

Spiritualism
Condemned
In God's Word

By
Ira B. Thayer

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OUR MONTHLY PAPER
The Evangelical Christian
AND MISSIONARY WITNESS
INTERDENOMINATIONAL

Rev. R. V. Bingham, Editor.

\$1.25 a Year

Evangelical Publishers

PUBLISHERS, IMPORTERS AND DISTRIBUTORS
OF SOUND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

858 College Street, Toronto, Canada

Spiritualism Condemned in God's Word

By IRA B. THAYER

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy, Chap. 4, Verse 1.

NEWSPAPERS and magazines throughout the world have recently given much publicity to Spiritualistic gatherings where mediums have been in attendance, through whom messages from the dead are supposed to have been received. Thus the dangerous practice of consulting with familiar spirits has been encouraged. If continued, much evil is sure to follow. No doubt at some of those seances there have been deceptions practised, and, when detected, the whole performance has usually been pronounced fraudulent. However, this explanation is not in itself sufficient. That evil spirits, when encouraged to do so, are quite capable of communicating with men is abundantly proven, and what is known to have taken place at some of those Spirit-

ualistic gatherings cannot be accounted for in any other way.

From published accounts of meetings recently held, one would be inclined to think that some of those who were in attendance are pretty well convinced that they have made a wonderful discovery and that their intercourse with spirits is quite a new thing, and an achievement of great value, whereas, if they would carefully read their Bible, they would see that their discovery is by no means new. Numerous passages written many centuries ago contain reference to this evil. All through the Bible, wherever the matter is spoken of, having to do with familiar spirits is strongly condemned, therefore, in no instance does the practice receive our Lord's approval. As an example of the truthfulness of this statement, the following quotation from Scripture should prove convincing evidence. In passing, I may say that, at the time the heathen nations which inhabited the land of Palestine were being dispossessed and driven out of the land, it was a well understood fact that they had descended to the very lowest depths of

sinful practices. One of their most flagrant sins, and, one which is especially mentioned in Scripture, was intercourse with familiar spirits, this being nothing more nor less than modern Spiritualism.

In 1491 B.C., after their escape from Egyptian bondage, and before the Israelitish nation had entered the promised land, God, through His servant Moses, gave them a code of laws which was intended for their good and was to govern their conduct, and which they were commanded to obey. They were plainly told of the evil practices of the heathen nations and were admonished to avoid them. Shortly before the death of Moses, he called the Children of Israel together and informed them that their wilderness journey was soon to end and that they were to enter the promised land. He again reminded them of their obligation to observe the laws that God had given them and strongly admonished them to have nothing to do with familiar spirits, namely:—Spiritualism.

Dating back to the year 1490 B.C., more than thirty-four hundred years

ago, in Leviticus, chapter 19, verse 31, it is written: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God." Again in Leviticus, chapter 20, verse 6, it says: "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people." Again in Leviticus, chapter 20, verse 27, it is written: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them."

In the year 1451 B.C., nearly three thousand three hundred and seventy years ago, in Deuteronomy, chapter 18, verses 9 to 14, it is written: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter

with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."

In the year 1056 B.C., twenty-nine hundred and seventy-five years ago, in 1st Samuel, chapter 28, we get a full and complete account of King Saul's interview with the woman who had a familiar spirit (the witch of Endor). This story will be remembered by nearly everyone. Those who do not remember it, can easily refer to it in the chapter above mentioned. It should not be forgotten that it is recorded in 1st Chronicles, chapter 10, verse 13-14, that "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire

of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

Again in the 712 B. C. (2631 years ago) we are told in 2 Kings, chapter 21, verses 1-6, that "Manassah," (who by the way, was one of the most wicked kings that reigned in Jerusalem), "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. He built altars for all the host of heaven in the courts of the house of the Lord. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger."

Again in 741 B.C., namely, 2660 years ago, in Isaiah, chapter 8, verses 19-20, the prophet in speaking to the people said: "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? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not ac-

ording to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

From the above passages of Scripture and also from other Scriptures, it will be noted that wherever intercourse with familiar spirits is mentioned, the practice is condemned, and a list of accompanying evils is added which are also condemned. The list includes divination, observers of times, charmers, witchcraft, enchanters, consultants with familiar spirits, wizards, necromancers, also **the awful crime of causing the son or daughter to pass through the fire.** This latter practice was intended as a sacrifice to the god Moloch. All these are in the same list and are classified together, all acting under satanic influence, they are instrumental in various ways in accomplishing Satan's purpose. Familiar spirits cannot be other than wicked spirits, for the children of God who have died now dwell in the presence of our Lord; therefore, the temptation to sin which on earth they endured is now forever removed; therefore, it is impossible for them to wish to act the part of familiar spirits and communicate with men on the earth because the

practice is condemned by God Himself.

If our space were not limited, we might quote from the New Testament many passages that confirm what has already been quoted from Old Testament Scriptures. When our Lord Jesus was here and "went about doing good," there were those in Palestine who were so under the power and control of Satan and his evil spirits that they were described as "being possessed of the devil," and one poor man was acknowledged to be possessed of a legion. (See an account of this given in Mark, chapter 5, verses 1-20). It will be here noted that our Lord Jesus constantly refused the testimony of evil spirits and one of the strongest evidences of His Deity was that He not only cast them out wherever they presented themselves, but He also gave His disciples power and authority to cast them out, thus proving that, notwithstanding the lapse of many centuries since the law was delivered by the command of God through His servant Moses, the practice of having to do with familiar spirits, which is none other than Satan in disguise, was then and still is "an abomination in the

sight of the Lord.”

In Acts, chapter 8, verses 6-24, we have an account of “a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the city of Samaria, used sorcery and bewitched the people,” whom Peter reproved and, although the man professed to have repented of his sin, it was afterwards found that the change in his life was superficial and one day Peter said to him, “I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

Again in Acts, chapter 13, verses 6-12, we read “And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer, (for so is his name by interpretation), withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said: ‘O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteous-

ness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season' ”.

Again in Acts, chapter 16, verses 16-24, we have an account of Paul and Silas' refusal to receive the testimony of “a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit: ‘I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out in the same hour.”

Scripture abounds with passages condemning the having to do with evil spirits; therefore, if it were necessary, we might go on and on with quotations. However, before closing, I wish again to quote from 1st Timothy, chapter 4, and verse 1: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

As already shown, the dealing with

familiar spirits has been practised more or less for thousands of years. At times the practice appears to lie dormant. The recent revival of this evil practice, I believe, is but the fulfilment of prophecy which warns us that the world is now in the closing days of this dispensation. I believe that many now living will witness the return of our blessed Lord and will be called "to meet Him in the air."

The Bible is our only infallible guide and those that are Christians must, of necessity, believe that it is the Word of God. In it God reveals His will to man, His commandments are imperative and should be obeyed. When the earthly life of a Christian terminates, we are assured that "absent from the body" means "present with the Lord." The temptations to sin after this forever cease; therefore, it is impossible for those who are "forever with the Lord" to disobey His voice which in Scripture speaks in language that cannot be misunderstood, and times almost without number, condemning the practice of consulting with familiar spirits, so it will be seen at a glance that no child of God dwelling in His presence

can take part in such performance.

As already shown, it is impossible for Christians who have died, and who now dwell in the presence of our Lord, to wish to act the part of familiar spirits and hold intercourse with those who are on the earth. It now only remains necessary for us to show that the wicked dead, namely, those who have died, not being themselves Christians, are also incapable of doing so. On this latter point the parable of the rich man and Lazarus recorded in Luke, chapter 16, verses 19-31, is full of instruction.

Our Lord Jesus, during His ministry, made frequent use of parables in order to instruct His hearers. In this parable we get an insight into the condition of those who have departed this life. Lazarus is described as being in the place of happiness, the rich man in the place of torment. The rich man, being unable himself to communicate with "his father's house," where he had "five brethren," requests that Lazarus be sent to warn them, "lest they come into this place of torment." He is told that "they have Moses and the prophets"—the Scriptures, "let

them hear them." Not being satisfied with this answer he pressed the case still further and said, "Nay; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Then the final answer comes back. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

It is quite evident that our Lord intended this parable to show that those who die go to their appointed place, and that all communication with those who remain on the earth is henceforth impossible.

It is of much importance to note that if men will not hear what Scripture has to say, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." It is also of much importance to note that neither "the rich man" or "Lazarus" could communicate with the "five brethren," thus showing that regardless of what the conditions may be of those that have died, it is impossible for them to hold intercourse with those who are living on the earth. It therefore follows that familiar spirits are properly described as "evil spirits"—spirits who, acting under the power and

influence of Satan, are actively engaged in carrying out his evil purpose. Hence one need not be surprised if those evil spirits sometimes assume the garb of "angels of light," and thus deceive those that listen to their "enchancements."

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verses 13-14.) I have simply quoted from God's own word and on the authority of that Word, I solemnly warn the readers of this paper against the fatal mistake of having anything to do with familiar spirits. Beware of this doctrine of the devil. I close with the words of the prophet: "If the Lord be God, follow Him."—1st Kings, chapter 18, verse 21.

Yours sincerely,

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