piety, sincerity and prayer, that He should make error on miraculous gifts impossible? For if this expectation is true, as Dean Goode acutely observes, "it at once *unchristianizes* all but those who receive 'the gifts.' For if God will not allow any real Christian to be deceived in such a matter, then it follows, that if these are really 'the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,' those who do not receive them cannot be real Christians." <sup>1</sup> The Scripture nowhere presents holiness of life or sincerity of heart as substitutes for verbal and explicit tests, or as, in themselves, tests of the supernatural at all.

For history has demonstrated the peril. Probably no child of God has ever harboured a seducing spirit without having first submitted it to some test; yet the wayside of history is strewn with the wreckage of supernatural seduction. Again and again disciples have vainly relied upon *that which is no test*—their standing, their holiness, their experience, their invocations of the Blood, etc.,—instead of on the only God-given criterion, the application of that part of the Word of God which relates to a visitor from the unseen. Spirit after spirit has slipped past the imagined tests put by those whom they have subdued with the most monstrous claims.

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Claims to the Gifts of the Spirit*, p. 250.

This was the downfall of the Montanist. "I am neither an angel nor an ambassador," said the spirit which deceived Montanus, the founder of Montanism, "but I the Lord God the Father am present." <sup>1</sup> This was the downfall of the Irvingite. "Nothing can discriminate," said Edward Irving, "between spirits, but the honest and good heart, which discerneth between good and evil." <sup>2</sup> "no one," says Mr. Baxter, an Irvingite prophet, after being delivered from the delusion, "*ever tried the spirit in me.*" <sup>3</sup> This was the downfall of the Spiritualist. To Mr. Stainton Moses, an ex-clergyman, his familiars, with whom he consorted for over thirty years, said:—"We have preached to you a nobler gospel, revealing a diviner God than you had previously conceived;" <sup>4</sup> and Dr. Monck, a famous medium, was once a Baptist minister on whom a spirit fell in supernatural power *while he was preaching*. This was the downfall of the Mormon. "I am Jesus Christ," said the spirit who wrote the Book of Mormon, "even the Father and the Son." This was the downfall of Prince of the Agapemone, once an ardent and devoted evangelical clergyman. He asserted at last, under the direction of his controlling spirit whom he mistook for the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Dean Goode's *Modern Claims to the Gifts of the Spirit*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Oliphant's *Life of Edward Irving*, p. 483.

<sup>3</sup> *Narrative of Facts*, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> *Spirit Teachings*, p. 207.

\* Myers' *Human Personality*, p. 395. Abridged edition.  
 philosopher." \* An hypothesis so amazing in its great artist, or a great mathematician, or a great unseemly may be as rare as the gifts that make a "the aptitude for communicating clearly [from the spirits, that Dr. Hodgson is driven to suppose that ing and baffling the proofs of identity offered by the fusion in the revelations forthcoming, so conflict- problem of all. So inextinguishable is the mental con- of the dead has proved the most acutely baffling history of Spiritualism, the evidence for the return fronted by the curious fact that, throughout the calculable importance. Now we are at once con- of identity is vital. It involves issues of quite in- come? It must be obvious to all that the problem Who are they—in the words of Defoe—who do our alert inquiry and arouses our acutest interest. tions, therefore, but their origin, which challenges "is to abandon the Bible." It is not the manifesta- the actuality of witchcraft," says John Wesley, "To deny intervening power of unseen intelligences."

6

|| *The Strand*, June, 1917.

1900.

\* *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, April, Myers, to whom the problem in life was a passion, istic communications." † Even Mr. F. W. H. for certain proof of personal identity through medium- says M. Camille Flammarion, "I have sought in vain rate, it is part of what we get." || "Up to this day," but that is part of what we might expect—at any is—and occasionally there are direct impersonations; Sir Oliver Lodge, "there may be—there sometimes " "Guessing" on the part of the control," says Investigators everywhere are baffled on identity. cannot be more serious than I am on this topic." \* communications are not what they profess to be. I friends. Either their tastes have altered, or the the characters and tastes of my own deceased Mr. Andrew Lang, "I must know something about need of the spirits be the dead." "Surely," says evidence on identity is not less violent than the facts admission of the rarity of anything like adequate

7

4

Ghost:—"In me you see Christ in the flesh; by me, and in me God has redeemed all flesh from death."<sup>1</sup> It has also been the downfall of modern Christian leaders. "I pray to my wife," says Dr. Parker, "every day. I never come to the work without asking her to come with me: and she does come. I never come to this place without her coming with me."<sup>2</sup> Still graver is Dr. R. J. Campbell's startling confession. "I am conscious of some one's presence in the mysterious unseen at this moment. Who is it? I have always believed it to be Jesus; it is no vague abstraction, but a definite, living, personal being. I work under his orders. Am I wrong in supposing it Jesus? If so, I have been deluded into doing a good many things which otherwise I would never have attempted. Someone is directing me from the spirit world: if not Jesus, who is it? To me it is a thing incredible, impossible of acceptance, it should be any one else."<sup>3</sup> No slavery more awful can be imagined than the acceptance of an evil spirit as God; no peril, perhaps, is more to be dreaded (Matt. xxiv. 24) in the last days; and probably no child of God has ever harboured a seducing spirit without submitting it to tests, but they were his own tests, and not God's.

<sup>1</sup> Hepworth Dixon's *Spiritual Wives*, Vol. I. p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Review of Reviews*, Jan., 1902.

<sup>3</sup> *Christian Commonwealth*, Nov. 30, 1910.

5

Nor do we find ourselves possessed of any infallible discriminating power within us. One fact alone is sufficient to disprove decisively any inherent power of discernment in a disciple. Among the nine miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost appears the gift of "discernings of spirits" (1 Cor. xii. 10): that is to say, even the miraculously gifted of the apostolic Church could not infallibly discriminate one spirit from another unless possessed of this special gift; much less therefore can we, devoid, as we are, of all miracle and inspiration. In direct, inspired safeguards of Scripture (if such there be) can be our only possible safety; and to doubt, or disregard, or deny such Divine safeguards, once discovered, while resting on our own powers to unmask man's most subtle foe, is to fling away the sword and to fight with the scabbard. For the Holy Spirit can fall on a wicked man—as Balaam; and a wicked spirit can fall on a holy man—for the Prophets, gifted with discernment of spirits, were commanded to sit alongside and discriminate (1. Cor. xiv., 29).

Now it is true that there are two general tests, both doctrinal (Gal. i. 8; 2 John 7), and a third that involves both creed and life (Matt. vii. 15-20): these tests, applied at leisure, are often sufficient to unmask a demon. But a sudden encounter with a spirit requires a more immediate and decisive test, and this is supremely supplied in 1 John iv. 1-3. Here is our final safeguard.

returns unrecognizable. "His messages," says Mr. A. C. Benson, "were to me more like a superficial parody of the attributes of his mind." Crucial tests steadily fail. "Several persons," Mr. Podmore says, have within the last few years left behind them sealed letters, containing some statement known only to themselves, in order that revelation of the contents through the medium might furnish proof of the writer's survival. In no case has the test been compared with. The limitations of the knowledge displayed, and the occasional disingenuousness, forbid us to accept these communications as authentic and unembarrassed messages from the dead.\* "Even if identity of the departed were established, it would only establish *neurotomy in operation*: and "there shall not be found with thee a *neurotomer*. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto THE LORD" (Deut. xvii. 11). The pressure of these constantly recurrent discrepancies extorts a remarkable admission from the chief Spiritualistic organ.

But the problem cannot end negatively. Mr. Myers, who declares that "the only invaders of the organisms who have yet made good their title have been human and have been friendly," also bravely asserts that "these phenomena of *possession* are the most amply attested in our whole repertory."\* But "possession" is a grave word, and possession of the organisms by any but God must involve incalculable peril. Why is Mr. J. N. Maskelyne compelled to say: "I have good reason to know that professional mediums, both men and women, are immoral and

"It may be necessary," says *Light* (Dec. 28, 1893), to acknowledge that recent experiments may effect a weakening of one wing of the faith which has supported the average Spiritualist in his most cherished hope. The doctrine that only spirits of the dead manifest their presence may have to be given up—indeed, is given up by many."

PREC

(I append some obvious inferences in brackets.)

Beloved [who alone are qualified to put the test (Luke x. 19)], believe not every spirit [for faith in a spirit can be deadly], but prove the spirits [for a spirit either from Heaven or Hell may manifest himself at any moment], whether they are of God: because many false prophets [men really inspired, but by demons, i.e. mediums] are gone out into the world. Hereby [as a God-given criterion] know ye the Spirit of God [therefore the other 'spirits' named are also personal beings]: every spirit [who is to be directly addressed, to the ignoring of the prophet (Acts xvi. 18)] which confesseth [in response to the challenge] that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [a test never before given, and therefore not operative earlier] is of God:<sup>2</sup> and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus [silence or shuffling is as fatal as denial] is not of God.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These tests have superseded those given through the Law (Deut. xiii. 1-3) and the Prophets (Jer. xxviii. 9). The tests in the Gospels and Galatians are peculiarly valuable where evil spirits are suspected, and yet there are no supernatural manifestations.

<sup>2</sup> It is true that demons confessed in His lifetime that our Lord was the Holy One of God. But (1) this was not in answer to test, whereas God now commands the putting of a direct challenge to each communicating spirit; (2) it is Jesus as *Messiah*, the human Christ, not only as Son of God, that invisible powers are called on to confess; (3) it occurred before these tests had been given to the Church, and therefore, presumably, before a prohibition of evasion had been laid upon the unseen world; and, (4) whether through policy or compulsion, it is a fact of experience that unclean spirits thus unerringly reveal themselves since our Lord's resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> It is natural that a devout soul should shrink from sub-

The importance of this inspired test it is impossible to exaggerate. The Word of God here makes itself responsible for the result: if evasion or deception by demons be possible, not only will a spirit's answer prove to be no criterion, but the whole passage becomes a rotten fence on the edge of a precipice, which (for leaning on) is more dangerous than none. It is an infallible criterion. But several conditions, implied in the context, need to be most carefully observed. (1) Scripture affords no ground, so far as I am aware, for supposing the test to be efficacious in unconverted hands. The test, like the invocation of our Lord's name (Mark ix. 39), is not a magical spell which any one may use (Acts xix. 13-16), but a solemn charge entrusted to the people of God to safeguard the flock of God. (2) It is a test for the *spirit*, not the *prophet*; therefore it is never to be applied unless the miraculous is obviously present; and the *spirit* must be compelled to answer—not the *prophet*. We are dealing with a subtle and unscrupulous foe.<sup>1</sup> (3) The spontaneous doctrinal system of a spirit (as in Acts xvi. 17) is no criterion; a seducing spirit can

mitting to test that which may prove to be the Holy Spirit Himself: nevertheless the passage commands it; and actually shows us the Spirit after He has thus been tested: "hereby [after the applied test] know ye the Spirit of God."

<sup>1</sup> So all modern claimants to miraculous gifts from God should be asked two questions:—(1) Have you first isolated the spirit

later, through every experience of Hell. Sorrow, grief, and despair have all to be gone through." The intercourse implants the stamp of Hell. "I could not divest myself of the feeling," says Dr. Furness of the medium Slade, "that his expression was that of a haunted animal or of a haunted man." || Mr. T. L. Harris, himself a lifelong Occultist, writes: "The tenor of private communications to me has been, not 'How shall we get into communion with spirits?' but, 'How shall we find salvation from the direful tortures with which they assail us?' So far as I am able to judge, the majority of such instances are traceable to the habit of attending seances." All these are the admissions of Spiritualists themselves. Facts, even apart from Revelation, compel us to the conclusion that Spiritualism is attempted necromancy, but actual sorcery. "A peep into the cavern of the witch," in the words of the *British Quarterly Review* (Oct. 1875), "or the circle of the necromancer, as they existed between two and three thousand years

blasphemous in the extreme" ? || "It is this apparent demoralization of the medium," says Professor Barrett, "which renders the whole inquiry so perplexing and doubtful, from an ethical as well as from a scientific point of view. As a rule I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly; moral obliquity is the first symptom, then they become wrecks."\* "If the medium is not specially wicked," says Professor Lombroso, "he becomes so in the trance." † Mediums themselves acknowledge the peril. "Cheating mediums," a healing medium wrote recently in the *Daily Telegraph*, "are often made so from necessity. Their spirit guides leave them for a time; they want means to carry on, and their reputation enables them to impose on their clients. A medium is forced to go, sooner or later, than he would like to go." ‡ "Report of the Church Congress, 1881. § After Death, p. 121. ¶ But Mr. Maskelyne has never disproved the phenomena. \*\* So far," says Sir Hiram Maxim (*Strand Magazine*, June 1910), "no believer either in Spiritualism or the supernatural, Mr. Maskelyne has utterly failed to understand or explain the extraordinary performances" which Sir Hiram has himself seen and carefully examined.

be as orthodox in general profession as a human hypocrite: only a confession in response to this direct challenge can elicit his real origin. John does not say, —Believe all spirits—as though the supernatural were always Divine; nor—Believe no spirit—as though miraculous communications from God are now impossible; but—"Believe not every spirit," for a spirit, either good or bad, may manifest himself at any moment,

Moreover the test is found to work. Supernatural tongues broke out, eighty years ago, in a clergyman's family in Gloucestershire; a superhuman utterance, through a child of seven, ruled the house as with the voice of God. Suspicion at last arose in the clergy-

visiting among you, and then insisted on "yes" or "no" to the question, "Did Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" (2) If the answer is in the affirmative, how did you successfully isolate him so as to be sure yourself, and to be able to assure others, that it was the spirit who answered and not the person in possession of whom he was at the moment? Without these questions put—questions never yet, among modern spirit sects, satisfactorily answered—whoever consents to enter the unseen enters blindfold, the sport of powers he knows not whom. Or again, if yourself 'gifted,' have the words, 'Jesus is Lord'—these words, and none other (1 Cor. xii, 3)—ever been spoken through you by the supernatural utterance, in conditions which make it certain that it spoke and not you? No authenticated case of response to these tests, with public references and proofs, has yet been given to the Church of Christ; no *prima facie* case even; nothing beyond what has occurred in pseudo-Spiritisms all down the ages—unverified rumours.

man's mind, and the curate suggested to the rector the application of the test. "Try not the spirits!" the boy immediately cried, "try not the spirits!" Solemnly the spirit, whose protest was wisely disregarded, was asked if Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, and as promptly denied it; and on the clergyman silencing it, the spirit departed, and never returned. Another concrete case may be given. Some years ago, in Norwich, a young man informed a godly man known to me that in a Spiritualistic *séance* he had got into communication with his grandmother. "Your grandmother, whom I knew so well, was a lovely character and a holy woman," the old man answered: "my counsel is that you go back and ask her, Did Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" A few days after the young man, unutterably horrified, returned, saying—"The spirit's immediate answer was 'No,' followed by a torrent of blasphemy; it is a spirit from hell!" I may add my own experience. Some twenty years ago, in conjunction with one now an Anglican Canon, and another a China Inland Missionary, several undergraduates applied the test in my own rooms at Cambridge. "Are you willing," the spirit was asked, when it had become certain that a spirit was present, and after it had been wholly isolated, "to communicate with us on the incarnation of Jesus Christ?" An emphatic "Yes" was the reply. "Did Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" The response was a still more

ago, reveals a scene indistinguishable, in its essential features, from the darkened chamber of the medium of to-day." So experienced a Theosophist as Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who would ridicule Scriptural warnings, nevertheless says:—"A medium of the ordinary type is open to communication from any inhabitant of the next world who chooses to avail himself of the opportunity. However innocent, therefore, the medium on this plane may be, the inquirer is liable to be addressed by some miserable entity on the 'other side' who falsely pretends to be the friend sought."\* Yet the modern investigator presses past every danger-signal in a mood of fearful daring. "Even if these Invisible Entities," said Mr. W. T. Stead, "be demons from the nether pit, the reality of their existence and the nature of their attributes deserve the study of those whom they are attempting to deceive."|| But this is deliberate sorcery; and "for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and

The consequences that flow from these facts are tremendous. Behind and beyond all the momentous movements of a momentous age stands this ominous shadow of Spiritualism. It is the silent inrush and unparalleled aggression of an unseen world. On the incidental importance of Spiritualism as an ocular and indisputable demonstration of Biblical teaching

smile in pity, but are unmoved by all your threats of familiar, i.e., friendly intercourse with them—we partnership and co-operation with spirit-people—aye, Pamphlet, "after twenty-five years' constant communication of the Spiritists" (The Two Worlds, April 2, 1897), commenting on the first Present Day warning, human or Divine. "For ourselves," says an organ of the Spiritists—"the Scriptural definition of 'familiar' spirits—the Scriptural definition of 'familiar' spirits—can become too powerful for any mediumship—can become too powerful for any next world who chooses to avail himself of the opportunity. However innocent, therefore, the medium on this plane may be, the inquirer is liable to be addressed by some miserable entity on the 'other side' who falsely pretends to be the friend sought."\* Yet the modern investigator presses past every danger-signal in a mood of fearful daring. "Even if these Invisible Entities," said Mr. W. T. Stead, "be demons from the nether pit, the reality of their existence and the nature of their attributes deserve the study of those whom they are attempting to deceive."|| But this is deliberate sorcery; and "for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and

emphatic "No!" The thrill of that awful discovery will never leave my memory. Thus a babe in Christ can no more be deceived by an honest application of the tests than the maturist saint; *because the revealing power is lodged, not in the degree of sanctification of the inquirer, but in the infallibility of the Word*; "beloved"—of whatever age, or maturity, or circumstance—"prove the spirits."

The second supreme test for the supernatural appears on the threshold of Paul's treatise on miraculous gifts. (I append some obvious inferences in brackets).

"Now concerning spiritual gifts [or, the inspired<sup>1</sup>], brethren, I would not have you ignorant [for such ignorance is dangerous]. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away [seduced by demoniac frenzies and deceits?] unto those dumb idols [to which demons ever lead], howsoever [for pythonic inspirations take manifold shapes] ye might be led. Wherefore I give you [as a special revelation] to understand [in order to discriminate unerringly between the God-gifted and the Satan-gifted] that no man speaking in the Spirit of God [that is, no inspired man] saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man [that is, none inspired] can say, Jesus [not 'Christ' only<sup>3</sup>] is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 1-3).

<sup>1</sup> "Most modern critics decide in favour of the sense, 'inspired men.'"—Godet. Verse 3 also so decides it; moreover, "the tests given will not apply to every case of spiritual gift, some of which were gifts of action, as healing; but only to gifts of inspired word" (Govett).

<sup>2</sup> "Chased by a scourge of evil demons."—Justin.

<sup>3</sup> "Paul says here *Jesus*, and not *Christ*. His concern is with

No gift is more easily mimicked by Satan, or has been more mimicked throughout the ages, than the most elementary gift of all (1 Cor. xiv. 19)—Tongues. Only when the utterance is thus obviously supernatural can the test be rightly, or successfully, applied; but it is unmistakable and decisive. The organs of utterance, in an inspired man, have passed partially out of his

the historical person who lived on earth under the name of Jesus. It is with Him that all true inspiration is bound up: it is from Him that all carnal or diabolical inspiration turns away. The Ophite Gnostics used to ask those who entered their churches to *curse Jesus*."—Godet. The absence of the 'Lord' before 'Jesus,' so conspicuous a mark in the Tongues' literature, and (I believe) invariable in their 'inspired' utterances, is most significant. "The One who has used me"—so runs a letter of one 'tongue-gifted' known to me—"I consciously and willingly responding to his usage, revealed to me Jesus; and, glory be to Jesus! as I think of Jesus now, the Son of God Who came in the flesh, the Spirit speaks loudly within me in the tongue, praising Jesus, Son of God who came in the flesh." Here is a person writing under the power of a spirit; yet, though our Lord is frequently referred to, *it is never as Lord*; and the *praise* given to the Lord by the spirit-being is wholly distinct from the *confession* required, but not forthcoming, in answer to a direct challenge.

<sup>1</sup> But, in Divine cases, partially only: that is, while the Holy Ghost was responsible for the *contents*, the prophet was responsible for the *occasion* and *duration* of his utterance: for "the spirits of the prophets ARE SUBJECT to the prophets" (1 Cor.

with some serious questions concerning it. One is, Mr. Stainon Moses, "I have been deeply impressed become intimately acquainted with the subject," says that underlies the spiritual onset. "Ever since I It is enough to emphasize, in conclusion, the motive which one often gets in contact with the insane."\* even that authentic touch of 'communicative decay' moment to experience that savour of spiritual rot, that relates to Spiritualism I cannot cease for a the 'sense' of an intelligence gone rotten, so in all Theosophists," says Father Martindale, "one gets writings of Christian Scientists, and still more of Spiritualism, we do not now dwell. "As in the consequences of the demonstrated truth of our Age:—on these, and other equally momentous Tim. iv. 1—3) of the approaching consummation of and Divine; on the critical revelation it affords (1 it casts upon methods of inspiration, both Satanic decisive overthrow of all materialism, and the light concerning wizardry and the supernatural; on its

|| *Spirit Identity*, p. 30.  
† *Survival of Man*, p. 339.  
§ *Proceedings of Society for Psychological Research*, vol. xii, p. 612.  
\* *Spirit Teachings*, p. 101.

that there is an organized plan on the part of spirits who govern these manifestations to act on us, and on the religious thought of the age."|| The religious teaching given has a curious and significant general identity. "There is a general consistency"—in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge—"in the doctrines that have thus been taught through various sensitives."† "Almost all these automatic utterances"—in the words of Mr. Myers—"appear to me analogous to Swedenborg; § the father of all modern Occultism. The intelligences, organized and acting together in some measure, betray a specific design. "The central dogmas of the Christian Faith," says Mr. Moses, once an Anglican clergyman, "seemed especially attacked: and it was this that startled me."\* It might well startle him. "It has been one of our chiefest difficulties," the spirits informed him, with whom he had consorted daily for thirty

control into that of the controlling spirit: no man, therefore—for this is God's revelation—so long as a supernatural power is operating through him, controlling his organs of utterance, can say, "Jesus is accursed," if it be a good spirit; nor can he say, "Jesus is Lord," if it be an evil spirit. Once again it is the spirit tested, not the man. But a practical problem, surpassingly important, remains. What shall we do if the supernatural comes to us in a form which cannot be so tested? as in some "tongue," which may be careful never to respond in our own language? "The test of 1 John iv.," a speaker in tongues writes to me, "could never be applied to me; as when the supernatural power is upon me, the utterances are always in an unknown tongue; and this is a constant experience." A heart devoted to the Word of God can have but one answer. No CHRISTIAN HAS ANY RIGHT TO HARBOUR THE SUPERNATURAL, OR A SPIRIT FROM ANOTHER WORLD, UNLESS AND UNTIL IT HAS SOLEMNLY AND SUCCESSFULLY PASSED THESE TESTS OF GOD. The critical peril is here. A seducing spirit comes in a guise that cannot be tested, and so wins over the recipient to accept this arrangement, and to make the enormous and awful

xiv. 32). One prophet was to stop, and could, if a sudden revelation was given to another (1 Cor. xiv. 30): an impossibility of checking the utterance is always a symptom of Satanic inspiration.

assumption that the spirit is the Holy Ghost. But the Spirit Himself gave the tests; He will therefore not resent their reverent application: that they should be applied is His own command: when He comes—or a good spirit or angel suffered by Him—He will point to His own tests: therefore a spirit which evades them is from the Pit. An untested spirit must be shunned and banned at all costs.

"It is of the last importance," in the words of Mr. G. H. Pember, "that the full meaning of this declaration [1 Cor. xii. 1—3] should be understood by the believers of our days. For again demoniacal manifestations are multiplying among us, and that with a subtlety sufficient to deceive any one who neglects to apply the prescribed tests." The failure, or obstinate refusal, to use the tests carefully and solemnly can itself be nothing else than a machination, a malign spell, of the Prince of Darkness. The refusal to do so appears as early as in the first half of the Second Century. "And every prophet who speaks in the Spirit," says the *Didache*, "ye shall not try nor test; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven." Exactly so, eighteen hundred years after, Mrs. Woodworth Etter says:—"It is an unpardonable sin to knowingly attribute any of the mighty works of the Holy Ghost to the devil. There has never been a time since the early churches when there was so much danger of



years, "to uproot false dogmas from your mind: so long as you reply to our arguments with a text, we cannot teach you." || It was with text after text that our Lord met the devil in the wilderness. Says a medium of long standing: "I learn from spirits that a vast spiritual movement is working out a great religious scheme, having for its basis Deism and universal brotherhood." The conclusion is inevitable. Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but, in a manner now appallingly real, against the world-rulers of this darkness. "It may be," as Canon Wilberforce assured the Church Congress in 1881, "that the manifestations are part of the dark clouds which have to appear and be dispersed before the promised advent of the Lord with His saints." The sunset of the world is the sunrise of the Christ of God. "And I will come near to you to judgment: and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iii. 5).

people committing the unpardonable sin as there is to-day since the Pentecostal fire has girdled the earth."<sup>1</sup> To confound the miracles of God, wrought through human agency in any age or nation, with miracles of Satan would be a tragedy indeed; but to imagine that this is the sin which hath never forgiveness is wholly erroneous, and (used as Mrs. Woodworth Etter uses it) a spiritual coercion of the worst kind. For it is attributing to Satan *our Lord's* miracles, and His alone, evidenced by the sinless character and the perfect life, which is the unpardonable blasphemy: "because they said, *He hath an unclean spirit*" (Mark iii. 30). There is no proof (so far as I am aware) that the unpardonable blasphemy has ever been committed since our Lord exposed it on the lips of the Pharisees.

"I praise God," says a leader of the Tongues movement in England, "that the 'indwelling Spirit' does not need isolating and questioning to elicit that fact [that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh]." It is an ominous refusal. "We state the grave fact," says a collective utterance of German pastors (1908), "that in the late ['Tongues'] movement in Cassel and other places, well-known Christians have got a gift of prophecy and tongues that was not from the Holy Ghost. We must say that we missed in a highly deplorable measure the trying of the

<sup>1</sup> *Signs and Wonders*, p. 138.

spirits, as the Word of God orders; and we confess this deficiency as guilt and blame falling on us, as on wide spheres of the Christian Church." Out of this solitary neglect, culpable and inexplicable, have sprung Montanism, the Camisards, Irvingism, Spiritualism, and the modern Tongues Movement: OUT OF IT ALSO IS TO SPRING THE GREAT APOSTASY. "The Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits*" (1 Tim. iv. 1). "Beloved, PROVE THE SPIRITS" (1 John iv. 1): "*despise not prophesyings: PROVE ALL THINGS*" (1 Thess. v. 19).