

A painting depicting a scene of spiritualism. In the foreground, a man with a beard and long hair lies in a coffin, his head resting on a pillow. He is illuminated by a bright, ethereal light that emanates from a glowing orb in the upper left corner. The light creates a strong contrast with the dark, shadowy surroundings. To the left, another man is kneeling in prayer, his hands clasped together. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a stone or brick wall. The overall mood is solemn and spiritual.

SPIRITUALISM

E. J. Waggoner

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“Glorious transit of the great Patriarch Saint Francis of Assisi”
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1. The Spirit of Antichrist

Signs of the Times, November 24, 1887

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 1

Christ vs. Antichrist

IN *1 John* 4:1-3 we find the following inspired warning and declaration:

1 John 4

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

² Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;

³ And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Again to *2 John* 7 we find a similar statement:

2 John

⁷ For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

“Antichrist” means “opposed to Christ.” The great antichrist, therefore, is Satan himself, for he is the instigator and abettor of everything that has ever come up in opposition to God and Christ. In *Revelation* 12 we find the following description of the first opposition to the Son of God, and its result:

Revelation 12

⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world; he was

cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Michael is the archangel,¹ that is, the chief or prince of the angels; and the archangel is Christ, for it is the voice of the archangel that will be heard at the last great day, when the dead shall be raised;² and Christ declared that His own voice would be the one that should penetrate the graves, and called forth the dead.³ Therefore this war in heaven was between Christ and His angels on one side, and Satan and his angels on the other side. It was the beginning of the great controversy which has been going on till the present time.

When Christ was on earth, He again met the devil in person, and again vanquished him; but still the warfare is kept up. Satan still opposes Christ by seeking to blind the minds of men so that...

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ ...the light of the glorious gospel of Christ [may not] shine unto them.

And the contest will cease only with the utter destruction of Satan and all his works.

The apostle, however, in the text first quoted, does not speak of antichrist himself, but of the “spirit of antichrist;” that is, not of Satan in person, but of the doctrines which he disseminates in order to blind the minds of them that believe not. This spirit of antichrist is declared to be a denial that Jesus is come in the flesh.

It is commonly supposed that this refers to Roman Catholicism. This is probably because in *2 Thessalonians*, the Papacy is spoken of as the one,

¹ *Jude* 9.

² *1 Thessalonians* 4:16.

³ *John* 5:26-29.

2 Thessalonians 2

³ ...who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

There is no question but that Roman Catholicism is antichrist; but we propose to demonstrate that what is known as modern Spiritualism is essentially the spirit of antichrist, being the direct mouth-piece of Satan himself, and that Roman Catholicism and other forms of error, whether of greater or lesser degree, are only outgrowths of the principle which is the very heart of Spiritualism.

Denying Christ

Our first business is to inquire what it is to deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Of course the most direct method of denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is to deny the entire narrative contained in the gospels, to say that the whole thing is a fabrication, and that there never was such a person as Jesus Christ. But there are comparatively few in enlightened lands who deny that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived on this earth.

Many who will admit that such a person lived, and that he was a very good man, possibly the best man that ever lived, will still deny His divinity; they will not admit that He was the Son of God. Such persons do most emphatically deny that Jesus Christ is come the flesh, and are therefore deceived by the spirit of antichrist.

But there is still another way in which the spirit of antichrist may be manifested, and that is by denying some essential part of the work of Christ, while still professing, to believe on Him. Representatives of this class are brought to view in:

Matthew 7

²¹ Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

This working of the spirit of antichrist is the most insidious of all, and is that which will wreck the greater part of those who will be lost. Let us examine it.

Why Christ Came

In the 1st chapter of *John* we have undoubted reference to Christ, under the title of “the Word.”

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the fourteenth verses we read of Him:

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

Grace means favor. Therefore the statement is that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of favor. That is the same as saying that Christ came in the flesh as an exhibition of the favor of God to man. And in harmony with this are the words of Paul:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

1 Timothy 1

¹³ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

He was “full of grace;” and so the apostle declares that the grace of God brings salvation.

Titus 2

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to

all men.

Now go back again to the statement that when Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us, he was full of favor. This favor was the favor of God, for His fullness was the fullness of God,^{4/5} and:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was [manifest] in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Now we read in *Psalms* 30 that:

Psalms 30

⁵ ...in His favor is life.

Therefore we conclude that Jesus Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us full of favor, in order to give life to men doomed to death; and this conclusion is strengthened by the statement:

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of man.

The following texts show plainly that Christ's sole object in coming to this earth was to give life to those who otherwise would not have had it:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The obvious conclusion is that if He had not come, all men would have perished, and that although He has come, none will have life except those who believe in Him. And this conclusion is stated in so many words, in:

⁴ **Colossians 1** ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

⁵ **Colossians 2** ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

John 3

³⁶ He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on Him.

1 John 5

¹⁰ He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself; he that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.

¹¹ And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

John 10

⁹ I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

¹⁰ The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

These texts abundantly prove that to give life was the sole object of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh. Therefore we say that to deny that He alone gives life,—to claim that without Christ man may have life—even under the most distressing conditions—is virtually to deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and is consequently the spirit of antichrist.

For to deny the essential part of Christ's work,—to deny the very thing and the only thing for which He was manifested in the flesh, full of grace and truth,—is the same as denying that He ever was manifest in the flesh at all. If men may have life without Christ, then His words,

John 5

⁴⁰ You will not come unto me, that you might have life,

—they might have responded,

“We don't need to, for we can have life, without coming to you.”

And this they did say in effect. The spirit of antichrist which is in the world is, therefore, when traced to its very simplest form, merely a denial that man is dependent upon Christ for life; it is the claim that all men will have life, whether they believe in Christ or not.

Natural Immortality?

This spirit is pre-eminently exemplified in modern Spiritualism. The fundamental principle of Spiritualism, and, indeed, the whole sum and substance of it, is the doctrine of the natural immortality of man. We will let Spiritualists define it in their own words. N. F. Ravlin, formerly a Baptist minister, and now one of the leading Spiritualist lecturers in California says:

The very central truth of Spiritualism is the power and possibility of spirit return, under certain conditions, to communicate with those in the material form.

Mrs. E. L. Watson, a noted “inspirational” lecturer, in an address in San Francisco, in the *Golden Gate* of February 6, 1886, said:

Spiritualism *per se* is a science; it is the demonstration of certain facts relative to the nature of man; it explains the psychological phenomena which have transpired in the past, and the mysteries which have surrounded us as spiritual beings. It demonstrates the fact of man’s continued existence after death, and enlightens us in regard to the manner of that existence.

The standing motto of the *Spiritual Magazine*, for many years the leading Spiritualist publication in England, was this:

Spiritualism is based on the cardinal fact of spirit communion and influx; it is the effort to discover all truth relating to man’s spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare, and destiny, and its application to a regenerative life. It recognizes a continuous divine inspiration in man. It aims,

through a careful, reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe; of the relations of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the spiritual world. It is thus catholic and progressive, leading to true religion as at one with the highest philosophy.

In an article entitled, "Spiritualism and Religion," in the *Golden Gate* of July 9, 1887, John Weatherlee said:

The central idea of modern Spiritualism is the key-stone of the religious arch. That is, a continued existence.

Bible Teaching About Death

But the central idea of Spiritualism is diametrically opposed to the Bible, for that declares that there is no such thing as continued existence for man unless he is one of the righteous ones who shall be alive when the Lord comes, and who will be translated. The patriarch Job said:

Job 14

¹⁰ But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

¹¹ As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up;

¹² So man lies down, and rises not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

And he adds:

²¹ His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

The psalmist says:

Psalm 6

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you; in the grave who shall give you thanks?

Again:

Psalm 115

¹⁷ The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Again, still more positively:

Psalm 146

³ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

⁴ His breath goes forth, he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Solomon wrote:

Ecclesiastes 9

⁴ For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

⁵ For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

⁶ Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

No matter how poor or how ignorant a man may be, he is infinitely richer and knows infinitely more than a dead man. The man who has barely conscience enough to know that he is going to die, and who knows not another thing, knows far more than a dead man; for the dead know not anything,—their thoughts have perished. The dead are represented as dwelling in the dust, asleep:

Isaiah 26

¹⁹ Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Daniel 12

² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

All the Scripture declarations, and many more of like import—for the Bible teaches nothing different on this point—are contradicted by Spiritualism, which declares that man has a continued existence, and that there is no death.

But this contradiction of the plain declaration of the Bible shows Spiritualism to be inspired by the spirit of antichrist; for the prophets...

1 Peter 1

²¹ ...spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,

—and the Spirit of Christ was in them inspiring all that they wrote.⁶

⁶ 1 Peter 1:10-11.

2. Natural Immortality

Signs of the Times, December 1, 1887

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THE next point to be considered is what is actually involved in this claim that all men are by nature immortal. We state as a proposition, that the claim that man are by nature immortal actually implies nothing less than that they are equal with God, and independent of Him. This proposition we shall now prove.

1. Immortality Only in God

Immortality belongs to God alone. Paul speaks of...

1 Timothy 6

¹⁵ ...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

¹⁶ Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.

Christ, as the only begotten Son of God, shares this attribute with the Father:

John 5

²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

Angels are immortal, but only because God has given them immortality; men may obtain immortality, but only as the gift of God, bestowed on them through Christ, only, however, to those who seek it by patient continuance in well-doing.

Romans 6

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 2

⁷ To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.

Now for a man to claim one of the attributes of God, is virtually to claim all of them. Especially is this true if the attribute claimed be immortality; for the possession of life involves everything else. To claim immortality is to claim the very highest attribute of a Deity. God's most sacred name is Jehovah,—the One who is,—and when He would give Moses the highest possible credentials, He said,

Exodus 3

¹⁴ Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.

So for a man to claim immortality as his own by right is to claim for himself equality with God, or at least to claim that he is a part of God.

2. God is the Creator

The great, and, indeed, the only reason why we should serve the Lord with all our heart, and with all our power, is because He has created us, and we live only by His favor. Said the holy angels in Heaven:

Revelation 4

¹¹ You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You have created all things.

And Paul, in proving to the Athenians that God alone should be worshiped, used only the argument that:

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life, and breath, and all things,
and that...

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

Now if it were true that we are immortal, and that our life, either present or future, is not dependent on the special favor of God, but that we shall continue to exist for ever, no matter what our character or condition, then it would be true that we would owe no allegiance to God nor to anyone else but our-

selves. The claim that man is by nature immortal is virtually a claim that he is independent of God. So again we see that for man to claim immortality for themselves is to make themselves gods, or, at least, a part of God.

3. God is the Lawgiver and Judge

If man were immortal, like God, then, as stated above, he would be independent of God, owing no allegiance to anybody but himself; and in that case he would, necessarily, be his own lawgiver and his own judge. Each man would determine for himself what his course of action would be, and right would be for each individual whatever his nature should prompt him to do.

These conclusions are self-evident, and prove the main proposition, that the claim of natural immortality for man is virtually a claim that men are gods, having all the attributes that the Bible ascribes to the one only true God. And this again shows that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is inspired by the spirit of antichrist, for Christ is God.⁷ Whatever dishonors either the Father or the Son dishonors the other.

Having thus briefly but positively shown that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is of the very essence of the spirit of antichrist, we shall proceed to show:

1. That modern Spiritualism, the foundation-stone of which is continued existence for man, does most positively deny both God and Christ;
2. That all teaching having natural immortality as its basis has ever been opposed to God; and
3. That the teaching that man is by nature immortal always leads directly and surely to immorality,—that it is indeed the cause of all the wickedness that has ever disgraced this earth.

⁷ *John* 1:1.

We quote first the statements of leading Spiritualist writers. The editor of the *Golden Gate*, which is probably the ablest and most respectable Spiritualist journal in the United States, in his issue of November 27, 1886, said:

As Spiritualists repudiate the horrible doctrine of election, as taught by certain branches of the churches; as they believe in no Satanic personality, and have no use for an eternal hell in an orthodox sense, they would naturally be regarded by those who still adhere to those old traditions as outside the pale of redemption,—as indeed they are, vicariously, but not in reality; for they realize that if they ever attained happiness in this life or the next it must be through their own efforts, in response to the aspirations of their own souls.

When a man learns that the only Satan in the universe is his own ignorance and the evil propensities and appetites engendered thereof; and when he learns that in all of God's great plan of creation there is no one but himself to answer for his own inequities, it would seem, if he stops to think, that he would "seek the better way," and cease to do evil.

In this passage the editor makes reference to "God's great plan of creation," yet he claims for man absolute independence of God, making man and not God the judge of right and wrong. Again, in the *Golden Gate* of July 2, 1887, we find the following editorial statement:

The spirits also teach us that there is no atonement or remission of sin except through growth; that as we sow, so also must we reap. They have not found God, and never will, except as they find him in their own souls.

Still more direct is a statement made by a correspondent of the *Golden Gate*, in the issue of September 10, 1887:

When the truth was made known to me that "God is life, love, truth, intelligence, substance, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, and there is no evil," I became glorified in myself as a part of that God.

Light in the West, a spiritualist paper published in St. Louis, Mo., contained the following, August 14, 1886:

Man is a part of God, a spark thrown off from the Great Spirit.

W. J. Colville is considered one of the greatest of Spiritualist lecturers. He lectures wholly by “inspiration,” and is held in as high esteem by Spiritualists as Christ is by Christians. In a lecture delivered in Oakland, Cal., June 19, 1886, he used the following language in answer to the question, “Where and what is Heaven, and where and what is hell?”

The mind of man is the original creator both of that heaven and that hell which your own individual mind or spirit may realize; and no matter what your theological premises may be, the creed you espouse or the doctrines you favor, you cannot obliterate human conscience; and so long as you cannot obliterate human conscience, you will know hell until you are reconciled with conscience, and as soon as you are reconciled with conscience you will know heaven. There can be no heaven unless there be a perfect reconciliation between the impulses of man’s highest soul and his outward life; there can be no heaven until your individual life is guided by the divine within you, that ever points out to you the road which is the perfect way.⁸

In a lecture delivered by the “inspirational lecturer,” J. J. Morse, at the Spiritualist camp-meeting held in Oakland, June, 1887, the following statement was made:

Truth is the voice of God speaking through the human soul.

Now take the gist of all these statements, and we find it to be that man himself is God, and that every man is a law unto himself. Recall the statement of the *Spiritual Magazine*, that Spiritualism “recognizes a continuous divine inspiration in

⁸ *Golden Gate*, September 3, 1887.

man;” the utterance of the editor of the *Golden Gate*, that man cannot find God except as they find him in their own souls; and that of Mr. Colville, that a man is in Heaven only when he is “reconciled with conscience,” and “guided by the divine within;” and the last one quoted, namely, that “Truth is the voice of God speaking through the human soul,” and what must we conclude? Simply that Spiritualism teaches that man must follow the impulses of his own nature, and that, wherever they may lead him, he is answerable for his actions to no one but himself.

To show that this conclusion is warranted, we make a few more quotations. In a Spiritualist paper called *Lucifer*, published at Valley Falls, Kansas, in an article entitled “Marriage and Free Love” (July 15, 1887), we find the following:

I acknowledge the presence of a power which we call Nature, and whatever Nature approves I encourage, and whatever Nature punishes I tried to avoid, such rewards and punishments being measured by the increase or decrease of personal happiness. It matters little to me whether moralists or reformers approve or condemn free love or marriage; the only question before me is to find out if Nature rewards one more than the other.

Hon. J. B. Hall, in a lecture reported in the *Banner of Light* of the February 6, 1864, says:

I believe that man is amenable to no law not written upon his own nature, no matter by whom it is given....By his own nature must he be tried—by his own acts he must stand or fall. True, man must give an account to God for all his deeds; but how? Solely by giving the account to his own nature—to himself.

Now in order to know the consequences that will result from holding that man is the sole judge of his own actions, and that a man’s natural inclinations are but the voice of God, and are to be followed, we have only to ascertain what is the

nature of man. Christ, who...

John 2

²⁴ ...knew all men,

²⁵ And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man,

–spoke as follows concerning what men are by nature:

Mark 7

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

²² Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness;

²³ All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Solomon says of the heart, that:

Proverbs 4

² ...out of it are the issues of life.

Therefore when Jesus mentioned “all these evil things,” and said that they proceed “from within, out of the heart of man,” He meant that men naturally exhibit just such traits in their lives. The apostle Paul bore witness to the same thing when he wrote:

Romans 3

¹⁰ There is none righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.

¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.

¹³ Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips;

¹⁴ Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;

¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways;

¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known;

¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes.

This is the uniform testimony of the Scripture concerning

all men, for Paul simply quoted what had been written by other inspired men. One more quotation will suffice to complete the picture of the natural tendencies of mankind. The man who is unrenewed by the Spirit of God is said to be...

Romans 7

⁵ ...in the flesh,

—and the “works of the flesh” are thus enumerated:

Galatians 5

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.

This is a picture of the natural impulses of the human heart. It is a description of what will be done by all who, unrestrained, follow the leadings of their own nature. And this is not spoken of one man or of any particular set of men, but of mankind universally. The king on the throne, the beggar in the hovel, the learned scientist, and the ignorant peasant, the pious Doctor of Divinity, and the blasphemous ruffian, all have one common human nature.

The natural impulses of the heart are essentially the same. A godly ancestry will often give one less of evil to contend with than another, but this does not disprove the general statements; it is simply one of the restraints that God has provided, only the restraint operates before the individual is born, instead of after.

It is true that all who believe that they are their own judges do not exhibit in their lives all the vices above enumerated; but it is only because there are certain restraints imposed upon them. But let them be in a country where the authority of God was wholly disregarded, and where all believed in following their own impulses, and they would prove the truth of the words of the Bible.

Now let us trace our argument backwards:

1. The tendency of the human heart is evil, and only evil.
2. Spiritualism teaches that each man is to follow the leadings of his own nature, and is to be the sole judge of his own actions.
3. This teaching of Spiritualism is a legitimate and necessary consequence of its teaching that there is “a continuous divine inspiration in man,” and that man himself is God, or a part of God.
4. And the idea that man is a part of God, necessarily goes hand in hand with the idea that he is possessed of an immortal, indestructible nature.

So we say that the natural tendency of the teaching that man is by nature immortal is toward unrestrained vice. When Spiritualists teach that all the god that men will find is in their own natures, they directly deify vice and crime.

But Spiritualism is simply the doctrine that men have a continued existence without any break at what is called death. Therefore we repeat that the doctrine that man is by nature immortal, tends directly to immorality, and to that alone.

If many who believe in that doctrine do love truth and right, and do live moral and upright lives, it is only because they have not yet followed that doctrine to its legitimate, ultimate results. God grant that such may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil before it is too late.

3. The Cause of Sin

Signs of the Times, December 8, 1887

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WE SHALL now proceed to show that the teaching of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, has from the very beginning been accompanied by sin, and that it is the cause of all the sin that has ever cursed this earth.

When God placed our first parents in Eden, everything was perfect and pure. Adam and Eve were sinless. They had full liberty to enjoy the fruit of every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, with the exception of one tree in the midst of the garden, which was a test of their loyalty to God. Into this garden of delight the tempter came.

Genesis 3

¹ Now the serpent⁹ was more subtle than any beast of the field, the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

In this question we find a covert insinuation against the justice of God. The idea is this:

“Is it so, that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Has God been so arbitrary as to thus curtail your happiness?”

There was an attempt to make Eve feel that she was being wronged, in being deprived of the fruit of that tree, and that she was not treated with the consideration due to so noble a creature. She replied:

² We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

³ But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

⁹ **Revelation 20** ² ...which is the devil, and Satan.

Satan then replied:

Genesis 3

⁴ You shall not surely die;

⁵ For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

It is unfortunate for the advocates of the natural immortality of the soul, that the very first announcement of it that was ever made, was made by the father of lies. We have already demonstrated from the Scriptures that the teaching that man can have immortality without Christ is the spirit of antichrist, and here we find that the doctrine was introduced into the world by the very antichrist himself.

If we study Satan's words a little more closely we shall find that they were identical with the teachings of modern Spiritualism, and that the first Spiritualist lecture ever delivered was given by the devil in the garden of Eden, with only Eve for an audience. When Satan affirmed that Adam and Eve were by nature immortal, by saying, "You shall not surely die," he added,

"For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

This was as much of a lie as the other, and was a companion to it, and a necessary consequence of it. Our common version does not give the full force of the original. We know not why the translators rendered it, "You shall be as gods," for the Hebrew plainly reads,

"You shall be like God, knowing good and evil."

This lets in new light on the subject. It shows that Satan recognized the fact that immortality is an attribute of Deity, and that the possessor of it must necessarily be his own judge of right and wrong. It was by this lie that Satan deceived Eve,

and caused her to sin.

Notice that the assertion of immortality and of the power of judging for themselves of right and wrong, constitutes the one deception; and bear in mind that it was this claim of natural immortality for man which...

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden.¹⁰

Therefore we have proved the proposition that the doctrine of the natural immortality of man is the cause of all the wickedness that has ever cursed our earth.

We may go back even further than this, to the time when sin first entered the universe, and we shall find that the cause of it was pride, and the claiming of attributes that belong to God alone. In *Isaiah* 14 we read the following description of the fall of Satan:

Isaiah 14

¹² How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations!

¹³ For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north;

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

This gives in plain language the sin of Satan. He aspired to be equal with God; he coveted the position that belonged only to the divine Word, the Son of God; and there the spirit of antichrist first sprung into existence.

Turn now to *Ezekiel* 28, and read a description of Satan's former position in Heaven, and the cause of his fall. Satan here appears with the title, "King of Tyrus." He is so called be-

¹⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 1674.

cause he is...

2 Corinthians 4

⁴ ...the god of this world,

–and the one who actually holds the reins of power in all wicked governments, such as that of Tyre. The man who held the position of the king of Tyre, is in the prophecy called...

Ezekiel 28

² ...the prince of Tyrus,

–because he was secondary to Satan, who controlled him. Moreover it is certain that verses 13-15 could refer to no one but one who had been in Heaven. Now read the description:

Ezekiel 28

¹¹ Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

¹² Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

¹³ You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

¹⁴ You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

¹⁶ By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned; therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁷ Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness; I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.

¹⁸ You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold you.

¹⁹ All they that know you among the people shall be astonished at you; you shall be a terror, and never shall you be any more.

Thus we learn that pride, and undue regard for self, forgetfulness of the fact that no one can have anything except from God, and a desire to be equal, in some respects at least, to God, led to Satan's fall. And this cause of his fall was exactly the same in nature as that by which we fell; and it is the identical principle by which Satan has perpetuated sin in the world until the present time.

From the fall of our first parents, every great system of error has been based upon that first great falsehood uttered by Satan. How natural that it should be so! Error is simply a departure from God, a failure or refusal to acknowledge Him as of supreme authority.

But just in proportion as men fail to recognize the claims of God, they usurp the place which He should occupy. That is, to the extent that they neglect God, they follow their own ways, and thus to that extent they make themselves gods, and worship themselves.

But, as we have already seen, the claim that man is immortal is also a claim that he is a god. Thus the two things go together. The doctrine of natural immortality, being a gross error, leads to the commission of the sins which are natural to man. It was the first cause of sin.

But if there should be a people who had no belief of any kind concerning man's nature and his future condition, but who were following their own inclinations, they would soon develop the idea that they were immortal. And this would be

because pride, which is always present in the natural heart, would lead man to feel that there could be no being in the universe greater than himself. As Gibbon aptly expresses it:

It must be confessed that in the sublime inquiry [concerning the nature of man], their reason had often been guided by their imagination, and their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers, when they exercised the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment, in the most profound speculations, or the most important labors, and when they reflected on the desire of fame, which transported them into future ages, far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave, they were unwilling to confound themselves with the beasts of the field, or to suppose that a being for whose dignity they entertained the most sincere admiration, could be limited to a spot of earth, and to a few years of duration.¹¹

And so dead man would be deified.

¹¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 1.

4. The Source of Idolatry

Signs of the Times, December 15, 1887
Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 4

IF WE examine the heathen world, we shall find that the deception by which Eve fell was the same by which they plunged into abominable idolatries. Pride, the exaltation of self to the place of Deity, resulted in degradation; for:

Proverbs 16

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction...

Proverbs 11

² When pride comes, then comes shame.

Paul also is authority for the statement that when one is...

1 Timothy 3

⁶ ...lifted up with pride,

—he is in danger of falling...

⁶ ...into the condemnation of the devil.

Although there was heathenism centuries before the time of Plato, we may take the heathenism of his day as a type of all, since it was he who first systematized the so-called philosophy of the heathen.

Everybody knows that one of the cardinal points of Plato's philosophy was the theory of the immortality of the soul; but perhaps comparatively few realize that this doctrine of his sprung directly from the idea that the soul of man is itself supreme, a part of God. We quote the following concerning his teaching:

There is no doctrine on which Plato more frequently or more strenuously insists than this,—that soul is not only superior to body, but prior to it in point of time, and that not only as it exists in the being of God, but in every order of existence. The soul of the world existed first, and then it was

closed within material body. The souls which animate the sun, moon, and stars existed before the bodies which they inhabited. The pre-existence of human souls is one of the arguments on which he relies to prove its immortality.¹²

By the following quotation from Priestly's *Heathen Philosophy*, it will be seen that this doctrine of the pre-existence of human souls, upon which Plato built his doctrine of their immortality, is in reality a claim that the soul is self-existent, or, in other words, that each soul is a god:

“Every soul,” he (Phoedrus) says “is immortal. That which is always in motion is from eternity, but that which is moved by another must have an end.” Accordingly he maintained the pre-existence as well as the immortality of the soul; and in the East these two doctrines always went together, and are always ascribed to Pythagorus; the soul and the body being supposed to have only a temporary connection, to answer a particular purpose. “The soul existed,” he says (Dr. Lea, lib. 10), “before bodies were produced, and is the chief agent in the changes and the management of the body.” Agreeably to this doctrine, Plato maintained that all the knowledge we seem to acquire here is only the recollection of what we know in a former state.

The heathen philosophy, therefore, was simply a deification of the human. The mind of man was made the “lord of itself and all the world beside,” a part of God, and consequently answerable only to itself. Now what was the result of this self-exaltation? The apostle Paul gives the answer. Speaking of the heathen, he says that they were without excuse,

Romans 1

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an

¹² Prof. W. S. Tyler, of Amherst College, in *Schaff-Herzog Cyclopedia*.

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves;

²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” Pride, which caused the fall of Satan, was at the bottom of their degradation. To be sure they had knowledge, and made great progress in the arts, but they attributed whatever knowledge they had to their own innate superiority.

They looked within for everything, and began to worship themselves, because in their conceit they couldn’t imagine anything else in the universe so worthy of worship as themselves. Thus that which they did know contributed to their folly, because they cut themselves loose from the only source of wisdom. The light that was in them became darkness, and the darkness was very great.

Now read a further consequence of their claim that they possessed the attributes of Deity:

Romans 1

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹ Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful;

³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Quotations from history might be given to any extent, to show that the 1st chapter of *Romans* does accurately describe the moral condition of the ancient heathen world; but they are not necessary to our present purpose. We merely wish to show that the working the spirit of antichrist is the same in all ages of the world; that since the elevation of man to an equality with Deity by claiming for him inherent immortality, was the cause of the moral degradation of the ancient heathen, the same thing in this age will result in the same way.

Compare the quotation in the preceding paragraph with *Galatians* 5:19-21, and it will be seen that the two lists of sins are almost identical, and that when men became so swelled up with pride that they fancied themselves gods, and thus cut themselves loose from God, the abominable practices into which they fell were simply the outcroppings of their own human nature which they were worshipping instead of God.

But there are only two great opposing forces,—Christ and antichrist,—and when men cast off their allegiance to God, they necessarily enlist under the banner of Satan. And so while the heathen were exalting self, they were in reality worshipping the devil. It could not be otherwise. In harmony with this conclusion, are the words of Paul:

1 Corinthians 10

²⁰ But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

The psalmist, also, describing the apostasy of the Israelites, says that they...

Psalm 106

³⁵ ...were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

³⁶ And they served their idols, which were a snare unto them.

³⁷ Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

From *Leviticus* 17:7 and *Deuteronomy* 32:15-17, also, we learn that when the Jews forsook the Lord, and practiced heathen worship, they sacrificed to devils.

Leviticus 17

⁷ And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

Deuteronomy 32

¹⁵ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: you are waxen fat, you are grown thick, you are covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶ They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger.

¹⁷ They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

Heathenism everywhere, and in all ages of the world, is simply some form of devil worship. The ancient heathen, like modern Spiritualists, consulted with “familiar” spirits, as we learn from:

Deuteronomy 18

⁹ When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

¹⁰ 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,

¹¹ Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

¹² For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you.

The most noted of these places where the ancients consulted with familiar spirits were the oracles of Apollo, at

Dodona, Delphi, and Trophonius, in Greece. The priests and priestesses who conveyed the message of these oracles to the people, would in these days be called mediums, clairvoyants, etc. It is well known that the philosopher Socrates had a familiar spirit, a demon, without whose advice he would do nothing.

From the *Gospel in All Lands* (September, 1887) we take the following extract concerning the religion of the inhabitants of Java:

The native Javanese...are Mohammedans as much as anything. In former times they were Buddhists and Brahmins. They worship their ancestors, and seem to have gathered something from every system of religion with which they have come in contact. The number of the spirits worshiped is almost without limit. In nearly every place there is a patron spirit to whose influence the good or bad fortune of the village is ascribed.

Concerning the religion of the inhabitants of Ceylon, the same authority says:

Buddha has a multitude of followers among the Cingalese. But mild and moral as his doctrines are, they have failed "to arrest man in his career of passion and pursuit," and many of his so-called followers have stolid indifference to religion of any form. Yet, strange to say, under the coldness there are superstitious fires whose flames overtop the icy summits of Buddhist philosophy, and excite a deeper awe in the mind of the Cingalese. Hence demon-worship, their earliest form of religion, is still extant. Devil-priests, on every domestic occurrence, and in their calamities, are called in, and their barbarous ceremonies performed. Devil-dancers are implicitly relied upon in times of sickness, and before the patient they personate the demon which is afflicting him, and spend the night in performing fiendish rights, and in the morning exorcise the demon and go away with the rich offering, praying that the life of the sufferer may be spared. Buddhist priests connive at this worship, and even practice it, because they

cannot suppress it.

Like the Javanese, the Chinese, also, as is well known, worship their ancestors, and their gods, like those of the heathen of Greece and Rome, are simply deified dead men and women, whose fame is thus perpetuated. Anybody who has been in a Chinese "Joss House," has seen, among the images of supposed ancient heroes and sages, a "good devil" and perhaps a "bad devil," whose favor must be gained, or whose wrath propitiated; and one can scarcely pass through a street in a Chinese village without seeing burning papers which are designed to drive the evil spirits away.

And so if all the nations of heathendom were passed in review, it would be seen that the Scripture writers were correct in their statements that the heathen sacrifice to devils.

5. Miracles

Signs of the Times, January 20, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Anti-Christ. No. 5

WE COME now to our own time and to so-called Christian countries. In the 3rd chapter of *2 Timothy* the apostle describes the condition of the mass of the professors of religion, in the days immediately preceding the coming of Christ. He says:

2 Timothy 3

¹ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Compare this list of sins with the list given in *Romans* 1:20-32, which were characteristic of the ancient heathen, and with the list of “the works of the flesh,” in *Galatians* 5:19-21, and it will be seen that all are the same,—the product of the same spirit.

We shall have to recur to this text again, when we come to show the danger that threatens the churches at the present time; but first we must show the cause of this state of things to be Spiritualism, the same in modern as in ancient times.

Now read further concerning these wicked ones in the last

days, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof:

2 Timothy 3

⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

The only ones besides Pharaoh, of whom we have any account that they resisted Moses, were the magicians whom Pharaoh called to his aid. Hence Jannes and Jambres are the names of the magicians who used their enchantments to confirm Pharaoh in his rebellion against God. It is sufficient to refer to the account in *Exodus* 7 and 8.

When Moses performed miracles to prove his divine commission, the magicians and sorcerers did the same, up to a certain point. Their rods became serpents;¹³ they turned water into blood;¹⁴ they brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt;¹⁵ but when the third plague came,—the plague of lice,—they could not do the same with their enchantments, but were forced to say,

Exodus 8

¹⁹ This is the finger of God.

By the aid of the devils whom they worshiped, they performed miracles which served to harden Pharaoh's heart against the truth; but they were not allowed to proceed very far before their folly was made manifest.

Notice also, in this connection, that while the magicians could, with their enchantments, bring calamities, they could not cause those calamities to depart. This is in keeping with the character of the master whom the magicians served. Satan is the destroyer; to build up and do good is no part of his

¹³ *Exodus* 7:10, 12.

¹⁴ *Exodus* 7:19-22.

¹⁵ *Exodus* 8:5-7.

work.

The work which the Egyptian magicians did is the very work that modern Spiritualism is doing. That modern Spiritualism is accompanied by wonders, must be admitted by everybody who has given the subject any candid investigation.

It is true that there is a great deal of fraud connected with it. Many persons who are unable to conjure up the evil spirits at will, seek the notoriety of genuine mediums by counterfeiting genuine manifestations. Nevertheless there are Spiritualistic manifestations that are not the work of sleight-of-hand performers. Many things have been accomplished which show the presence of a power not human.

Of the many phenomena of Spiritualism, it will be sufficient to refer to slate-writing, as that is probably as good evidence of spirit power as has yet been afforded, and, under certain conditions, affords the least opportunity for collusion. The phenomenon of slate-writing has been manifested under conditions that absolutely precluded the possibility of any human intervention in the matter.

The report of the Seybert Commission to investigate Spiritualism, says that when this writing is done the slates must always be concealed, and must be in contact with the medium, thus affording opportunity for the clean slates to be replaced by slates upon which messages have previously been written.

But this is not so. The writing is often produced when the slates are at a considerable distance from any person, and under gaslight or in open daylight. It is a very common thing for people to bring their own slates, which they know are perfectly clean, lay them upon the floor in plain view, and several feet away from the medium, and have the writing produced while they watch.

On one occasion, in the city of San Francisco, two slates that were perfectly clean were fastened together, with a pencil

point between them, and were hung upon a lighted gasjet, in the presence of a large congregation. Without any person being within reach, the scratch of the pencil was distinctly heard, and in a few minutes the slates were found to be covered with legible writing.

At another time two slates were fastened together as above described, and when they were opened, the surface of one was found to contain messages in twelve different languages, namely, English, Germany, French, Spanish, Italian, Egyptian, and old Asiatic or Assyrian cuneiform writing. We have in our possession a facsimile of the writing upon the slate. The slates were clean when the séance began, which was held in open daylight, and they were kept in sight all the time.

More than this, the medium through whose influence the writing was obtained, had no knowledge of any language, except the English; and no person present had any knowledge of any language besides English, further than a smattering of Spanish and French. Therefore it is absolutely certain that no human being could have produced the writing upon the slate. The question is,

“Who did the writing?”

Spiritualists tell us that this writing was done by the spirits of men who once lived on this earth, and that such phenomena are proof that death does not put an end to conscious existence. But reason and revelation are both opposed to such an explanation. We have learned from the Bible that:

Ecclesiastes 9

⁵ ...the dead know not anything,

—and that as soon as their...

Psalms 146

⁴ ...breath goes forth,...[their] thoughts perish.

We know that there is neither...

Ecclesiastes 9

¹⁰ ...work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor power, in the grave, whither all men go.

But we know that there are spiritual beings whose nature is entirely different from that of man, who were created before man was, and that some of these beings, having sinned, and been cast down from their high estate in Heaven,¹⁶ have ever since, together with their leader, Satan, been warring against the truth. These are the beings to whom we attribute this phenomena of Spiritualism, whether slate-writing, materialization, or anything else.

But then Spiritualists will ask,

“How do you know that these spirits are evil spirits? And if these are evil spirits, then how do you know but that the beings who appeared to ancient prophets and the apostles, were also evil spirits?”

The answer to this is simple; we tell what kind of spirits they are by trying them. The apostle John says:

1 John 4

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

And in trying these spirits we follow the directions given:

Isaiah 8

¹⁹ And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Tried by this rule, the spirits that produce the phenomena of modern Spiritualism, like those that produced the wonders of ancient heathenism, are proved to be the spirits of devils.

¹⁶ 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

We shall allow the spirits and Spiritualists to speak for themselves. We have already shown the similarity between modern Spiritualism and ancient heathenism, and we quote the following to show that Spiritualists themselves acknowledge that heathenism and Spiritualism are the same thing:

The oracles of Delphi were nothing more nor less than the utterance of spirits through the lips of sensitives.¹⁷

Again in the same journal, September 17, 1887, we find the following concerning Confucius:

In common with the majority of his countrymen, he believed in spirit communion, and we shall find that all orientals are Spiritualists rather than idolaters when we understand them; their images are only symbols like the statutes in Catholic churches.

We have already shown that all heathenism is devil-worship, therefore there need be no question as to the origin of Spiritualism, since it is identical with heathenism.

¹⁷ *Gold Gate*, January 22, 1887.

6. The Spirits of Devils

Signs of the Times, January 27, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Anti-Christ. No. 6

IN THE next place, we know that the spirits that are responsible for the phenomena of modern Spiritualism, are evil spirits, and not the beings who appeared to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of old, because they deny the Bible. This is their great work.

N. F. Ravlin was for many years a Baptist minister, but is now an ardent Spiritualist lecturer. In the *Golden Gate* of December 18, 1886, he gave an account of how and why he became a Spiritualist, and also some of his experience since becoming one. Among other things, he said, concerning a message purporting to have come from his father:

The message of my father contained an epitome of my history for the last thirty years, and closed by a most emphatic endorsement of my recent preaching according to the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures. He commended my published discourses, which the Baptist denomination have repudiated as heresy.

Farther on in the article he said:

Nearly half a score of old Baptist preachers, with whom I have been associated in the past, have already come to our home, and explained wherein their former preaching was erroneous. The whole system of biblical interpretation is far away from the truth, as everyone will find when they enter the spiritual world.

The spirits deny God. The following we clipped from an article in the *New Thought* of January 1, 1886:

I was told, not long since by a God-worshipping Spiritualist, that they believed that "deep down in my heart, I believe in a God." I have not only been told that once, but many times; I consider it an insult, both to my intelligence and my honesty.

But perhaps they only judge by themselves, and may be, in part, excusable. They may have one belief deep down in their hearts for Sundays, and another nearer the surface for week-day use.

As for me, I have lived without hanging on to a God for a good many years and do not see but that I am as well off as before; though from early training, I was obliged to let go, inch by inch. How can we progress when tied fast to a God idea? To me it looks like tying a calf to a stake; he goes the length of his rope then goes around in a circle, and still thinks he is making progress.

The above seems the more horrible because it was written by a woman. We do not wish to multiply testimony on any point, but we could give many more equally blasphemous extracts from Spiritualist writings. There are some Spiritualist papers that do not contain such bold statements as the above, but there is not one that does not deny God as revealed in the Bible.

Light in the Word, a Spiritualist paper published in St. Louis, Mo., contained the following question addressed to a spirit, and the answer of that spirit, in its issue of July 14, 1886:

We are taught that God made man after his own image; consequently, when we think of God we are apt to imagine him a being shaped like ourselves. How is this understood over on your side—are we correct?

The answer came quickly:

It is not correct; it is an error. What you call God is the great creating spirit of the universe. Man is a part of God,—a spark thrown off from the Great Spirit. Imagine, if you please, a great circle. Man is placed upon it an infant, and commences his long journey around it. His first great change is what you call death; from thence he progresses, onward and onward, from sphere to sphere, until he reaches the place of beginning, when he again becomes a part of the Great Spirit, but retains his individuality.

They deny Christ and the atonement. The editor of *New Thought* in his issue of September 11, 1886, when writing of Andrew Jackson Davis, a noted Spiritualist, said:

Jesus was no more of an instrument in the hands of the superior powers than is Mr. Davis.

And in the same paper of June 14, 1887, I find the following, which is a part of an interview between a man and his wife, who was on her death-bed:

“It is very true, Maggie, I have done wrong, as we all have; but ‘the blood of Christ cleanseth from all unrighteousness.’ If I have repented and been forgiven for Christ’s sake, you ought to forgive me.”

“O James,” said his wife, “lean no longer upon this treacherous fallacy. So far as my forgiveness is concerned, you might have it a thousand times. But no forgiveness can change your crimes into virtue; no blood can wash out the guilty deeds deeply graven on your soul. You must atone for your own sins, and work out your own salvation. There is no alternative.”

In the same paper, October 22, 1887, we find the following under the heading, “Our Creed”:

We believe that God does not pardon sin, as is represented in the Scriptures; and we also believe that sin is as much of a necessity as righteousness, so-termed; that sin in the evolution of Nature’s (God’s) laws is converted into righteousness, and vice versus.

This is straight Spiritualist teaching. There is not a Spiritualist in the world who holds any different view of the atonement. The Bible gives the devil the following character:

John 8

⁴⁴ He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Of course all his angels have the same character. Now that Spiritualism emanates from that source is virtually acknowledged by a Spiritualist of many years' standing. In the *Golden Gate* of August 7, 1886, the following appeared as part of an editorial entitled "Misleading Spirits":

Whoever surrenders his individual judgment and gives his trust implicitly upon the communications of spirits, as given through promiscuous mediumship, is almost certain to be deceived. It matters not how confident his trust or implicit his faith, nor how sincere or honest he may be in his intentions, he will find the...spiritual message a veritable broken reed, if he attempts to lean upon it to the exclusion of the staff of his own reason.

Now with the evidence already produced, showing that Spiritualism is of the devil, and with the above admission that the spirits are not to be trusted,—in other words, that they are lying spirits,—read the following from E. A. Brackett's *MaterIALIZED Apparitions*:

When I had finished my investigations on this point, I found that I stood on the shore of a boundless sea of speculation and uncertainty. I could not help asking myself the question, "What are these forms that, for a few moments only, clothe themselves in objective reality, bearing the semblance of my friends, blended with the likeness of the medium? Are these my father, my mother, my wife, my brother?"...

In the midst of this perplexity, this whirl of unanswered questions, the voice of my old friend came to me: "Don't stare these sensitive beings out of your countenance, but give them all that you can of your better nature, and you shall have your reward. If there is a possibility of mistake as to identity, if you are in any way deceived, the responsibility is theirs not yours. In all true séances, if the forms are not what they are supposed to be, they are at least beings from another life, seeking strength and comfort from association with you, else they would not come. Let not a shadow of doubt or distrust bar their approach. Have no awe, no reserve, no fear as

to what they are, and they will blend into your soul, become a part of your life.”...

I decided to follow the course which had been suggested to me. I would lay aside all reserve, and greet these forms as dear departed friends who had come from afar, and had struggled hard to reach me.

From that moment the forms, which had seemed to lack vitality, became animated with marvelous strength. They sprang forward to greet me; tender arms were clasped around me; forms that had been almost dumb during my investigations now talked freely; faces that had worn more the character of a mask than of real life, now glowed with beauty. What claimed to be my niece, ever present and earnest in aiding me to obtain the knowledge I was seeking, overwhelmed me with demonstrations of regard. Throwing her arms around me, and laying her head upon my shoulder, she looked up and said, “Now we can all come so near you.”

All Spiritualist writers give advice to the same effect, that the investigator should yield himself to the influence of the forms that come professing to be his dead friends. What a terrible thought that men will voluntarily put themselves into the hands of the devil, allowing him to obtain complete control of them. If the majority of the people on earth should thus submit themselves to his influence, who can imagine the evil that would follow? The only way in which a person can get any just conception of what would follow, is by reading *2 Timothy* 3:1-7.

“But,” says one, “when we see the forms of our departed loved ones, and hear their voices, and they recall memories of the past, how can we be deceived? Can we not trust the evidence of our senses?”

We reply, No; in this matter the senses are not a safe guide. Our only sure guide is the word of God, which declares that...

Ecclesiastes 9

⁵ ...the dead know not anything,

–that their...

Psalm 146

⁴ ...thoughts are perished,

–and that their dearest relatives may come to honor or be ruined, and they will not be affected by it in the least, because they cannot know anything of it.

As further evidence that the senses cannot be trusted to determine whether a spirit is the one whom he professes to be, or not, we quote the following. It is from the *New Thought* of July 16, 1887, in a description of a Spiritualist séance:

Among other new demonstrations of spirit power was the transfiguration of Maud. Sitting right in her chair in the full gas-light, she assumed several transformations which were marvelous. At one time she assumed almost the exact image of Mrs. Woodard, then in an instant she represented old Mrs. Graves, then her light brown hair and blue eyes and petite form was changed into a stout, full-chested lady with very dark eyes, and almost black hair, unknown to the circle. Then again, she appeared a young man whom Calvin recognized as a college classmate. All this time she was semi-conscious.

The apostle Paul says:

2 Corinthians 11

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

In view of the testimony both of the Bible, and of Spiritualists themselves, none need be in doubt as to the source of Spiritualistic manifestations, or as to the identity of materialized forms.

Revelation 16

¹⁴ They are the spirits of devils working miracles.

7. Using Good Works to Deceive

Signs of the Times, February 3, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 7

BUT it is urged that the spirits often do good service, giving valuable advice in business matters, healing the sick, etc., and that those who do such things must be good spirits. Again we recur to our rule:

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Do they acknowledge the God of the Bible, and accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world? Never. Then they are of the devil.

- Is it strange that the devil should do a little seeming good for a person, in order more completely to entangle that person in his toils, and to lure scores of others into his net?
- Does not the libertine often profess the utmost piety, in order that he may win his way into the homes of innocence?
- If men will steal the livery of the court of Heaven, to serve the devil, is it any wonder that Satan should steal the same livery in order to serve himself?

Christ says that just before the end,

Matthew 24

²⁴ There shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

And Paul says that just before the coming of Christ, Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁹ ...with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

The miracles which Satan works are intended to deceive, and since they almost deceive even the saints of God, it is evident that they have the appearance of good. In order to capture professed Christians, Satan is going to profess to be Christ, and he must therefore counterfeit as far as possible the work of Christ.

Sometimes men wonder why the Lord should allow Satan to deceive people. He doesn't allow him to deceive anyone who doesn't want to be deceived. Only those who receive not the love of the truth, will fall under Satan's wiles. No matter what garb Satan or his angels may assume, they can always be detected by comparing their words with the plain declarations of the Bible.

In previous articles we showed that from the very nature of the case, Spiritualism must tend to immorality; and now we have shown that it denies God, denies Christ, and makes man his own saviour, denies the Bible, and, consequently, the morality of the Bible, makes every man's desires and natural propensities his own law, and advises men to submit themselves to spirits which it acknowledges are lying spirits.

What more is needed to show that Spiritualism is the spirit of antichrist? Yet we give one more quotation. It is from an article in the *Golden Gate* of August 20, 1887, written by Dr. John B. Wolff, of Washington, D.C., who says that he was a Spiritualist years before the Rochester knockings, and a Methodist minister before he was a Spiritualist. Hence he ought to know whereof he speaks. He says:

There have been many attempts to unite Christianity and Spiritualism, but they have all been signal failures, and will continue so to be, because there is not enough in common to make the basis of a solid union.

Again he says:

Spiritualism strikes at the root of every cardinal doctrine of Christianity; hence there can be no conciliation or reconciliation between that and genuine Spiritualism, except at the expense of the latter. The churches have control of public opinion, the press, and the machinery of the governments, and are using all these instruments to crush us out. While this state of facts exists, I do not propose to belittle and stultify myself by any concessions or courtships. I am ready to meet them half-way upon the platform of equality. Till then no compromise is mine. With me Spiritualism must stand alone upon its own facts and doctrines, perfectly discreted from any and all system, past or present. Those who are fond of conglomerates, such as Daniel's model of iron and clay, can mix to suit their tastes and necessities, but I will have one of it.

Yet in spite of all this, Spiritualism will ere long profess to be the Christianity of the Bible, and as such will be accepted by a very large majority of the people of the earth. It will not change its character in the least, but will still continue to teach doctrines having the same immoral tendencies that it now does. This could not be done if it were not for the fact that it is engineered by Satan, the arch-deceiver.

8. Christian Spiritualism

Signs of the Times, February 10, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 8

SOME may think we have made a wildly extravagant statement in saying that the time is not far distant when the majority of professed Christians will be enrolled under the banner of Spiritualism, but we shall present ample proof to show that the so-called orthodox churches are even now ripe for Spiritualism, and wait only till it shall have put on a little more of the livery of Heaven, in order to accept it. In proof of this assertion, I shall quote only from those who are authorized to speak for the churches.

First, let it be remembered that with almost all the religious denominations of the world, the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, is a cardinal point of faith; and we have shown that this doctrine is the corner-stone of Spiritualism, and that a belief in it logically tends to all the vagaries and abominations of heathen Spiritualism. A writer in the *World's Advance Thought*, speaking of the phenomena of Spiritualism, says:

I can understand why materialists are unable to believe the possibility of such startling proofs of immortality; but why they should be called in question by Christians, when they come to prove the very foundation claim of their faith, and the one of all others which most taxes credulity, I cannot understand.

That is, he can readily understand why Spiritualism is not accepted by those who do not believe in immortality at all; but he cannot see why those who believe in natural immortality for all men, and that there is no such thing as death, should refuse to accept the testimony which proves (?) it. But we shall see that they are not so skeptical as some think.

A writer in *New Thought*, under the heading, "Who Are

Spiritualists?" says:

As a matter of fact Spiritualists are found among the advocates of almost every system of religion, and all the peoples of the earth. It is received alike by orthodox and so-called heterodox Christians, by theists and deists, on its own testimony of facts. Thousands who believe in a personal God and the divine inspiration of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, are as really Spiritualists as those who deny both....

Thousands do not think it necessary to leave their churches in order to consistently advocate the spiritual philosophy. Very many would be more active in the cause were it not for the wholesale denunciations of the churches, and of all Christian Spiritualists especially, by some who make themselves offensively conspicuous in our ranks, both as writers and speakers.

That this is not the vain boasting of an enemy who wishes to cast a reproach upon the churches, will be seen by what follows. We begin with the largest body of professed Christians, the Catholics. When Monsignor Capel, the famous agent of the Roman Propaganda, and sometime chaplain to Pope Pius IX, was lecturing in California, he had something of a discussion with one G. P. Colby, a Spiritualist. Colby set forth the beliefs of Spiritualism, and charged Capel with misrepresentation. The following is a part of the *Chronicle's* account (Sept. 7, 1885) of the priest's reply:

Monsignor Capel took up Mr. Colby's chief statements seriatim.¹⁸ He at first expressed surprise that the latter had not tried to ascertain what he in the first place had said before replying to it. Much that was attributed to him was the merest parody of his real words. He was a believer in immortality. If he were not, the Catholic Church would not tolerate him within her bosom for a moment.

It was brought against the Catholics that they believed themselves in daily communication with the angels and

¹⁸ Seriatim: taking one subject after another in regular order; point by point.

saints. But the angels and saints were spirits. To Catholics the spirit world was as clear as the light of a gas jet. They walked the streets accompanied by guardian angels. The dead were in their eyes disembodied spirits who surrounded the throne of God. They prayed to them as well as to the saints and angels. To say that they did not hold communication with the spirit world, would be contrary to the whole evidence of the history of the church.

Monsignor Capel denied that he had expressed a disbelief in spiritism. He had simply left out of the category of possible supernatural manifestations all biological phenomena. Aside from these, Spiritualism was but a misrepresentation of Catholic teaching, and it had been in the world from the beginning.

Thus we find that, on the testimony of one of its foremost representatives, the Catholic Church is wholly Spiritualist. But we should know that without this testimony, for its prayers for and to the dead, and its host of “saints” to whom adoration is paid, are sufficient evidence of the fact. In his *Life of Pope Leo XIII* (page 44), Dr. Bernard O’Reilly says of the habit that Catholics have of naming their children after Scripture personages and churchmen:

It was thought, in the firm and universal belief of the real though invisible communion between the spiritual world of the blessed in Heaven and their brethren still struggling on earth, that the bestowing of these dear and honored names on children in baptism secured them special protectors in Heaven, and was to them a powerful motive, when grown to manhood and womanhood, to honor by Christian lives the sainted names they bore.

And on page 83 he speaks of Stanislas Kostka as...

...the boy saint whom Catholic Poland reveres as its patron and protector in Heaven.

There is probably not a reader of these lines who could not from his own knowledge of the Catholic Church add many

like evidences. So we have the great Roman Catholic Church as essentially a Spiritualist church, and claiming to be such. We turn now to Protestantism.

The *Sunday Times* has undoubtedly as wide a circulation as any religious journal in the land, and possibly larger than any other. It is non-denominational, although its leading editor is a Methodist, but it is taken and read by Sunday-school teachers and scholars of all denominations, and among its correspondents are the leading divines and educators of both Europe and America. In an editorial in the issue of August 20, 1885, we find the following under the heading, "What Our Dead Do for Us":

Much of the best work of the world is done through the present, personal influence of the dead. And in our estimate of the forces which give us efficiency, we ought to assign a large place to the power over us, and in us, of loved ones whom we mourn as wholly removed from us. When death takes away one on whom we have leaned,...the temptation to us is to feel that his work for us is done, and that henceforth, while we live on here, we must live on without his presence or aid. Yet, as a practical fact, and as a great spiritual truth, our dead do for us as constantly and as variously as they could do for us if they were still here in flesh; and they do for us very much that they could not do unless they were dead.

Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of Heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds, in loving communion with their children in Heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life struggles, because of their constant sense of the overwatching presence of their dead parents....And so the dead live on here, for, and with, and in, those who mourn and remember them as gone hence forever.

Our living friends do much for us, but perhaps our dead friends do yet more. In the bitterness of our keenest grief

over the loss of our loved ones, there may be the consoling thought that we do not lose the stimulus and the inspiration of their memories, nor part, even for the time being, with the more sacred influence of their example, and of their spiritual fellowship.

The most ardent professed Spiritualist could not give utterance to more pronounced Spiritualist doctrine than this. The *Sunday School Times* has an "Open Letter" Department, in which correspondents may freely ask questions or express their opinions on any subject. It often contains sharp criticism on statements that have appeared in the paper, but no criticism on the sentiments quoted above, has ever appeared. On the contrary we have seen quite a number of commendatory notices of the article.

The *California Christian Advocate* of September 2, 1885, contained a letter from the editor, who was visiting in Oregon. In giving an account of his doings, he said:

We visited the cemetery, and enjoyed for a little while communion with the dead.

The *Advance*, of Chicago, is the Congregationalist journal of the West, and is one of the leading church papers in the country. In the issue of July 9, 1885, the editor said:

God's people never work alone. No child of his is ever left unaided. A great company which no man can number is sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. Just what they do, or how they help, we may not know, but that they do help and interpose to protect and guide us, we surely believe.

After referring to *Hebrews* 1:14, which teaches that the angels are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation, the editor continues:

But are our departed friends among the number of those engaged in this ministry? Do those who have once lived in

the flesh, and on this earth, form a part of this great host? A fair inference from the Scriptures will, it seems to us, give an affirmative answer to this question. We do not say that this is an authorized doctrine, but such inference is a fair one. No one has authority, either from nature or revelation, for the assertion that when the good die they cease to have any interest in the affairs of this world.¹⁹

The assumption that they never return to this earth is wholly unwarranted. Indeed, no one can be sure that they ever leave its busy scenes. They may simply pass beyond the range of our few senses. That “undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns,” is good Shakespeare, but it is not good Scripture.

And the above extract from a Congregationalist journal is “good” Spiritualism. If it is not out and out Spiritualism, then there is no such thing. But we have more. The *New York Observer* is a staunch Presbyterian journal, one of the oldest and most influential in the United States. The following Spiritualist verses appeared in its issue of July 22, 1886:

How cheering the thought that spirits in bliss
Do bow their bright wings to a world such as this.
They leave the sweet joys of the mansions above,
To breathe 'oer our bosoms the message of love.

They come when that pilgrim has rested from woe,
To gild the dark couch of the mourner below.
They smile on the weeper, and brightly appears
The rainbow of hope through the mists of his tears.

Oh, blessings upon them wherever they fly.
To brighten the earth or illumine the sky.
Heaven grant us, when parted from life and its cares,
A pinion of light, and a mission like theirs.

No more direct Spiritualist doctrine was ever taught in any Spiritualist paper. Yet there are few professed Christian believers in the natural immortality of man, who would not call

¹⁹ Compare *Job* 14:19-21.

it orthodox. Then how far is the Christian world today from Spiritualism? Who can tell?

9. Communication with the Dead

Signs of the Times, February 17, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 9

THE *Christian at Work* of February 18, 1886, contained an original story so full of Spiritualist teaching that one would think it was in a Spiritualist paper, instead of an independent Presbyterian journal. That the reader may get the full force of the article, we quote quite largely from it. It opens thus:

“Mamma, are you thinking of Jesus?”

“Yes, dear, she seems to be very near me tonight.”

Bertha drew a low stool to the window by mamma’s side, and asked in hushed tones, “Do you indeed think that sister Jessie can sometimes be with us in this room?”

“I cannot doubt it,” was the reply. Mamma’s hand was laid caressingly and soothingly upon the bowed head, for Bertha had not yet learned (alas, how few in this weary world do learn!) the quiet repose and steadfast hope of a perfect faith.

After a moment’s silence Mrs. Grey continued: “I have been sitting here alone thinking of Jessie’s life among the angels. How happy she must be in her beautiful home! I often wonder in just what way the hopes and aspirations, that made her earth life so pure and true, are finding their perfect realization in the unrestricted possibilities of spiritual life.”

“But, mamma, what comfort do you find in that?” cried Bertha. “I want her here; she was older and so much wiser and better than I, and she would have helped me so much.”

“But that is a selfish grief, dear Bertha; is it no comfort to know that Jessie is safe and happy? She knows how much you need her help, and can guide you far more truly now, in her perfect knowledge of the good and true, than she could have done in her earthly existence.”

“But I cannot see her; I cannot hear her. How can she help me now?” and Bertha sobbed with the unreasoning abandon of a grief that would not be comforted.

“Be quiet, my child; Jessie does not wish you to mourn for her in this rebellious way. It can be a help to you always to think in what way your angel sister would rejoice to have you think, and speak, and act. If you seek to do those things that merit her approval, you will surely feel her guiding power. Jessie can both see and hear you; but her spirit is released from its earthly fetters, because the loving Father had need of her among the angels. We cannot hear her voice, but we may feel the holy influence of her angelic presence; we cannot see her face, but we may be cheered and comforted by the thought that her bright spirit is near us, and that she loves us with a love that is purer and holier than earth-love, even as her life in its changed relations is purer and holier.”

Bertha sobbed no more, but listened with eager interest, while her mother talked to her of Heaven and the angels. The gentle voice subdued the rebellious heart. The loving words of faith, submission, and steadfast hope lifted her thoughts from the dark and narrow grave to the beauty and grandeur of the Father’s “many mansions.” Sitting in the moonlight, with her mother’s hand clasped in hers, a strange, sweet peace came upon her. Her heart was filled with an unspeakable joy, born of the thought that Jessie—angel Jessie, might always be unto her an invisible guardian, an intangible, loving presence.

Then follows an account of a dream that Bertha had, in which she seemed to be dead and in the spirit-land, with her sister Jessie and other spirits, all told in the regular Spiritualist style. The story closes thus:

Suddenly the scene faded from view. In another instant Jessie also had vanished. She felt herself sinking to earth again and was soon conscious of lying in her own bed without the pangs of disease. She opened her eyes to find herself alone in the silence of night, awakened from a beautiful dream. Its calm influence entering her heart taught her that death is indeed life; that God’s angels must far exceed in beauty and power any dream-like conceptions of earth; and that unseen spirits—God’s messengers—may indeed be near us, if the heart be kept pure and true, receiving their whis-

pered counsels and holy influence.

Is this Spiritualism, or is it not? If it is not, can anybody show us the genuine article? We affirm that no more direct Spiritualist doctrine can be found in any Spiritualist paper in the world. It is not Spiritualism simply to the extent that it teaches the intercourse of spirits of the dead with the living, but it carries the thing to the logical conclusion of utterly ignoring Christ.

Notice how Bertha's doubt of the presence of her dead sister is given as evidence that she had not learned "the quiet repose, and the steadfast hope of a perfect faith." A "perfect faith" in what? in Christ? Oh, no! a "perfect faith" in the doctrine that her dead sister "might always be unto her an invisible guardian, an intangible, loving presence," and that if she should do the things that merited her sister's approval, she would always feel her guiding power.

Thus the people are taught by a professedly Christian journal to put their trust in the dead, instead of in Christ. Such teaching is not a single degree removed from the ancestral worship of the Chinese, or the hero worship of the ancient Greeks and Romans. When people swallow down such teaching, what is there that is opposed to the Bible, that we may not expect them to accept, if it coincides with their fancy?

But we have some more "Christian" Spiritualism. In an article commemorative of Dr. Daniel Curry, in the N. Y. *Christian Advocate* of September 8, 1887, Rev. J. Pullman, D. D., said:

And he is gone! We are not to see him on the Conference floor ever again! We are not to see that white head among us, that noble white head, nor to hear that peculiar, strident voice to which we have listened all our lives! And that face, that wonderful face, with its deep-seeing eyes and beetling brows and massive chin—a face as unique and startling in its way as the face of Giotto's Dante, but kind and tender, and yet the hiding-place of thunder. "A soft, ethereal soul looking

out so stern, implacable, grim, trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice.”

But he is not gone. We will not say “Good-bye” to him. We will keep him among us still. Reserve that seat in the front pew of the Conference. Let the old place be kept sacred. He was not the man to leave his friends. In the thick battle, in the time of danger or holy communion, in the solemn hour of crisis, he will be there. “Are they not ministering spirits?” No, you are not gone from us, beloved friend, and we will love you till Conference is convened in the presence of the King.

Just before Dr. Curry’s death, one of his Methodist brethren called upon him. As the visitor puts it, it was “as he lay within sight of his triumph.” In answer to a wish that he might live many years longer, Dr. Curry said:

I had marked out in my mind that I might live on till about eighty-five, perhaps; but when a man has lived and worked till nearly seventy-eight, what is left is not of much consequence. About the future, as I wrote to Brother Smith, there are two things. The first is, I have perfect confidence in the general truth of Christianity (although I expect my conceptions to be changed when I get over there); and the second is, that I know that Christ has taken my case in hand.²⁰

Some people think it an impossibility that professed Christians should ever as a body deny the doctrine of Christ which they now profess, and which alone holds them to morality. But compare the last two quotations. Dr. Pullman has said that Dr. Curry is not gone, that he would not leave his friends, and that in the thick battle, in the time of danger, he will be there, occupying the front seat which they reserve for him. They will probably not be disappointed. Satan will be most likely to gratify them with the sight of the form of their fallen leader.

But before he left, Dr. Curry gave notice that he expected many of his conceptions to be changed when he reached the

²⁰ *Christian Advocate* (N. Y.), August 25, 1887.

home “over there.” Therefore when Satan, or one of his angels, does appear to the Methodist Conference in the form of Dr. Curry, and tells them, as Mr. Ravlin’s spirit friends did, that he has learned that his old views of the Bible were all wrong, they will have their minds all prepared to receive whatever he may give them in their stead.

The Michigan *Christian Advocate* of September 1, 1887, contained an address delivered at the funeral of Bishop Harris, in which the following occurs:

He is not dead—God’s saints don’t die; they only change their modes and forms of life.

At the funeral of Rev. Israel Thrapp, August 29, 1887, Rev. A. S. Fisher delivered an address which was printed in the *Methodist Recorder* of October 29, 1887, from which we take the following:

For more than fifty-six years he answered the roll call of his Conference here on earth. He answers now to another call, where the weary are at rest. At rest, but not idle. He cannot be. It would not be Israel Thrapp if he were idle. He was not idle here, and he cannot be there. He will go, if bidden to itinerate as a ministering spirit, and carry help to some who are to be “heirs of salvation.”

Surely the Methodists stand in grand array on the side of Spiritualism.

10. Preparing the Way

Signs of the Times, February 24, 1888
The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 10

FROM a sermon preached at Cornell University, by Rev. Henry M. Field, D. D., and published in the *Christian Union* of November 3, 1887, we take the following extract:

As I stand here, I have before me the vision of one in all the grace and charm of womanhood, the idol of her home, who in an instant vanished out of sight. It was the flashing of an angel's wings as the shining gates were opened and she passed into the heavenly city. How precious are these memories of the dead, without which this world would be poor indeed! The conversation of the living is but tame and commonplace compared with that which is whispered to us from those lips of air. Oh, may the dead ever be with us, walking by our side, taking us by the hand, smoothing the cares from the troubled brow, and pointing us upward to the regions of everlasting light and peace!

If anybody can tell us the difference between this and Spiritualism, we should like to know it. Instead of looking to Christ for comfort and guidance, the dead are invoked for that purpose. Is not this the spirit of antichrist?

On Sunday, November 20, 1887, services in memory of Dr. Parker were held in the First Baptist Church at Los Angeles, Cal., at which Mrs. P. W. Dorsey, the wife of the Baptist minister, read a "Tribute," of which the following [printed in the *Herald of Truth*] is an extract:

Another soul has taken its place among the great cloud of witnesses, and today looks on with clearer, juster, kindlier vision than earth can know at the battle you and I are still waging. Have you thought with what loving interest he is watching our work and lives? Not with the imperfect vision of men, and with the unjust judgments of earth, but with the clear and just discrimination of Heaven we are seen by him

today as we in turn shall see.

There is for us who meet in Parker Chapel a new tie binding us to Heaven, and there is just as surely a new motive for more earnest, more worthy, more holy living and work on earth. If there be any incentive to worthy endeavor in the thought that the great and good of all ages are witnesses of our efforts, then the knowledge that he who so recently was with us has taken his place in the great host of heavenly witnesses, should be a fresh motive for us to lay aside every weight, and run our race with patience.

“Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we should hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?
Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eyes some hidden shame,
And I be lessened in his love?
I wrong the grave with fears untrue;
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look us through and through.
Be near us when we climb and fall.
You watch, like God, the rolling years
With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.”

Who is it that is near us, watching over us, protecting us, inspiring us to noble action, looking us through and through, judging us with clear and just discrimination, and making allowance for us all? Is it “God the Judge of all?”²¹ Oh, no; it is the dead!

What greater power could they give to God himself? Such an utterance is nothing less than a deification of the dead. Can it be possible that the papers from which we have quoted all these Spiritualist utterances, profess to teach and hold to the

²¹ *Hebrews* 12:23.

Bible and the religion Jesus Christ?

Oh, the far-reaching influence and the blinding power of Satan's lie in Eden! Of a truth, we may now say of him as was once said of Christ, "Behold, the world is gone after him."²² With very few exceptions, all have accepted the lie by which he caused our first parents to fall. If it caused Adam and Eve to lose Eden, will it not likewise cause those who are now deceived by it to lose the eternal life which it professedly holds out to them? How can it be otherwise?

But we have yet a few more quotations to give. In her address of welcome at the *National Woman's Christian Temperance Union Convention*, held in Nashville, Tenn., November, 1887, Mrs. Meriwether spoke as follows of her dead sister:

In this work I have had her daily companionship, her inspiration, and her help, and I know I shall have it until I, too, cross the river, and meet her face to face, upon the other side. The morning has come for me. The sun has risen, and shall set no more. Bird nor bee nor blossom, wind nor wood, nor wave, shall ever again sigh to me, "only one," for we two walk together once more, and shall never again lose each other's hands.

We walk and talk together, just as when, on the sunny, upland slope of this century, we clasped our little hands, and roamed the daisied fields together. She lives in my life, works through me, thinks through my brain, speaks through my voice. Very rarely, if ever, have I stood upon the platform, but words of hers came to me unbidden, and I spoke her message with my own, and tonight as I stand here and bid you welcome, down through the blue fields of ether comes the solemn sound of her prophetic measure, and salutes you through my lips.

We have very closely scanned the pages of Spiritualist papers, but we have never seen from the lips of a professed medium any more explicit declaration of belief in spirit con-

²² *John* 12:19.

trol than this from Mrs. Meriwether; and yet Mrs. Meriwether would no doubt be indignant if she were told that she is a Spiritualist. So would Mrs. Dorsey and Rev. Henry M. Field, and all the others from whom we have quoted. But if they are not Spiritualists, what are they?

And now we will hear from the talented Dr. T. De Witt Talmage. Dr. Talmage is a learned and eloquent man, a Presbyterian. In his tabernacle, Brooklyn, N. Y., he probably preaches to more people every Sunday, than any other preacher in the United States. More than this, his sermons are printed in scores of papers, so that there are few, if any, preachers in the world, whose influence extends farther than his does. Some time in the summer of 1887 he preached a sermon on "The Employments of Heaven," in which he told how all the dead are busying themselves at their several callings. Among other things, he said:

What are our departed Christian friends, who in this world had their joy in the healing art, doing now? Busy at their old business. No sickness in Heaven, but plenty of sickness on earth, plenty of wounds in the different parts of God's dominion to be healed, and to be medicated. You cannot understand why that patient got well after all the skillful doctors of New York and Brooklyn had said he must die. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him—Abercrombie, who, after many years' doctoring the bodies and the souls of people in Scotland, went up to God in 1844. Perhaps Abercrombie touched him.

I should not wonder if my old friend, Dr. John Brown, who died in Edinburgh—John Brown, the author of "Rab and His Friends"—John Brown who was as humble a Christian as he was skillful a physician and world-renowned author—I should not wonder if he had been back again and again to see some of his old patients. Those who had their joy in healing the sickness and the woes of earth, gone up to Heaven, are come forth again for benignant medicament.

It is quite the fashion with some to mildly sneer at Talmage's extravagant statements, but nobody sneers at that.

Such statements as the above find ready entrance anywhere. Well, the devil does make a pretense of doing a big business in the healing line; and with those words of Dr. Talmage's in their minds, thousands of people will readily visit any "healing medium" who professes to be controlled by the spirit of Abercrombie shall appear more readily still, when Abercrombie shall appear to come back in person to heal the sick. Be assured that the devil will treasure up that sermon by Dr. Talmage, and will reap a harvest of souls from it. But read further:

What are our departed Christian friends doing in Heaven, those who on earth found their chief joy in the gospel ministry? They are visiting their old congregations. Most of those ministers have got their people around them already. When I get to Heaven—as by the grace of God I am destined to go to that place—I will come and see you all. Yea, I will come to all the people to whom I have administered in the gospel, and to the millions of souls to whom, through the kindness of the printing press, I am permitted to preach every week in this land, and in other lands—letters coming from New Zealand and Australia, and uttermost parts of the earth, as well as from near nations, telling me of the souls I have helped—I will visit them all. I give them fair notice. Our departed friends of the ministry are engaged in that delectable entertainment now.

But what are our departed Christian friends who in all departments of usefulness were busy, finding their chief joy in doing good—what are they doing now? Going right along with the work. John Howard visiting dungeons; the dead women of Northern and Southern battle-fields still abroad looking for the wounded; George Peabody still watching the poor; Thomas Clarkson still looking after the enslaved—all of those who did good on earth busier since death than before.

If this is not Spiritualism, where can Spiritualism be found? See how Dr. Talmage has prepared the way for thousands to be deceived. He assures the people that when he dies he is coming back to them. Says he, "I will visit them all. I give

them fair notice.” Having been thus taught, they will not be surprised when they see a form that looks like him, and claims to be him.

And then when he shall tell them that the churches have held wrong views of the Bible, and confirm them in some erroneous doctrine which they already hold, of what account will a plain declaration from the word of God be to them? Who of those that accept the teaching of his sermon, will presume to take the simple, commonsense statement of Scripture, in opposition to the declarations of what they believe to be a saint direct from glory?

Another thought. If a man disbelieves one plain, unequivocal statement of the Bible, what is there to hinder his disbelieving the whole Bible? If he reads the statement that...

Ecclesiastes 9

⁵ ...the dead know not anything,

—and straightway declares that they know everything, he shows that he does not believe the Bible according to what it says, but according to his fancy. He shows that he has not received...

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ ...the love of the truth,

—but rather the love of his own opinion. Now when Satan comes to such a one, in the form of some highly esteemed friend, and declares that the Bible is all a fiction, designed to teach certain “spiritual” truths, what is to hinder his discarding the Bible entirely? Nothing at all.

Well, the whole world is in just that condition now. And when confidence in the Bible has been shaken, when the atonement is regarded as a myth (and Spurgeon says that it is so regarded now by very many Baptist ministers), and when men have gained so high an opinion of themselves, as immortal beings, that they lightly regard God and His law, vice and

immorality must flood the land to an extent not known since the days before the flood.

Then it will be that the churches will have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, and Spiritualism will work wonders to resist the truth.

11. Calling Evil Good

Signs of the Times, March 2, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 11

EVEN now the restraints of God's law are being thrown off, and the flood-gates of iniquity are being opened. In the summer of 1887, Professor John Fiske, of Harvard University, delivered a lecture in Oakland, Cal., of which the following is a portion of the synopsis given in the *Oakland Enquirer* of June 27:

Mr. Fiske took as the text for his remarks the fifth verse of the third chapter of *Genesis*, "For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The legend from which this sentence is taken, Professor Fiske said, is borrowed from one of the books of the Zoroastrian Scriptures. All the evidences indicate that it was incorporated in the book of *Genesis* at a late date, after the Babylonish captivity. None of the earlier prophets or the writers of the historical books of the Bible have left a record that they knew the story of the garden of Eden. It is a real Persian myth. In intention it is one of the attempts which theologians have made from the earliest times to reconcile the existence of evil in the world with the theory of the goodness of God.

Mr. Fiske then went into a discussion of considerable length to establish the relativity of all knowledge. We know nothing, he said, except by contrast with or relation to something else. If there were only one color in the world, we would be unable to conceive the idea of color at all. If everything were as sweet as sugar, we would not know what taste means. In the same way, evil exists only by contrast—the contrast of a lesser good with a greater. Evil may be defined as a low stage of existence looked at from a higher one. There is ground for the hope that evil may be evanescent in the universe, but it now exists as a necessary condition of the development of man, like the relation of the shadow to the light. Were there no evil in the world, there could be no morality—no man in the highest sense; human beings would

be so many puppets, but such a thing as character would be impossible.

Just think of it! A professor in one of the leading universities in America,—an institution that molds the thought and character of thousands of the young men of our country,—openly teaching that sin is a necessity! that evil is only undeveloped good! And for this he is not rebuked, but rather applauded. Let no one say that it is impossible that the world should ever again become as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. The time will come when in “Christian” America vice will be counted virtue. With such teaching as the above, from so high a source, it would seem that this day is not far distant.

Jeremiah 17

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

We have known of such a thing as an adulterer quoting the seventh commandment to his paramour, in justification of their crime. In the days of Jeremiah the professed people of God would steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and would then go to the temple and stand before the Lord, and say,

Jeremiah 7

¹⁰ We are delivered to do all these abominations.

The man who knows the human heart, will not be surprised at any wickedness that any man may do. It is not strange that men fall; but it is a miracle of saving grace that any walk uprightly.

It may be said that the teaching concerning evil, which we last quoted, is from a Unitarian source, and therefore cannot strictly be charged to “orthodoxy.” That really makes no difference, since “culture” is fast becoming the religion of the day; but take the following from Dr. Lyman Abbott, editor of the *Christian Union*:

*Each disciple of Christ is to judge for himself how far the law is thus fulfilled in his own character; and is at liberty to cease to regard any provision of the law which has ceased to be useful in the development of character.*²³

The italics are Dr. Abbott's. Again he says in the same article:

If any man is living in sympathetic fellowship with God, if his impulses, his desires, his aspirations, are divine in their origin and character, he is no longer under rules and regulations.

That agrees exactly with what we have quoted from Spiritualist writers. They simply claim that there is "a continuous divine inspiration" in all men, and consequently that every man is a law unto himself. To the same intent Dr. Abbott further says:

Just in the measure in which he is at one with God in character he is free from all laws external to himself. The law is not destroyed; but when it has accomplished its purpose in him it is fulfilled.

When such teaching appears in such a paper as the *Christian Union*, and from such a man as Dr. Lyman Abbott, it may be taken for granted that it is quite popular. Unfortunately we do not have to take it for granted. The idea that the law of God is abolished, or, what is the same in effect, that each disciple is to be his own judge as to how much of the law he will keep, and what provisions he may cease to regard, has been openly taught for years from many professedly Christian pulpits, and in many professedly religious journals.

²³ *Christian Union*, August 11, 1887.

12. Imitating the Second Advent

Signs of the Times, March 9, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 12

ONE point more remains to be noticed in the work of antichrist. In the remarkable discourse concerning the signs of his second coming, our Saviour first said:

Matthew 24

⁴ Take heed that no man deceive you.

⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

This was given in answer to the question:

³ ...what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?

The Saviour's language plainly indicates that attempts would be made to counterfeit His second coming, and so successfully made as to deceive many. Again He says, speaking of the time following the great persecution:

²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

²⁴ 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.

This shows that the counterfeit will be very close. From these statements and warnings, we can come to no other conclusion than that just before the coming of Christ, His great adversary, Satan, will, as far as is possible, counterfeit all the wonderful signs that Christ has said would attend His coming. This conclusion is stated by the apostle Paul in express terms:

2 Thessalonians 2

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity does already work; only he who now lets will let, until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy

with the brightness of His coming;

⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

The sum of the apostle's argument is very clear. The whole chapter is devoted to the time of the coming of the Lord.

Some unscrupulous person had written a letter to the Thessalonian brethren, telling them that the Lord's coming was close at hand, and had signed Paul's name.²⁴ Paul wrote to them that the day could not come until after the great apostasy, and the setting up of the Papacy, and reminded them that when he was with them he had told them so.

Paganism then hindered the complete establishment of the Papacy, but soon that would be taken out of the way, and when that was done, then should the Papacy be fully revealed, to be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Christ. And the coming of Christ to destroy the Papacy, would be, he said, just after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. We inquire,

“Is there any present prospect that these predictions of Jesus and Paul, concerning Satan's counterfeiting Christ's second advent, will be fulfilled?”

Our answer must be, There is. Spiritualism is even now planning such a campaign, one that is calculated to turn the attention of people away from Christ's literal coming. In the *World's Advance Thought* (published at Salem, Oregon) of April 5, 1886, there was the following editorial utterance upon the subject of “A Coming Messiah”:

In a recent Harmony Hall lecture on “The Messianic Idea,” the necessity for a new messiah, and the certainty of his early advent, were philosophically considered, as well as prophetically proclaimed.

²⁴ See 2 *Thessalonians* 2:1-3. Compare also 2 *Thessalonians* 3:17.

The messianic idea is involved in the theory that all the phenomena of spiritual manifestations, however diverse and widely separated, may be referred to a single mediumistic source of distribution....The time has already come for logically arranging the authenticated facts which shall demonstrate it....

There are regular cycles of spiritual progress, of truth unfoldments; and we are now passing from one into another. Another "Sun of righteousness" is called for on earth, and the messenger cannot be far off whose life mission it shall be to practically illustrate the new truths that will be vouchsafed. He will not be a mere racial messiah, to which class belonged Buddha, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Mahomet; nor a half-world messiah, as was the great Nazarene; but steam locomotion and lightning communication, and the harmonizing influences of commercial intercourse, have made a whole world messiah possible, and such the next one shall be. Though themselves ignorant of the fact, as a body, the great and multiplying army of mediums are his accomplices.

In the same paper a lecture delivered in Harmony Hall, Salem, Oregon, by Judge H. A. Maguire, is reported thus:

I say, "as one having authority," Spiritualists, and all, may see a hope, that shall be a realization to this very generation, of the higher spiritual forces getting control over and governing all the institutions of earth. Silently and invisibly to the worldly-wise, these forces have been, and are being, under the direction of a divine intelligence, extended into every department and station of human life, and the culmination is near at hand,—the ushering in of a new messiah and a new spiritual dispensation.

The editor of the *Golden Gate*, of April 2, 1887, in an article entitled, "Significance of Prophecy," speaks as follows concerning the second advent:

It is not thought by all who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures—except a small portion who adhere to the literal but strained and illogical interpretations thereof—

that the prophecies pointing to a second coming of Christ, do not contemplate a personal return to earth of the gentle Nazarene whom the Jews crucified; but rather the advent of the Christ spirit to the world—the unfoldment of a new spiritual dispensation.

Now these prophecies, by several lines of computation, were demonstrated by Miller and his coadjutors to point to the year 1843 as the time when the great cataclysm, the destruction of the world, was to take place. By a revision of their data the time was afterward brought down to 1848, the year when direct and positive communication was opened up between the two worlds—the advent of modern Spiritualism.

From that time to the present, the believers in a literal second coming of Christ have been daily and hourly looking for his appearance in the heavens, accompanied by a mighty host of angels. The mighty host are here, and the Christ spirit comes with their teachings; hence, may it not be that the prophecies have been fulfilled?

The well-informed reader knows full well that by no “revision of their data” was the time for the coming of the Lord ever brought down to 1848; but that does not invalidate the fact that Spiritualists expect that all the prophecies concerning the second advent are to be fulfilled by Spiritualism.

But one Ben Franklin French, of Los Angeles, Cal., is still more positive, and in an article entitled, “Who Are the Real Adventists?” written March 18, 1887, he claims that Spiritualists alone are the true Adventists, and that those who are looking for Jesus from Heaven have no right to the name. He says that he was a ‘44 Adventist, that he did not give up his faith when the time passed, but waited, believing that the prophecy would be fulfilled, although it might tarry, and that the introduction of Spiritualism in 1848, was the fulfillment of Daniel’s vision.

So the promises of the coming of Christ are all to be fulfilled only by Spiritualism! And professed Protestants, by claiming that the coming of Christ is to be a spiritual coming, are pre-

paring themselves for Satan's deception on this point.

We believe that the Scriptures most plainly teach that Satan will appear in glory surpassing anything that men have seen, and that he will have a host of his followers with him, and that this will be claimed as a fulfillment of the prophecy:

Matthew 16

²⁷ The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels.

Then this warning will apply:

Matthew 24

²³ If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not...

But will Satan find any who will acknowledge his claims to be Christ? Yes; all who have not received the love of the truth, will follow him. Those who are looking for Christ to take the reins of this Government, will flock to the standard of this usurper.

To show how ready people are to follow anything that offers them present happiness, we quote the utterance of the editor of the *National City (Cal.) Record*, in commenting upon a sermon in which the preacher had declared Spiritualism to be real, but of the devil:

We have not yet been allowed the privilege of witnessing a materialization of the dead; have not been so fortunate as the Elder in that respect; but whether they are agents of the devil or not, so the spirits had the appearance of being good spirits, it would matter not, we would go a long way to see the same, and forever after worship the devil.

We have in our possession a letter from an infidel, touching the attitude of infidels toward the National Reform movement. Says he:

If Jesus will come and sit visibly on the throne where we

can see Him, and talk to Him, there will be no unbelievers,
and all will obey.

Thus the way is preparing for Satan's last, over-mastering
deception.

13. Purgatory and Indulgences

Signs of the Times, March 16, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 13

IN THE preceding articles of this series, it has been shown that Spiritualism is essentially antichrist, because it is wholly of the devil, and directly opposed to Christianity. It has been shown by positive testimony that Spiritualism is based upon the theory that man is naturally immortal, and that death does not end his existence. This idea is, in fact, the whole of Spiritualism.

But this, we have seen, naturally leads to a denial of God and His moral Government, and makes every man his own judge; in short, it assumes for every man the attributes and prerogatives that belong to God; and since human nature is fallen, and its tendency, when unrestrained by some power outside of itself, is downward, the doctrine of the natural immortality of man is the germ out of which has grown all the evil that has cursed this earth.

The claim has been made that no person who holds to that doctrine has any warrant against becoming an avowed Spiritualist, and that however much a person may think himself opposed to Spiritualism, he is essentially a Spiritualist if he believes in the conscious existence of the dead.

This claim has been substantiated by many Spiritualistic quotations taken from professedly evangelical publications. The argument, in short, is this:

The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul inevitably leads to Spiritualism, and Spiritualism is from its very nature opposed to God and every vital principle of morality.

But Spiritualism as a distinct system is not the only exhibition of antichrist. By the expressions “that man of sin,” and “the son of perdition” in *2 Thessalonians* 2:3, the apostle makes

undoubted reference to the Papacy. Now of that “man of sin” he says that it...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁴ ...opposes and exalts itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

Then of course Roman Catholicism must also be a manifestation of the spirit of antichrist. It has already been shown that Catholicism is essentially Spiritualism, in that it teaches that the dead are conscious, and that the living can communicate with them, and that the living and the dead may render assistance to each other; therefore we shall notice only two points that are peculiar to Catholicism, which show it to be antichrist. Both of these points depend wholly on the doctrine of the conscious state of the dead.

Purgatory

The first dogma to be noticed is that of purgatory. In the *Catholic Christian Instructed*, pages 150-151, that doctrine is thus briefly stated:

Some there are, though I fear but few, that have before their death so fully cleared their accounts with the Divine Majesty, and washed away all their stains in the blood of the Lamb, as to go straight to Heaven after death; and such as those stand in no need of our prayers.

Others there are, and their numbers are very great, who die in the guilt of deadly sin, and such as these go straight to hell, like the rich glutton in the gospel (*St. Luke 16*), and therefore cannot be bettered by our prayers.

But, besides these two kinds, there are many Christians, who, when they die, are neither so perfectly pure and clean as to exempt them from the least spot or stain, nor yet so unhappy as to die under the spot of unrepented deadly sin. Now such as these the church believes to be, for a time, in a middle state, which we call purgatory, and these are they who are capable of receiving benefit by our prayers. For though we pray for all that die in the communion of the church, be-

cause we do not certainly know the particular state in which each one dies, yet we are sensible that our prayers are available for those only that are in this middle state.

This is a simple statement of the Catholic Church concerning purgatory. That it is antichristian may be seen from the fact that it is diametrically opposed to the Bible doctrine that the dead are totally unconscious. But the greatest point against it is that it leads directly to a depreciation of the sacrifice of Christ. Dr. Challoner, the author of the *Catholic Christian Instructed*, states the following question and answer:

Q. What grounds have you for the belief of a purgatory from reason?

A. Because reason teaches these two things:

1. That every sin, be it ever so small, is an offense of God; and consequently deserves punishment from the justice of God; and therefore that every person that dies under the guilt of any such offense unrepented, must expect to be punished by the justice of God.
2. That there are small sins, in which a person may happen to die, that are so small, either through the levity of the matter, or for want of a full deliberation in the act, as not to deserve everlasting punishments.

From whence it plainly follows that, besides the place of everlasting punishments, which we call hell, there must be also a place of temporal punishment for such as die in those lesser offenses, and this we call purgatory.

Now mark the following:

Q. But does not the blood of Christ sufficiently purify us from all our sins, without any other purgatory?

A. The blood of Christ purifies none that are once come to the use of reason, from any sin without repentance, and therefore such sins as have not been here recalled by repentance, must be punished hereafter, according to their gravity, by the divine justice, either in hell, if the sins be mortal, or if venial, in purgatory.

David prayed to be cleansed from secret faults:

Psalm 19

¹² Who can understand his errors? cleanse me from secret faults.

By secret faults he meant those of which he had no knowledge. This is evident from the verse itself. He prayed to be cleansed from sins which he committed in ignorance, and which had never come to his knowledge. He knew that he must be cleansed from every sin, if he would be saved. Now Peter testifies that besides the name of Christ...

Acts 4

¹² ...there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Therefore to say that any person must work out, through punishment in a purgatory, some sins that Christ has not atoned for, and that afterwards he may enter Heaven, is to deny, to that extent, the virtue of Christ's sacrifice. Thus the doctrine of purgatory is directly opposed to Christ.

But read further what Dr. Challoner says of those who, having died in venial sin, are consigned to purgatory:

Q. Are they not, then, capable of relief in that state?

A. Yes, they are, but not from anything that they can do for themselves, but from the prayers, alms, and other suffrages offered to God for them by the faithful upon earth.

Thus it appears that the doctrine of purgatory, depending upon conscious existence in death, leads to prayer for the dead, and not only to that, but to indulgences, and the payment of money for the release of souls confined in purgatory. Thus: as the above quotation states, a man in purgatory may be released, and, of course, admitted to Heaven, if some of his friends give money to the church.

Who cannot see that this is antichrist? It is allowing that

money and good works will buy one's way into Heaven; it is teaching men to put their trust in Mammon, at least in part, instead of wholly in Christ. Read the scorching words of the apostle Peter, in *Acts 8*, to one who thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money:

Acts 8

²⁰ But Peter said unto him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter: for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

²² Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

²³ For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Indulgences

The doctrine of purgatory leads directly, as has been said, to the doctrine of indulgences. We have no space for lengthy quotations, and so present as a concise statement of this doctrine, the following quotation made in *McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia* from the *Treasury of the Church*, by Alexander de Hales:

The sufferings and death of Christ not only made a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of men, but also acquired a superabundance of merit. The superfluous merit of Christ is conjoined with that of the martyrs and saints, which is similar in kind, though smaller in degree, for they likewise perform more than the divine law required of them. The sum of these supererogatory merits and good works forms a vast treasure, which is disjoined from the persons who won or performed them, exists objectively, and, having been accumulated by the head members of the church, and intended by them for its use, belongs to the church, and is necessarily placed under the administration of its representatives, especially the Pope, who is supreme.

It is therefore competent for the Pope, according to the

measure of his insight at the time, to draw from this treasure, and bestow upon those who have no merit of their own, such supplies of it as they require. Indulgences and remissions are made from the supererogatory merits of Christ's members, but most of all from the superabundance of Christ's own, the two constituting the church's spiritual treasure.

This is the doctrine of indulgences in its best form. Primarily it probably does not contemplate such a thing as granting license for future sin, although this has always naturally followed. If men know that by doing penance, or by alms-giving, they can atone for certain sins, they will not be so careful to guard against those sins. So the doctrine of indulgences does lead directly to looseness of life.

No matter what claims may be made, as a matter of fact no real humility is required by indulgences and penance, as there is in accepting Christ as the only Saviour. The individual trusts in himself and his own good works, and not in Christ. But without humility and self-abasement there can be no true godliness; for,

Habakkuk 2

⁴ Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright within him: but the just shall live by his faith.

And the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is responsible for this doctrine which leads to trust in self instead of trust in Christ, and so it appears again as the doctrine of antichrist.

The first cry of the awakened sinner is,

Acts 16

³⁰ What shall I do to be saved?

When he has been convinced of sin, and feels his utter helplessness, he instinctively looks for something to lean upon. The true minister of the gospel will point him to...

John 1

²⁹ ...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Trusting wholly in Him, the sinner can find both pardon and holiness,—cleansing from the guilt of sin, and from the love of it.

But right there at that critical moment, the Catholic Church meets him and turns his attention to some “saint” who has accomplished the impossible feat of being better than the Lord wanted him to be, whose extra good works he may get if he will pray or pay for them.

Thus men are elevated to a level with Christ, and all in consequence of the theory that death is not an enemy, but a friend.

14. Mariolatry

Signs of the Times, March 23, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 14

THE homage which the Catholic Church pays to the Virgin Mary is one of the most pernicious phases of the spirit of antichrist. It is true that in their catechisms they disclaim any intention of paying her divine honor, or of worshipping her as God; but those who are familiar with the facts know that the honor and worship which should be given to Christ alone are by them given the Virgin Mary, and Christ is virtually ignored.

But this worship of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints and martyrs, which detracts from the honor due to Christ, springs solely from the doctrine of the natural immortality of man; for if they did not hold that human beings are by nature possessed of the immortality which actually belongs to God alone, they could not give to those human beings, after death, the worship which is due to God.

To show the pernicious effects of the Roman Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary and “saints” we shall make a few quotations from a Catholic publication entitled, *The Glories of Mary*. The work was first published in Venice, Italy, in 1784, and we copy from the first American edition of the translation from the Italian, which translation bears the approval of Archbishop John Hughes, of New York, dated Jan. 21, 1872. We quote the following statements concerning the author, Alphonsus Liguori, in order that the reader may know how he and his work are regarded by the Catholic Church:

Nine years after his death [which occurred Aug. 1, 1787], he was pronounced venerable by Pius VI, was beatified by Pius VII, Sept. 15, 1816; and on May 26, 1839, was canonized by Gregory XVI Pius IX added, July 7, 1871, to these honors the dignity of Doctor of the Church; thus placing him beside Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, etc. The decree was

based upon the scholarly and devotional character of his works, and especially the circumstance that they teach in the most excellent manner the truths relating to the immaculate conception of the blessed mother of God, and the infallibility of the Roman bishop speaking from his throne.

It ordained that...

...his works should be cited as of equal authority with those of the other doctors of the church, and should be used in schools, colleges, controversies, sermons, etc., as well as in private.²⁵

The reader will know, therefore, that every quotation made from *The Glories of Mary*, is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. On page 19 we find the following:

If the assertion is true and incontrovertible, as I believe it to be, and as I shall prove in the fifth chapter of this book, that all graces are dispensed by the hand of Mary alone, and that all those who are saved, are saved solely by the hand of this divine mother, it may be said as a necessary consequence, that the salvation of all depends upon preaching Mary, and confidence in her intercession.

If this is not antichrist, can anyone tell what would be? When the Catholic Church teaches that “all those who are saved, are saved solely by the hand of this divine mother,” what room is left for Christ? Further quotations will show that the Catholic Church openly gives to Mary a higher place than to Christ. On pages 27-28 we find:

The kingdom of God consisting of justice and mercy, the Lord has divided it; he has reserved the kingdom of justice for himself, and he has granted the kingdom of mercy to Mary, ordaining that all the mercies which are dispensed to men should pass through the hands of Mary, and should be bestowed according to her good pleasure.

²⁵ *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, article “Liguori”.

And on page 29:

Ernest, Archbishop of Prague, also says that the eternal Father has given to the Son the office of judging and punishing, and to the mother the office of compassionating and relieving the wretched.

Sometimes professed Protestants are guilty of setting the Father and the Son in antagonism with each other, representing the Father as desiring to wreak vengeance upon men, and the Son as restraining Him. The natural result of such teaching is to cause men to regard God as unlovable.

In like manner the Catholic Church represent Christ as the stern, unyielding judge, and Mary as the only one who can induce Him to show mercy. Of course the result must be the neglect of Christ. In the following questions this is made more apparent (p. 119):

Every blessing, every help, every grace that men have received or will receive from God, to the end of the world, has come to them, and will come to them, through the intercession and by means of Mary.

Again on page 133 we read:

St. Bonaventure remarks that Isaias in his day lamented, and said, "Behold, you are angry, and we have sinned....there is none that riseth up and taketh hold of you," because Mary was not yet born into the world. But now, if God is offended with any sinner, and Mary undertakes to protect him, she restrains the Son from punishing him, and saves him.

But the following caps the climax:

To increase our confidence, St. Anselm adds that when we have recourse to this divine mother, we may not only be sure of her protection, but that sometimes we shall be sooner heard and saved by invoking her holy name than that of Jesus our Saviour. And he gives this reason: Because it belongs to Christ as our judge to punish, but to Mary, as our advo-

cate, to pity.

These statements are so clear that they need no comment to convince the reader that Christ is practically ignored in the Roman Catholic Church, and that the church is essentially pagan. It teaches men to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator.

It matters not how much that church may profess to be Christian, nor how much prominence they may give to the name and image of Christ; the fact remains that it is not a Christian church, but is essentially antichrist.

And this, let the reader not forget, is due wholly to its assumption of pagan doctrines, notably that of the inherent immortality of man. But for this, they could not thus exalt a creature to the place of God.

15. Mary in the Place of Christ

Signs of the Times, March 30, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 15

IT HAS before been shown that Catholicism is virtually one with Spiritualism, because it teaches that the living may and do have intercourse with the dead. This alone is sufficient to brand it as an antichristian system.

But there are so many professed Protestants nowadays who regard Catholicism as an important branch of the Christian church, that it is necessary to present some very conclusive evidence to the contrary. The Scripture, speaking of the Papacy under the form of a beast, says:

Revelation 13

⁸ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

It also says of the unclean spirits that represent Spiritualism:

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 that great day of God Almighty.

This shows that those who either directly or indirectly acknowledge the authority of the Papacy, will also be Spiritualists. When we remember that Spiritualism is paganism in its original form, and that Catholicism is paganism with some modifications, and that both depend mainly upon the heathen idea of the natural immortality of the man, we can see how Spiritualists might come to acknowledge the Papacy. As for Catholics, they are Spiritualists already.

Since this is so, it is as necessary to warn people against Catholicism as against Spiritualism. We therefore shall quote quite a number of additional statements from *The Glories of*

Mary, to show the antichristian character and essential wickedness of the Roman Catholic system. Many of these statements are little else than repetitions of the same thing; but we wish the reader to know that we are not misrepresenting the Catholic Church by quoting a few isolated passages. Whoever will take the trouble to procure the book, will find stuff of the same kind on almost every page, until he will become nauseated.

The inspired apostle tells us that Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, died,

Hebrews 9

¹⁵ ...for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.

But this Catholic “saint” contradicts this statement thus:

St. Bernardine of Sienna says that God did not destroy man after his fall, because of the peculiar love he bore his future child, *Mary*. And the saint adds, that he doubts not all the mercy and pardon which sinners received under the old law, was granted them solely for the sake of this blessed Virgin.²⁶

This takes from Christ all the honor of the salvation of people for the first four thousand years of this earth’s history. Now when we find that sinners in this age are directed to look to *Mary* first, and afterwards, if at all, to Jesus, it is evident that Catholicism is emphatically antichrist. On pages 83-84 we read:

Justly, then, does St. Lawrence Justinian call her the hope of evil-doers, since she alone can obtain their pardon from God. St. Bernard rightly calls her the ladder of sinners, since she, this compassionate queen, offers her hand to poor, fallen mortals, leads them from the precipice of sin, and helps them to ascend to God. St. Augustine rightly calls her the only hope of us sinners, since by her means alone we hope for the remission of all our sins. And St. John Chrysostom repeats

²⁶ *Glories of Mary*, page 81.

the same thing, namely, that sinners receive pardon only through the intercession of Mary.

The last quotation speaks of Mary as the “ladder of sinners,” and therefore the following little story comes in very aptly right here (p. 279):

In the Franciscan chronicles it is related of Brother Leo, that he once saw a red ladder, upon which Jesus Christ was standing, and a white one, upon which stood his holy mother. He saw persons attempting to ascend the red ladder; they ascended a few steps and then fell; they ascended again, and again fell. Then they were exhorted to ascend the white ladder, and on that he saw them succeed, for the blessed Virgin offered them her hand, and they arrived in that manner safe in Paradise.

Now add to this, the following (p. 293):

God has ordained that all graces should be dispensed by the prayers of Mary; where these are wanting, there is no hope of mercy, as our Lord signified to St. Bridget, saying to her: “Unless Mary interposes by her prayers, there is no hope of mercy.”

These quotations show, not that Mary divides with Christ the honor of man’s salvation, but that she is the only saviour. The Catholic Church actually teaches those who look to it for instruction, that they cannot be saved by the merits of Christ, and that if they do not seek the aid of the Virgin Mary, they must certainly be lost. And yet there are Protestants who think that it is an important part of the Christian church. On page 330 there is a prayer to be said to the Virgin Mary, from which we take the following extract:

It is enough that you will save us, for then we cannot but be saved. Who can restrain the bowels of your compassion? If you have not compassion on us, you who are the mother of mercy, what will become of us when your Son shall come to judge us?

Surely nothing more is needed to convince any person not wholly blinded that the Catholic Church robs Christ of honor as the divine Mediator for sinners, and gives it to a creature, who, though she was a good woman, could obtain salvation in no other way than through the merits of Christ, and who has been dead for not less than eighteen hundred years.

Again we ask the reader to remember that Mariolatry could not have any existence if it were not for the pagan notion that death does not end a man's existence. The thoughtful person will readily connect Mariolatry with the ancient heathen custom of deifying the dead.

Ancient heathenism, modern Spiritualism, and Roman Catholicism, all spring from the same root, and are very closely related.

16. Encouraging Wickedness

Signs of the Times, April 6, 1888

Original title: The Spirit of Antichrist. No. 16

THUS far we have quoted only those passages which directly state that the Virgin Mary is entitled to more honor than Christ; that to her men must look for salvation, rather than to Christ; and that if they depend upon Christ, and not upon the Virgin Mary, they will surely be lost.

We shall now give a few sample quotations showing that this Mariolatry directly fosters and encourages the most outrageous wickedness. On pages 36 and 37 of *The Glories of Mary*, we find the following:

We read in the life of Sister Catherine, an Augustinian nun, that in the place where that servant of God lived, there lived also a woman named Mary, who, in her youth was a sinner, and obstinately persevered in her evil course even to extreme old age. For this, she was banished by her fellow-citizens, forced to live in a cave beyond the limits of the place, and died in a state of loathsome corruption, abandoned by all, and without the sacraments, and on this account was buried in a field like a beast.

Now Sister Catherine, who was accustomed to recommend very affectionately to God the souls of those who had departed this life, after learning the miserable death of this poor old woman, did not think of praying for her, as she and everyone else believed her already among the damned.

Four years having passed, a soul from purgatory appeared to her, and said: "Sister Catherine, how unhappy is my fate! You commend to God the souls of all those who die, and for my soul alone you have no pity."

"And who are you," said the servant of God.

"I am," answered she, "that poor Mary, who died in the cave."

"How are you saved?"

She said, "By the mercy of the Virgin Mary."

“And how?”

“When I saw death drawing near, finding myself laden with sins, and abandoned by all, I turned to the mother of God, and said to her, ‘Lady, you are the refuge of the abandoned, behold me at this hour deserted by all; you are my only hope, you alone canst help me; have pity on me.’ The holy Virgin obtained for me the grace of making an act of contrition. I died and am saved, and my queen has also obtained for me the grace that my pain should be abridged, and that I should, by suffering intensely for a short time, pass through that purification which otherwise would have lasted many years. A few masses only are needed to obtain my release from purgatory. I pray you cause them to be offered for me, and I promise to pray God and Mary for you.”

Sister Catherine immediately caused those masses to be said for her, and that soul, after a few days, appeared to her again, more brilliant than the sun, and said to her, “I thank you, Sister Catherine; behold I am now going to Paradise to sing the mercy of God, and pray for you.”

This is very much in the same line as the preceding quotations. It teaches that people may live profligate lives up to the very moment of death, and then be saved by a single “act of contrition.” Thus it tends to cause men to put off repentance, and to rob God of all the service that is His due.

But that is not the worst. It is true that...

Hebrews 7

²⁴ [Christ] is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,

—and that it is possible that even in the last hour of life the sinner may heartily repent and find acceptance with God; for one such case is recorded in the New Testament. But the Catholic Church, in the quotation just made, teaches that men may come unrepentant to the last moment of life, and even then be saved without Christ. Christ is utterly ignored even in that extremity. The essential wickedness of such a scheme of religion ought to be apparent to everyone who has any

knowledge of divine things. Again, on page 687 we read:

In the mountains of Trent lived a notorious robber, who when he was admonished by a religious to change his course of life, answered that for him there was no remedy. "Do not say," said the religious; "do what I tell you; fast on Saturday in honor of Mary, and on that day do no harm to anyone, and she will obtain for you the grace of not dying under the displeasure of God."

The obedient robber followed this advice, and made a vow to continue to do so. That he might not break his oath, he from that time went unarmed on Saturdays. It happened that on a Saturday he was found by the officers of justice, and that he might not break his oath, he allowed himself to be taken without resistance.

The judge, when he saw that he was a gray-haired old man, wished to pardon him; but through the grace of compunction which he had received from Mary, he said that he wished to die in punishment of his sins. He also made a public confession of all the sins of his life in that same judgment-hall, weeping so bitterly that all present wept with him. He was beheaded, and buried with little ceremony, in a grave dug near by.

But afterwards the mother of God appeared, with four holy virgins, who took the dead body from that place, wrapped it in a rich cloth embroidered with gold, and bore it themselves to the gate of the city. There the blessed Virgin said to the guards: "Tell the bishop from me to give an honorable burial, in such a church, to this dead person, for he was my faithful servant." And this was done.

By such stories as this, Catholicism identifies itself with paganism, which taught its devotees to depend on charms and incantations, and also with Spiritualism, the great feature of which is that man is his own saviour. All three systems are alike in that they exalt man to the level of God. This, as has before been shown, necessarily follows wherever the doctrine of man's natural immortality is held, because that very doctrine claims for man the attribute of Deity.

Similar to the above quotation, is the following, found on page 689:

In the country of Normandy, a certain robber was be-headed, and his head was thrown into a trench, but afterwards it was heard, crying: "Mary, give me confession." A certain priest went to him and heard his confession; and questioning him as to his practices of devotion, the robber answered that he had no other than fasting one day of the week in honor of the holy Virgin, and that for this our Lady had obtained the grace to be delivered from hell by that confession.

Surely that was an easy way of getting saved, considering the amount that a person is allowed to eat during a Catholic "fast." But the worst of all is the following, found on pages 301, and 302, with which we will end these extracts:

Father Charles Bovins relates that in Domans, in France, lived a married man who had held a criminal connection with another woman. Now the wife being unable to endure this, continually besought God to punish the guilty parties, and one day in particular, went to an altar of the blessed Virgin, which was in a certain church, to implore vengeance upon the woman who had alienated her husband from her, and this very woman went also every day to the same altar to repeat a Hail Mary.

One night the divine mother appeared in a dream to the wife, who, on seeing her, began her accustomed petition: "Justice, mother of God, justice." But the blessed lady answered: "Justice! do you seek justice from me? Go and find others to execute justice for you. It belongs not to me to do it for you. Be it known to you," she added, "that this very sinner offers every day a devotion in my honor, and that I cannot allow any sinner who does this to suffer and be punished for his sins."

It is impossible to conceive of anything that could be written under the pretense of being religious, that would tend more directly to lead people to the commission of crime, than

this does. In this instance which, like all the rest, is of course fictitious, we have the case of a woman living in open sin, yet the Virgin Mary, who is set forth as the only hope of sinners, severely rebukes the one who has been so grossly wronged, saying that the guilty woman shall not be punished, because she, every day, repeats a form of prayer.

Thus the Catholic Church teaches that no matter how wicked a person may be, he is safe if he only remembers, in the midst of his debauchery, to “say a prayer” to the Virgin Mary. Is it not rightly named...

Revelation 17

⁵ ...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH?

Surely Paul could not have given a more accurate description of it than by calling it...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ ...that Wicked.

The apostle John says that antichrist is he that denies that Jesus is come in the flesh. It has been shown that Spiritualism is antichrist, because it openly and emphatically denies the divine mission and character of Christ. Catholicism is no less antichrist, because, although it makes much of the name and the image of Christ, it sets another above Him in the plan of salvation.

And both of these systems of error arise from the pagan notion that the soul of man is a part of God, and therefore cannot by any possibility die, which idea was first promulgated by Satan, the arch-enemy of Christ. Therefore we say, as before, that the spirit of antichrist is the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul.

The only difference between paganism and Christianity is Christ. Take Christ out of Christianity, and all of its professors would soon sink into paganism. There is no power in man to

elevate himself, this can be done only by some power outside of himself, and that power is the Saviour. But the salvation which Christ brings is not simply a present uplifting, but...

Isaiah 45

¹⁷ ...an everlasting salvation.

He came to give eternal life to as many as should believe on Him. The sum of all the blessings which Christ has to bestow is comprised in the gift of eternal life.

Now when people, no matter what their profession, teach that men are not dependent on Christ for life, they virtually deny Him entirely. And when Christ is set aside, immorality must come in. There cannot by any possibility be any righteousness in this world except...

Romans 3

²² ...the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.

And since the doctrine of man's natural immortality takes away the incentive to believe in Christ,—the Life-giver,—we once more emphatically repeat that this doctrine is the very spirit of antichrist.

17. Let Them Laugh

Signs of the Times, April 20, 1888

FROM a Spiritualist we have received a series of questions, which he evidently thinks cannot be answered without scattering to the four winds our recent articles on Spiritualism.

First, he wants to know how it is that in forty years Spiritualism has made so many converts, while comparatively few accept the doctrine of our Lord's soon coming. This is easily answered. It is because the human heart naturally loves error. Ever since our first parents listened to Satan's great lie,

Genesis 3

⁴ You shall not surely die,

—error has been courted, while truth has had to fight its way to recognition. Says Bacon:

In general let every student of nature take this as a rule, that whatever his mind seizes and dwells upon with particular satisfaction is to be held in suspicion.

The heart of man is naturally the spring of evil thoughts, and of vice, and so he is predisposed to error. If he learns to love truth, it is because some influence or power outside of himself has been brought to bear upon him. The argument that we ought to do or believe a certain thing because others do, is well adapted to sheep, which go in flocks, the hindmost following blindly whichever way the current sets; but men should...

Exodus 23

² ...not follow a multitude to do evil.

He asks,

“Did you ever investigate Spiritualism? or are you too timid?” etc.

Yes, we have fully investigated Spiritualism. We claim that we know more of its nature and tendency than any Spiritualist who lives. But we are too timid to venture into it. We submit that the man who stands at the mouth of a dark cave and views its interior by the aid of an electric light, whose bright rays he causes to be reflected into it, is in a position to know more of it than the one who stumbles into it without any light.

Having examined Spiritualism by the light of God's word, we are too timid to venture near it. The wolf may taunt the lamb with cowardice for not coming to examine his teeth and nails; but all will agree that timidity in such a case is wisdom. We know the nature and effects of arsenic; we know that it is a deadly poison, although we were never poisoned with it.

Again,

"If your Jesus is a delusion, where do you stand?"

We reply, Nowhere. We are free to confess that without Jesus we are nothing. That is why we pity Spiritualists, who reject Christ. He will not fail us, and we have no fear. The implied idea that we should cast off our faith in Christ, simply because if he were not a reality our faith would be vain, and we should be lost, is most absurd.

There is a man walking across the Brooklyn bridge. If that bridge should fall, what would become of him? Why, he would be killed. Suppose the bridge upon which he is walking were not a bridge at all, but were only a streak of fog, what then? Why, then of course he could not walk upon it. But because he couldn't walk there if the bridge were not there, shall he refuse to walk on the solid bridge which is there? Shall he refuse to stand upon its firm structure, because he couldn't stand upon it if it were not in existence? What nonsense! So we shall not be frightened from...

Deuteronomy 33

²⁷ ...the everlasting arms,

–because someone cries that we should fall into perdition if they were not there. That is just why we stay in that secure place; it is the only place of safety.

Finally, we are told that if we would lay aside our opposition to Spiritualism, we...

...would not run any risk to become the laughing stock for over two millions of converts to Spiritualism.

No doubt. But we are perfectly content to be laughed at by Spiritualists, whether they be two million or two hundred million.

Ecclesiastes 7

⁵ It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

⁶ For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughing of the fool; this also is vanity.

We would rather have their laughter than their commendation.

