

# THE SPIRITS TRIED;

OR,

*Spiritualism Self-Convicted, Self-Condemned,*

AND

*PROVED TO BE OF SATAN.*

BY

ARTHUR PRIDHAM.

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“πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι.”—2 TIM. iii. 13.

“δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα.”—1 JOHN ~~iv. 1~~

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## PREFACE.

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WHAT is here presented to the Christian reader is mainly a review of a work published last year at Manchester,<sup>1</sup> and which is recommended by *The Spiritualist* as the best book for enquirers who may desire to acquaint themselves with the phenomena and teachings of modern spiritualism. As the publications of this party are already very numerous, and are fast increasing also in boldness of tone, I am glad of the appearance of an author who, as a recognized expounder of the system, may be specifically and finally reckoned with, since a just examination of this single work will render superfluous a wider and discursive criticism.

Now among those who acknowledge a divine revelation, a witness is *self-convicted* of falsehood when his declarations contradict what God has plainly said ; he is *self-condemned* when his statements are found irreconcilable with his own accepted standard of appeal. My intention is to show that, in both these respects, the writer, whose work I have undertaken to review, falls strictly and evidently within the above definition.

<sup>1</sup> *Where are the Dead? or, Spiritualism Explained.* By Fritz.

I have carefully examined this book, and inasmuch as it boldly claims upon its title-page the sanction of the Bible, I have tried it by that holy and unerring standard; with what result will appear on a perusal of the following chapters.

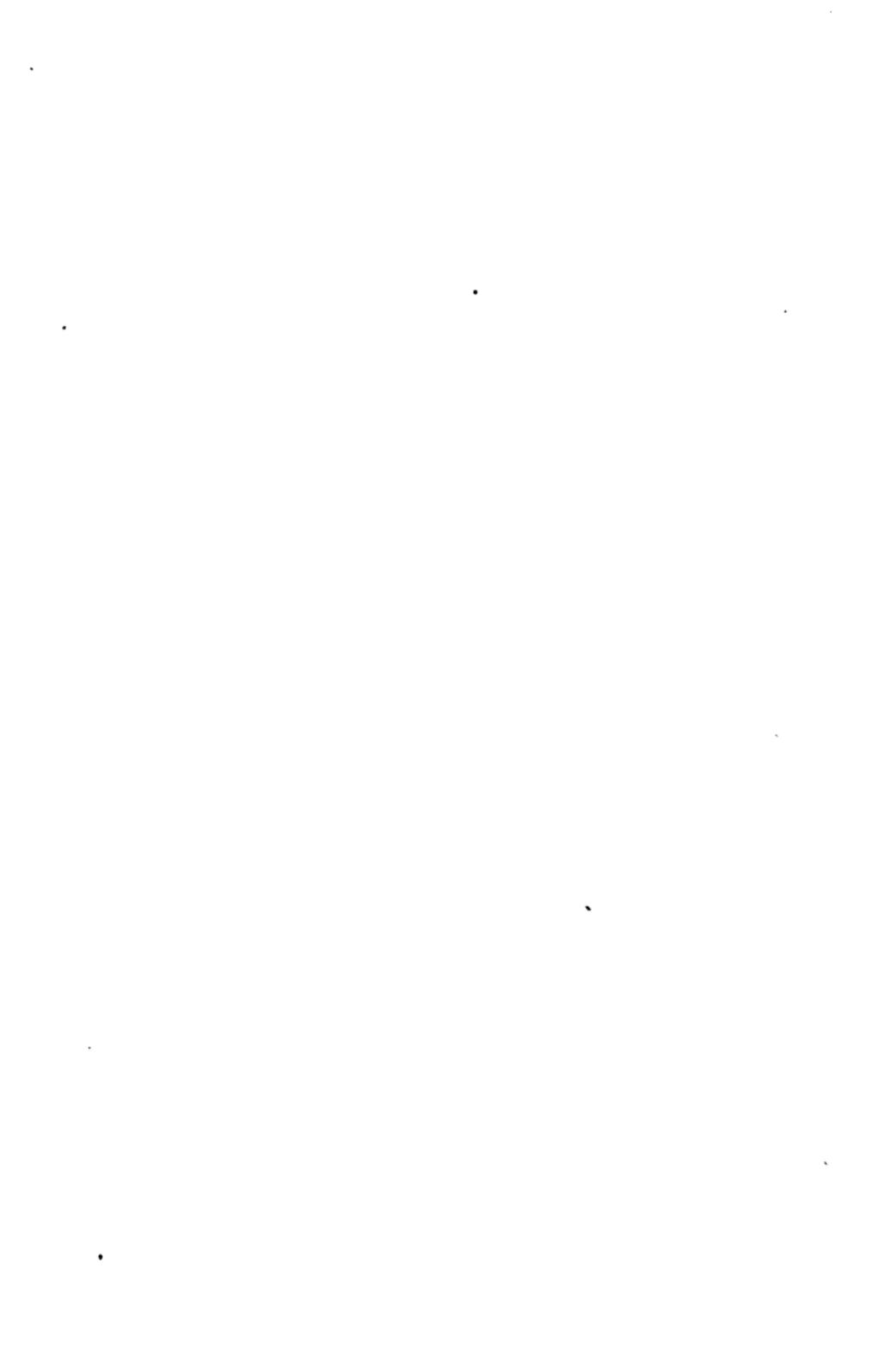
It is my earnest desire that what I have written on this subject should be free from the taint of malice or any other evil passion; but for any strong expressions which from time to time occur I can offer no apology. "A lie" is, in Scriptural acceptance, a contradiction of God's truth, and is entitled to neither tolerance nor courtesy from those who love that truth. Against an unknown writer I can have no personal antagonism; towards his *work* I have no other feeling than the most uncompromising and contemptuous hate; for it is, from first to last, an outrage against both the sovereign majesty of God and the suffering grace of our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By far the greatest danger of these perilous times is the general ascendancy of a false humanitarian sentiment, and an idolatry of mind which, in society at large, is fast destroying *faith in God*, and as a necessary consequence, rendering His words of none effect. Satan, whose work this is, knows well how to profit by it, and to make it the occasion of his final effort; for it is not by a merely negative infidelity, but by a positive energy of wickedness, that the last and self-destructive counsel of the adversary must attain its long predicted end.

God's elect will not be fatally deceived; but Christians do well to remember that their safety from

spiritual danger lies practically in their own faithful observance and defence of *truth*. They are, by the grace which saved them, children of that light which has no fellowship with darkness ; they can, therefore, have no safe or honest association with that which is naturally contrary to themselves. It is in the hope of opening the eyes of the unwary to the real nature of this last of Satan's many "methods of deceit," which is now seeking to come in by flatteries as the supplanter of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that I give myself to a necessary but distasteful task.

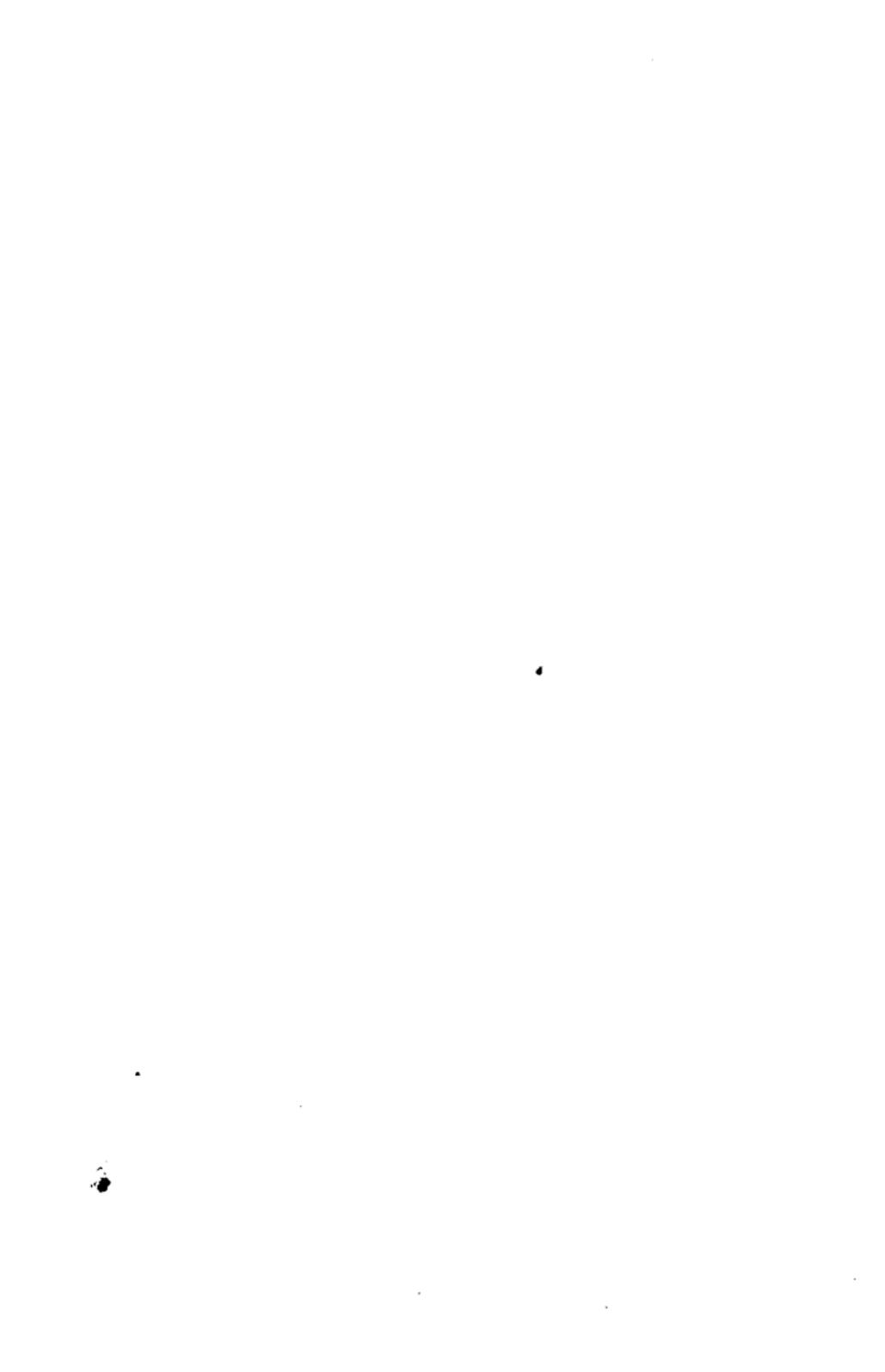
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# THE SPIRITS TRIED.



## CHAPTER I.

SPIRITUALISM AND ITS PHENOMENA ARE AMONG THE EXPECTED TOKENS OF "THE END."

No thoughtful Christian, who has given much attention to the subject, will, I believe, regard modern spiritualism as a system of merely human trickery; nor, on the other hand, will its well-attested external phenomena cause either surprise or embarrassment to any mind that has been formed and nurtured by the sound words of God's inspired witnesses. To such it will seem only natural that multiplied indications should be now beginning to appear of the presence and activity of a supernatural power which in a variety of manners is largely operating upon human consciousness, but which is most evidently not the Holy Spirit of God.

For that heresies of destruction and miracles of falsehood should mark the evening of this long day of grace, even as its morning was brightly ushered in by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and distributions of the Holy Ghost,<sup>1</sup> is a prominent article of the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 4.

faith once delivered to the saints. The "day of Christ," we are assured by one who wrote not his own words, will not come until the final revelation of that wicked one whose coming "is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."<sup>2</sup> The *power* here spoken of will be both real and various in kind, the *signs* will be very cognizable; and it is of much importance to remember that a "lying wonder," in the language of the Bible, does not mean usually a deceptive trick, but rather a genuine act, of an extraordinary and persuasive kind, wrought in support and commendation of a lie. I concede to the spiritualist, therefore, a sad but sincere credence for his facts, while I engage to convict both him and his system of utter falsehood and blasphemy against the living and eternal truth of God.

That God has from the beginning spoken unto men, first by His prophets, then, personally, in the Son—His own incarnate Word—and, since the ascension into heaven of the man Christ Jesus, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and, further, that in the Bible we possess God's *very sayings*, is at least as certain as that the spirits of departed mortals can and do, as the spiritualists affirm, communicate with flesh. I am free therefore to deal with the subject now before the reader with a direct and final reference to the inspired Word (especially since the writer, whose work I am about to notice, claims its sanction for his views), as the *sole criterion* of what is spiritually true or false. The alleged

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 9.

agreement of Scripture with modern spiritualism will receive a special consideration in my second chapter.

To extol and magnify the Lord Jesus Christ by attesting the excellency of His person and the grace and glory of His incomparable work, is the ever-blessed office of the one Spirit of truth. To dishonour the same Lord by a misrepresentation of the record that God hath given of His Son, by depreciation of His work, and ultimately by denying Him openly in favour of incarnate wickedness and falsehood, is the permitted occupation of the many and diverse "spirits of demons" which have yet one head, even "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that *now worketh* in the children of disobedience."<sup>3</sup>

The book before me was written with the avowed object of meeting and relieving certain natural cravings of the human heart, by superadding to the imperfect declarations of Scripture, with respect to the future, the fuller and not less trustworthy revelations of modern spiritualism. Its opening chapter is accordingly devoted to a demonstration of "the unsatisfactory state of our knowledge of the future life." Outside the Bible, as this writer truly says, "we find nothing but vague uncertainty," modern philosophy being little in advance of ancient in reference to futurity. "If," he continues, "we turn to the Bible, we certainly find some assurance of our immortality, but are left in the utmost ignorance and uncertainty

<sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 2.

as to the nature and conditions of our future state." And yet, as he had just before remarked, they who mourn the loss of friends might naturally expect to find a true consolation in the word of God.

For the libel uttered thus—in ignorance, I trust—against "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,"<sup>4</sup> as well as for other expressions of a still more blasphemous tenor, to be noted further on, the author, if his eyes be hereafter opened to behold the light of life, will seek and find forgiveness from his outraged Lord. My duty meanwhile is to demonstrate its falseness. "Our knowledge," Fritz complains, "of the future life is unsatisfactory." I reply: *Whose* knowledge? In whose name, and as representing what class of persons, does he venture to say this? Not of such kind, assuredly, has been, and is, the knowledge of futurity possessed by those who have trusted God and hearkened to His words. Was it an "unsatisfactory" state of knowledge that has from age to age emboldened the generation of God's children to stay their souls upon His truth, and, for the love of what they knew and were assured of, to confess themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth? Of the elders, who obtained through their faith a good report, it is written that they all died, as they had lived, "in faith;" that they had seen the promises afar off; that they embraced them; that, with opportunity of return to what they had abandoned, they chose rather to pursue another hope, desiring a better country, even an heavenly; wherefore, it is added, "God is not

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. i. 3.

ashamed to be called their God."<sup>5</sup> Is Fritz then, I ask, become ashamed of *God*, that he turns with dissatisfaction from His promises to seek a newer and a nearer hope? By appealing, as he elsewhere does, to Scripture, he invites his readers to infer that he believes its truth. Then let him ask himself, when Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, when he saw it and was glad, was he the deluded victim of what Fritz, and others like him, ignorantly call "blind faith"? or were not his eyes opened rather to an anticipative view of the brightness of that glory which should be afterwards more openly revealed? In common with all Christians, I believe that God's prophets and apostles were true men, and speakers of *His* truth. Was then David's or Isaiah's knowledge of the future life "unsatisfactory," when the one found his hiding-place in God, and expected after death to awake up in the satisfying likeness of his Lord, and the other sang extatically of the unseen things prepared of God for them that wait for Him?<sup>6</sup> And were Paul's views of the life to come defective or unsatisfactory, when he longed "to depart and be with Christ"? or John's, when he reminded his brethren both of their present title and standing as the sons of God, and of the sort of similitude in which they were in due time to appear?<sup>7</sup> So also is it now. Believers know that they are, by sovereign grace, both justified and glorified in Him who once for their sakes gave Himself to the accursed death. They know, by the

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xi. 13-16.    <sup>6</sup> Ps. xxxii. 7; xvii. 15; Isa. lxiv. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Phil. i. 23; I John iii. 2.

sure witness of the Spirit, that they are heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ. They know also that they have, in view of the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.<sup>8</sup> Respecting their departed comrades in the faith, they *sorrow not*; for they have a knowledge both of the present and the future also, which utterly dispels their grief.<sup>9</sup>

But God's words console those, and those only, who know Him in His Son, and from their native state of alienation have been brought, through the effectual power of the ministry of reconciliation, to find their rest and joy in God. Natural sorrow must first be mastered by a deeper and more hopeless grief—the wretchedness of conscious disunion and distance from the living God through sin—ere “the comfort of the Scriptures” can be truly tasted and enjoyed.

That Fritz is in his present state outside the congregation of the righteous, and among the “murmurers and complainers” described in the Spirit's prophetic picture of this age's last iniquity,<sup>1</sup> is but too evident from the beginning to the end of his book. Thus, at page 2, his plea for having recourse to spiritualism is the large variety of religious opinion notoriously existing among those who yet all “profess to base their doctrines and beliefs upon the Bible.” “It is not surprising,” he says, “that some men should anxiously seek elsewhere the truth, which it seems impossible to

<sup>8</sup> Rom. viii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. v. 1.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.      <sup>1</sup> Jude 16.

extract from the professed word of God." With his remarks on the same page respecting materialism as a rejected alternative of faith in the Bible, I have now no immediate concern ; but we shall see hereafter in what manner materialism and spiritualism, as distinct and consecutive manifestations of the self-same evil energy, stand related to each other.

The point of Fritz's complaint is, that the clashing opinions and unsatisfactory conclusions to which he refers, as well as a very general fear of death which is said to prevail, are found among those "who profess and call themselves Christians." In reply to this, I remark that without doubt every right-minded believer, who reflects on the actual condition of God's church in this present world, will sadly acknowledge what great occasion has been given, through the practical shortcomings of God's children, to the enemy to blaspheme ; but such language as Fritz here employs proves only that, in speaking of things Christian, he is meddling with a topic which lies far beyond his present reach of thought. Reminding him therefore, and the many others who shelter habitually their own disobedience and unbelief under a like plea, of the futility of any such attempt to justify one's own wrong by the faults of others, I observe, with reference to the *form* of his objection, that unity of faith and hope belongs to all who really are "*of God,*" while to "profess and call oneself a Christian," without a living faith in Christ, is no better than to say, as the reprobate "concion" said to Him whom they knew not, though in name they worshipped Him : "We be

Abraham's seed."<sup>2</sup> A merely traditional faith is, like everything else received only from our fathers, a vain and empty thing.<sup>3</sup> They who, in the language of Scripture, are "of God" are *called* of Him; His word, which is freely preached to all, being in their case mixed with a personal faith which joins those whom the Holy Ghost has quickened to the living Lord. In his entire ignorance of the nature of "the faith of God's elect," Fritz desires "a belief based upon *positive knowledge*, as contrasted with blind faith." He would, in other words, make natural intelligence the measure of religious belief, which notion is tantamount to an excluding of the living and true God from any positive and immediate intercourse with His own creatures; for a God whose thoughts are only as our own, and who can be searched and known by effort of our will, is no true God, but a delusive lie. Such a "belief" is clearly not the faith which justifies the ungodly, and which is to the believer an "evidence of things unseen." Knowledge is in the school of God an effect, but not the cause, of faith. Distinctively it is a thing to be *added* to the faith of those who have, through sovereign mercy, already tasted that the Lord is gracious.<sup>4</sup> But faith lives and rests upon the *words of God*. Thus Abraham obtained His witness and became His friend. Thus David too attained the blessedness which he describes. And with a like faith did God's murdered saints refuse deliverance from torture that they might obtain a better resur-

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 33; Phil. iii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter i. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter i. 5.

rection.<sup>5</sup> God's children have a knowledge, which is "positive" enough to fill their souls with rich effects, as we have seen; but the false cravings of the natural man God does not undertake to satisfy. If therefore we do not begin by seeking Him and His righteousness, His word, which should have been for our welfare, will become a gin and snare to our souls.<sup>6</sup> "I know whom I have believed," says Paul; a positive assurance which is the common property of all whom God has begotten by the word of His truth. But how different is this strong consolation of the believer from a merely intellectual comprehension of things, a restless longing after which is the continuous working in the unregenerate mind of man's original sin.<sup>7</sup>

Absolute *knowledge* belongs not to the creature, but to Him only who alone is wise. Absolute *conviction*, and full assurance of a hope which maketh not ashamed, are the portion of all who, by a living and true faith, receive out of the fulness that is in Christ, and grace for grace.<sup>8</sup> The *ignorance* (intellectually) of faith is but the moral reflection of that higher and all-consoling certainty which has its dwelling in the light which God is, who now by His word speaks comfortably to His saints, and by His Spirit sheds His love abroad within their hearts. The grace that is to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, with all that the eye is then to see and the mind to comprehend, is waited for with patience of hope by those whose joy and peace are meanwhile

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xi. 35, *seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Gen. iii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. lxi. 22; Hosea xiv. 9.

<sup>8</sup> John i. 16.

full through the comfort of His words.<sup>9</sup> They have known and believed the love that God hath toward them; for they discern it in the cross of His own Son. They are aware of the impotency of the natural mind as a discoverer of ultimate truth, and that if a man think that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.<sup>1</sup> They have learned also that what *God* calls truth, and men call sometimes "truth" and sometimes "knowledge," are essentially different things; for the one means CHRIST as the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, reveals Him; the other is the vague and illusory phantom, which men seek in an ever-widening circle of vanity, but never find. God's children will hereafter know as they are known. Their present joy is rather to be known and kept of God. "For if any one love God (and there is but one true reason and motive of that love<sup>2</sup>), he is," says a true witness, "known of Him."<sup>3</sup> But I proceed with my review.

At page 4 the author states the scope and intention of his work as follows: "It is my object to endeavour to supplement the deficiencies of the Bible testimony regarding the life to come, by pointing out how, instead of trusting to blind unreasoning faith, we can, if we will, obtain abundant positive evidence upon the subject, sufficient, on the one hand, to clear up all doubts which conceal the truth lying beneath the Bible narratives, and the innumerable creeds that are based upon it; and powerful enough, on the other

<sup>9</sup> 1 John i. 4.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 19.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 3.

hand, to explode the metaphysical subtleties of the German theologian<sup>4</sup> and his English admirers."

Of these last-named opposers of sound doctrine it is needless here to speak particularly. Strauss, and other writers of like kind, have no doubt served efficiently the will of Satan, as unsettlers of a merely traditional and evidential belief; but a negation cannot rule mankind. By positive truth or positive falsehood must men's hearts be swayed. Jehovah or Baal must be Israel's God, and in like manner the spirit of truth or the spirit of error must lead all those who name the name of Christ. The age is well-nigh weary of mutually destructive theories of scepticism, and is sensational rather than philosophic in its present mood. That spiritualism is an incipient manifestation of that positive energy of Satan, which will be judicially allowed to turn the neglected light of divine testimony into the darkness of a delusion strong enough to lead men, who once did outward homage to the name of Jesus, to bow down and worship an incarnate lie, is to me very evident, from reasons which will soon appear.

Nor is it at all less evident that the very spirit of antichrist is governing the author of the above-quoted presumptuous declaration, since he both purposes to make additions to what the word of God reveals concerning the life to come, incurring thus the danger of that judgment which is recorded prophetically against all such,<sup>5</sup> and by offering himself as an authentic guide

<sup>4</sup> Strauss, to whose late work, *The Old Belief and the New*, he had previously referred.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. xxx. 6; Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

to those who seek a sound knowledge of futurity, he is plainly usurping the glory which belongs solely to the Holy Ghost. For it is He only who, as the revealing witness of the Saviour, can guide God's willing children into all the truth, and show them things to come.<sup>6</sup> All other guidance, therefore, can be only into error. Folly and falsehood are thus, as it were, the very frontispiece of this sad book; but, alas! it is by folly and falsehood that a Christ-refusing world is led.<sup>7</sup>

As might be expected after such an exordium, this earnest seeker of light and devoted lover of his kind is found explicitly denying the testimony of God's holy prophets and apostles on every distinctive point of genuine Christian doctrine, in favour of a new and more enlightened creed; and in a future chapter<sup>8</sup> we shall see what special inducements are held out by the professors of this rectified and more ennobling gospel

<sup>6</sup> John xvi. 13.

<sup>7</sup> I may here notice generally that a common feature of such spiritualistic writers as I have read is their utterly false and dishonest use of Scripture. It is to them authoritative or null, as its words may or may not be made to countenance their system. Thus one witness (a clergyman) assures his readers that the Bible "was not intended to contain all things concerning religion." Another, after attempting to override plain gospel doctrines as to sin, grace, and judgment, by a fallacious reference to the tenderness of Jesus in receiving children, &c., turns presently to inveigh against the useless labour of attempting "to get at the minds of certain Oriental writers of fifty or a hundred generations back." Compare with such declarations those of Christ's inspired scribes in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 2 Peter i. 21, or the Lord's own reply to the tempter, Luke iv. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Chap. iii.

to allure Christ's sheep of this generation from their ancient pastures, and from following the earlier footsteps of the flock. Fritz has found, he says, in spiritualism the key to the latent truth which underlies the letter of the Bible; but as the new interpretation flatly gives the lie to the voices of God's inspired witnesses in their ordinary and natural acceptation, the reader of his book is brought at once to a necessity of choice. Let us notice first the perverse sophistry by means of which the open page of *Revelation* is placed on the footing of a cabalistic riddle. If there be truth in it, he implies, it is not to be found *in* the words of God, but somewhere underneath them. Yet those words are "to the sons of men,"<sup>9</sup> and both earth and heaven are cited in God's pleadings against those who stop their ears and will not listen to His voice.<sup>1</sup> All who speak thus of the Scripture are therefore plainly chargeable with willing ignorance—the most fatally destructive of all sins.<sup>2</sup> For with respect to all pretensions of esoteric teachings, or recondite expositions of God's written word which may be alleged, it is to be remembered that *publication*, and not reserve, is the order of God's dealing now with men. The darkness is passed, and the true light now shineth; and ruin irremediable threatens those who now turn their ears away from Him that speaks.<sup>3</sup> The declarative plainness of apostolic testimony is the only true key to the language of the older prophets, while the Holy Ghost, which is given to all them that believe,

<sup>9</sup> Prov. viii. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxii. 1; Micah vi. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter iii. 5, *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 8; Heb. xii. 25.

interprets His own sayings, not to the gratifying of mental ingenuity or curiosity, but as the enlightener and cheerer of those who with an honest heart are seeking in Christ crucified and glorified the fulness of the truth of God. Greeks may continue to seek wisdom at another source, but God proclaims Christ crucified, commanding all men everywhere to repent and to believe, because He has ordained that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.<sup>4</sup>

“The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord,”<sup>5</sup> says the inspired proverb, and Fritz is an impressive illustration of its truth. Complaining still of the scantiness of our knowledge of the life to come, “Can any one,” he impatiently enquires, “conscientiously affirm that the Bible satisfies all our wants in this respect, and that we ought to have no curiosity regarding the future?” All sound-minded Christians will at once reply, that both life and incorruption are now brought to light by the gospel;<sup>6</sup> that the Bible *does* satisfy, and raise to the height of a rapturous anticipation, the wants of those whose souls are weaned from vanity and cast upon the consolations of the Lord, and that curiosity, or a desire to pry into what is not yet manifested, is the very opposite of that “patience of hope” which is a standing mark of all who truly walk with God.<sup>7</sup> Thousands of gold and silver, corn and wine, honey and the honey-comb, are expressive metaphors of natural satisfaction; but the savour of God’s word in

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23; Phil. ii. 9, 10.      <sup>5</sup> Prov. xix 3.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Tim. i. 10.      <sup>7</sup> Heb. vi. 17, 18; 1 Peter i. 8, 9.

the heart of a believer far excels all these.<sup>8</sup> "What do we really know?" continues this unhappy maligner of the faith of God's elect, and replies to his own question, "Absolutely nothing!" Did this man ever know a real believer, one may ask, or witness, or read of the last hours of some departing lover of the Lord? At all events he reads, and professes even to reverence, the *Bible*. Was it then, according to that witness, in the spirit of fanatic ignorance that the Hebrew saints endured a great fight of afflictions, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods? or was it not rather because they *knew* that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance?<sup>9</sup> Did the martyrs also of an earlier day, who refused to accept deliverance from an agonizing death that they might obtain a better resurrection, know "absolutely nothing" of the life to come?

It were easy to enlarge on this, but I pass on. Like most writers of his class, Fritz mingles Scripture with the traditions of men, and makes "creeds and the Bible" indiscriminate objects of attack. I shall concern myself chiefly with his objections to the express declarations of the latter. "We hear a great deal," he says, with reference to popular theology, "about the necessity of salvation through Christ from damnation," &c. God be thanked, I reply, wherever this is so. Would that the gospel of His saving grace were both heard more frequently, and more heartily embraced by those who hear; heeded however, or unheeded, God does yet, in His much long-suffering, continue to preach

<sup>8</sup> Ps. iv. 7; xix. 10; cxix. 72.    <sup>9</sup> Heb. x. 34.

peace to His natural enemies by Jesus Christ. "We are led to believe," he goes on to say, "that we are all children of the devil," &c. I reply that Paul, to whom Fritz occasionally looks for countenance for his opinions, distinctly testifies that both himself and all others were "by nature children of wrath,"<sup>1</sup> and that, as Christ's apostle, his mission was to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.<sup>2</sup> If Fritz doubts this, the reason of his incredulity is to be found in a sad and solemn passage of the same inspired writer.<sup>3</sup>

"We talk," he soon after adds, "of our departed friends and relatives as having gone to heaven, and being already angels. . . . Some believe that they are possessed of gorgeous wings," &c. The proper answer to all this is, that men talk often and very freely of what they do not know, although neglected knowledge lie within their reach. If, instead of conjectural and speculative talking, they bowed their ears to listen to God's words, they would soon become aware that His "saints in light" are not to be confounded with His "angels," though, as it respects their change from flesh to spirit, they are on a par with such.<sup>4</sup> For in place and title they are higher, having been called, by the grace of their election, into a relationship which angels do not share. God speaks not to angels as to *sons*; but they who receive, in the love of it, the truth which Fritz despises are children of the living God, and companions of the First-born

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Cor. iv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xx. 36.

from the dead.<sup>5</sup> Then as to the array and occupation of those who are presented faultless before the throne of God, not "wings" are mentioned in God's book, but *white robes*. They are *clean*, in the eyes of Him who cannot look upon iniquity, through the shed blood of His Lamb, and with emotions suited to the grace in which they stand, and to their ripened knowledge of salvation as the work of their Redeemer, the instinct of their blessed life is praise.<sup>6</sup>

"Christ is said to have promised to the thief," he again objects, "'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,'" and then proceeds to contrast this with the statement in the "Apostle's Creed," that the Lord descended into Hades, and did not rise until the third day. This objection is merely a natural exclamation of baffled intellectual pride. As it is written, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."<sup>7</sup> If Fritz were in his right mind, he would be found in the company of apostles and all other true believers, who worship the mystery of godliness, which they know they cannot fathom. That the Prince of life should lie buried in the grave, His flesh resting there in hope, while, as the triumphant Finisher of sin, He opened Paradise to this penitent professor of a good profession on the same day that His own eyes closed for the appointed time in death, is, God be thanked, no difficult self-contradiction, but a sweet and transparent verity to all who have a true knowledge of the Scriptures, and of the grace and power of God.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. i. 4, 5; 1 Cor. i. 9.    <sup>6</sup> Ps. lxxxiv. 4; Rev. v. 7.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

A like remark applies with equal force to the alleged indistinctness of the Bible as to the state of the departed saints. "Others again," says Fritz, "believe that the soul falls into a kind of sleep or lethargy on the death of the body, and talk of 'sleeping in Jesus,' although we are informed in the Bible that Lazarus went at once to heaven, and the rich man to hell." One who criticizes an inspired writing should at least himself be verbally exact. It is *not* said that Lazarus went to *heaven*, though in Hades the rich man was in torment. Abraham's bosom is not heaven. David is not yet ascended into heaven,<sup>8</sup> nor Abraham, so far as Scripture testimony goes. As to those who imagine that the soul is in a lethargy on the decease of the body, their error is sufficiently refuted by the expressed desire of the apostle to depart and be with Christ. A lethargic slumber is certainly not "far better" than an experience of spiritual joy, which, abundant always, rose at times, spite of his mortal burden, to the point of ecstasy.<sup>9</sup>

I pass by the blasphemous outcry of "monstrous injustice" with which Fritz, in common with many others, greets the scriptural denunciation of eternal punishment against the finally impenitent, with the single remark that man's replyings against God can work no change in *Him*. He will send forth truth to victory, and will be clear when He is judged, as the apostle says. Some further remarks on this subject will also be found in the closing pages of this work.

The strange mixture of bland self-ignorance and

<sup>8</sup> Acts ii. 34.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. v. 13; xii. 1-4.

audacious uprising of the heart's imaginations against the knowledge of God which comes out in the following passage, it is truly painful to contemplate: "How little hope can there possibly be," he exclaims, "of our ever again meeting many of our dearest and best friends (and these not unfrequently the most erring), when we consider how few of them can be regarded as good enough for heaven! On the other hand, how cheerless must be the thought, in connection with such stray sheep, that they were fit only for hell—a conclusion which it seems the height of cruelty and injustice to sanction!" The writer's apprehension of not hereafter meeting his departed friends is their presumed unfitness for heaven. Doubtless, like the Pharisee of old, he has few misgivings of a *personal* kind on this important point! One thing is at least but too sadly evident, that he is a total stranger at present to the faith which opens heaven as the sure hope and everlasting rest of God's elect. As to the self-satisfied tone of his own anticipations, we shall soon see that a spiritualist's conception of heaven, and of fitness for it, is of another (though not very original) kind from that entertained by those whom God has taught.

There is more to the same purpose, which I need not quote at length, and which has been judged by anticipation in the word of God. That the unbelieving hearer of the gospel is condemned, both now and in the coming day, is the express declaration of Him who is the appointed Judge of both quick and dead.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 18; v. 29.

Fritz, however, and others like him, profess themselves unable to reconcile the idea of final judgment with that of an "all-merciful God." But let "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is Holy," describe Himself. To be "a *just* God and a Saviour" is His proper and exclusive glory. He will revive the spirit of the contrite, but deprives the obstinately wicked of all hope of peace. His goodness leads men to repentance; but the proud despisers of His grace, who will not bow the knee to Jesus as the Lord, must know Him in that coming day of recompenses as a convict knows his judge.<sup>2</sup> The attempt which is made to cast upon God the blame of men's idiosyncrasies, and make Him responsible for His creatures' unbelief, is nothing but the senseless raving of a rebellious will, which refuses to receive instruction from its Maker. To decline also to receive a truth because it is *incomprehensible*, is plainly to make human capacity the measure of divine revelation, or, in other words, to esteem one's Maker as one's self. The transparent folly of such reasoning needs no laboured proof. That it is habitually committed by very able minds is but an emphatic evidence of the darkening effect of sin upon our mental faculties while in an unregenerate state. Things intellectually incomprehensible are not on that account incredible; God's thoughts are not our thoughts, though by His words the living live. Men are not condemned because of their inability to fathom God's unrevealed mysteries, but because they refuse to give glory to

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lvii. 15; xl. 21; Rom. ii.

Him to whom power and truth essentially belong by believing the record that He has given of His Son.

Having demonstrated, as he imagines, "the unsatisfactory nature of the Bible evidence touching the life beyond the grave," Fritz hastens to assure the "Bible student" that by inviting him to the study of spiritualism he is offering for his acceptance something which will afford him "ample comfort from the fact of its according in the main with his favourite authority." "In fact," he continues, "so far from imperilling the authenticity of the Scriptures, it will add intensely to the interest of their perusal, by shedding an entirely new light upon hundreds of Bible narratives that must have always appeared mysterious and inexplicable even to the most ardent believer in 'the word of God,'" &c. The reader will not fail to notice the utter infidelity of this writer's tone when speaking of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is "a favourite authority" with some, just as Bacon, or Aristotle, or Plato might be. By a sort of metaphoric concession it is also sneeringly allowed to be "the word of God," only falsely and degradingly interpreted by theologians. It is however, at best, but a heap of riddles until opened by the light-shedding key of spiritualism, which is alone to "solve the problem of immortality, and once for all settle all speculations on the subject of man's destiny." In what manner this bold supplanter of the Holy Ghost endeavours to substantiate his promise will appear in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

EXAMINATION OF THE PRETENDED HARMONY OF  
SPIRITUALISM WITH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

As a prelude to his attempt to sanction spiritualism by the confirmation of both "Scripture and history," Fritz labours to disabuse his readers' minds of the erroneous, though popular idea, that "spirit-rapping," "table-turning," and other like phenomena, are of the heart and essence of spiritualism. "Not so," he explains, "they are merely the fringe of the subject," and are admitted by spiritualists themselves to be "the least dignified, edifying, and satisfactory of the innumerable modes in which spirits manifest their presence."

There is a sad and solemn propriety in this ingenuous avowal which, for my own part, I accept without reserve. Satan, cunning always, though never truly wise, knows how to use skilfully, and in their fitting season, the methods and instruments of his soul-destroying wickedness. The notion of spiritualism has long ceased to be a novelty; the deceiver can therefore afford now to discard the ladder by means of which he has raised himself gradually to the moral vantage-ground from whence he is commanding so largely the credulity of a self-reliant age. "Table-

turning," and such like demonstrations, did their work effectively as a needful preliminary, by stimulating, while yet ever disappointing, the restless craving for a knowledge of things beyond the ken of ordinary reason, and not revealed of God, which is so marked a feature of the natural man.

We have had under our view in the previous chapter some specimens of Fritz's conceptions of "orthodox ideas," and it is necessary now to hear him a little further on this topic. Such ideas, he complains, disable most people from "appreciating the possibility of a spirit being but an ordinary mortal like ourselves. They conceive that when a man dies, who has led what the world calls a 'godly life,' his whole character becomes at once changed, and he becomes an inhabitant of the abode prepared for 'the spirits of just men made perfect;' in short, he becomes an angel. By what inscrutable process he gets rid of his faults and weaknesses, and abandons the thoughts, feelings, and memories that have clung to him through life, and helped to form his character, and make him what he is, they are unable to explain. Such an assumption must, however, appear to most reasonable minds as entirely erroneous. Nothing can be more certain than that for a dying man to lose all memory of the past, would be equivalent to an entire loss of his identity," &c. No doubt! I reply. But where did Fritz learn this strange and absurd description of an "orthodox" believer's faith? To begin with his last objection: Is there no memory of their former state in the minds of those whom John beheld

in vision, and who sing the new song of perfected redemption as they cast their crowns of righteousness before the throne? Fritz, it is but too possible, may have heard at times unscriptural statements of so-called orthodox doctrine, but had he read his Bible with an opened eye, he would have escaped the folly of so gross a misrepresentation of true Christian hope. Is a suffering saint a different *person*, in popular theology, from a reigning saint? To quote texts in proof of their identity would be an unwarrantable tax upon my readers' patience, and a superfluous waste of toil. As to the *process* by which God's true people are freed from their faults and weaknesses, it may be "inscrutable" to Fritz and others in the same spiritual condition, but is, God be thanked, no secret to the humble and sincere believer. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan," says the apostle. "The flesh lusts against the spirit," and conflict is by consequence the normal condition of God's children in this world;<sup>1</sup> their promised change is to the likeness of their Saviour and the rest of God. The true believer will be "found in Christ," when search is made for what belongs to God in the coming day of inquisition. Thoughts, feelings, and memories, which were the effect of *faith*, remain and cannot perish, as they are a part of the life which Christ is in His people; but bitter memories are buried with the flesh which gave them birth, no more to rise in the day in which dishonour is exchanged for glory, and God Himself wipes every tear away. Their recollection as sinners

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 2; Gal. v. 17; Heb. xii. 4.

will be no longer of guilty perpetration, but of pardoning grace. Their Redeemer will see of the travail of His soul and will be satisfied, and the gladness of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren will be filled, to the measure of their several capacity, from the fulness of *His* joy. Already they both rest and glory in the assurance of His perfect love; but like the transition from infancy to manhood, there is a shading of their lesser, though equally positive, vital experiences by the greater. "We know now in part," says the same witness, but we shall then know as we are known.<sup>2</sup>

In writing as he does Fritz errs therefore, like the Sadducees of old, through ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God. It needed surely no oracular announcement from Mr. Grey<sup>3</sup> to inform any who do not *falsely* "profess and call themselves Christians," that "a sense of personal identity is an essential element of the doctrine of a future life." Both Lazarus and Dives felt the force of contrast in their change of state. It were indeed a waste of

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Grey, the title of whose book is *Enigmas of Life*, appears to have reasoned himself into an almost persuasion that there really is a God and a future state. "The existence of a wise and beneficent Creator," he says, "and of a renewed life hereafter, are *still to me beliefs, especially the first*, very nearly reaching the solidity of absolute convictions. The one is almost a certainty, the other *a solemn hope*." And these are the sort of guides to whom we are recommended "by the literary journals" to lend our ears, instead of to the "wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness!"

words to insist on so self-evident a truth. But if this be so, argues Fritz, "it is quite consistent with common sense to suppose that a man's thoughts and character after death *remain precisely the same as before.*" Certainly not, I reply; the thoughts of Dives after death were very different from those which he entertained when feasting in purple at his ease. Illusion and self-deception were at an end, and truth pressed with its full force upon his soul.<sup>4</sup> But his *identity* remained, and with it his natural affections, the retention of which added poignancy to the torment which he underwent. But while it is easy to refute such pleadings, even by a mere appeal to "common-sense," an authority more *esteemed*, as it would seem, than *understood*, by Fritz, I would remind my readers that a surer guide than common-sense is needed by those who desire a true knowledge of God and of His things. Natural intellect can deal safely and surely with temporal things only, and is often even there at fault; but "the things of the Spirit knoweth no man but the Spirit of God."<sup>5</sup> When therefore Fritz infers from the argument of personal identity, that it is "reasonable and probable" that departed souls should be still interesting themselves about the friends whom they have left, and should both wish and endeavour to revisit them, he is evidently pushing natural ideas beyond the sphere allotted to them, and thus opening his mind to the free entry of satanic delusion; for minds truly subject to God have never entertained the

<sup>4</sup> Compare, in illustration of the same principle, Ps. l. 21.

<sup>5</sup> I Cor. ii. 11.

notion of *such* posthumous revisitings of earth. "I shall go, but not return," says Job.<sup>6</sup> There is a resurrection of the just and also of the unjust. Until then the bodies of God's children sleep in death, while they are themselves "with Christ." Dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. "Where then is man," again asks Job, "when he has given up the ghost?"<sup>7</sup> God knows, and for the consolation of His children lets them also know, that such as die in the faith are after death *with Him*, even as He was by His Spirit upon earth *with them*. Of the intermediate state of those who refuse to know God in His Son, and die therefore in their sins, but little is expressly revealed; enough however to assure us most emphatically that unbelief will bear its proper fruit as well as faith.

Let it be also noticed how entirely apart from *God*, in the true Christian sense of His immediate government of His creation, are all these uninvited speculations. It is a question purely of human willing and attaining. God and His laws are, to be sure, dealt with by Fritz in the usual fashion of modern free-thinkers, a little further on; but the value of spiritualism, in the eyes of its professed votaries, is its practical emancipation of the human soul from all sense of immediate dependence on or responsibility towards the *living God*.

As an introduction to the facts of modern spiritualism, Fritz takes a cursory review of earlier examples,

<sup>6</sup> Job xvi. 22. Conf. 2 Sam. xii. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Eccles. xii. 7; Job xiv. 10.

remarking that "if such things can occur in the present, it is quite clear to every sensible mind that it must happen according to *natural*, and not *supernatural*, laws." "In fact," he adds, "there can be nothing supernatural in nature. Nature's laws are God's laws, and nothing can happen contrary to the latter." Then follows the conclusion from the universality and immutability of God's laws, that inasmuch as spiritualism exists now, it is very certainly "as old as the world." We have here then a plain and complete dismissal of the supernatural in any shape from the sphere of human experiences. In other words, Satan is trying, as usual, to conceal himself and his positive operation beneath a natural disguise. Having begun as a serpent, he continues, as a false prophet and false teacher, to deceive those who are willingly apart from God.

For in truth "spiritualism," or the opposition of the powers of darkness to the work of God, *is*, as Fritz says, as old as the world. The devil sinneth from the beginning, and from his first success in Eden to the final gathering of the nations, as fuel for the fire of God,<sup>8</sup> his machinations, as the tempter of God's people and the deceiver of the world, are constantly attested by the Holy Ghost. But his methods are always suited to the temper of the age in which he acts; and so it is in the tone of a natural philosopher that he now most commonly addresses men. This apparently reverential acknowledgment of "God's laws" is however, as will soon appear, a pretext

<sup>8</sup> Rev. xx. 9.

merely for disallowing all *positive* divine action of any and every kind. But because spiritualism is, under all its forms, but a lying witness against Christ, it speaks, like all other such, with a divided tongue.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in the very next paragraph of Fritz's book, we are told that "the Bible is saturated with spiritualism from the beginning to the end; and we may safely say that, but for the divine interference in the affairs of men in former times, which is implied in the various 'miraculous' events recorded in the Bible, that book would never have influenced the minds of men to the extent which it has done, and is doing, at the present day." Assuredly divine interference in the affairs of men is rather more than *implied* in the Holy Scriptures; but, by Fritz's previous definition, "divine interference," or "the supernatural," is excluded from a just estimate of human experiences. The whole course of things is, without exception, but a process of a simply natural kind, and in constant operation in accordance with fixed laws.

We have now to consider "the examples of the manifestation of spirit-presence which are related in the Bible," as these are cited and explained by Fritz. "In the first place," he says, "there are numerous instances of the exercise of spirit power over material objects, such as the angel of the Lord (Matt. xxviii. 2) rolling back the stone from the door of Christ's tomb." The examples of release from prison related in Acts v. 19 and xii. 7 are also specified. Cruden's *Concordance* is next quoted to show that an angel means a mes-

<sup>9</sup> Mark xiv. 56.

senger, and that the term is applied to "those intellectual and immaterial beings whom God makes use of as His ministers to execute the orders of Providence." And then follows the conclusion that all this is "quite consistent with the supposition that they might be the spirits of departed human beings; for has not God at all times made use of men in the flesh to effect His purposes; and if He does so use those who are in the body, why not disembodied spirits or angels?"

On reading this passage one is led to ask, Is Fritz an honest but weak-brained and bewildered sceptic? or is he a bold and unscrupulous enemy of truth? The first of these alternatives is the preferable assumption; but if so, will he not perceive the fatal application of his own admission to the new gospel of spiritualism which he asks us to receive? For if, as he says truly, God has at all times made use of men in the flesh to effect His purposes, how do we *know* this but by the testimony of the Scriptures? And if so, then he has made use of Moses and the prophets, of apostles and evangelists, *all* of whom affirm what Fritz denies respecting life and death, sin and redemption, the present and the future state of man, &c.

With respect to the very foolish question which closes the above extract, a sufficient answer is to be found in the scriptural distinction (for Fritz is now, be it remembered, appealing to Scripture as a voucher of his doctrine) between angels and men in Heb. ii. 5-16. No truth is more distinctly stated in the Bible

than the essential diversity of human and angelic nature.<sup>1</sup>

Reference is next made to 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 19, to prove that David received instructions about the building of the temple "by spirit-writing and drawing," this very bold assertion being grounded confidently upon David's words: "All this the Lord made me to understand in writing by His hand upon me." This sort of "spirit-power," as Fritz terms it, is affirmed to be "on a par with modern spiritualism." In other words, the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost is "on a par" with the efforts of deceased mortals to satisfy the curiosity of those who reject God's written testimonies as "unsatisfactory," and forsake His lively oracles to seek a brighter and a surer guidance in the darkness of the grave! The posthumous letter of Elijah is next noticed, and a choice of explanations offered. "It is not stated," he says, "whether this came through a writing medium (such as we shall find by-and-by are in constant practice in our day), or was given by the direct spirit-writing; *i.e.* writing given without mortal contact, such as is nowadays frequently received in the presence of the mediums hereinafter alluded to." It seems to be forgotten by

<sup>1</sup> Yet a writer in the *Spiritual Magazine* of June, 1873, is bold enough to deny this very plain doctrine on the ground that the word "man" is sometimes used interchangeably with "angel" in describing the same person; *e.g.* "the man Gabriel" in Dan. ix. 21. But it is evident that in such instances the name is given according to the impression conveyed to the human senses in the scene described. "The man Gabriel, whom I had seen, . . . touched me," &c. (Conf. Rev. xxi. 17.)

the writer that Elijah was *not dead*. But, waiving this for the present, has his mind no feeling of misgiving in thus venturing to "put on a par" a miraculous communication from a translated prophet of Jehovah and the results of modern necromantic manifestations? Let him remember, while yet this day of grace remains, that the magicians' rods seemed on a par with Aaron's, and that Baal's prophets were even more than on a par with him who served Jehovah, till the moment of decision came.<sup>2</sup> To resist the truth is easy so long as God continues to entreat, but He will ease him of his adversaries in due time.

Again, "The writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast (the hand also being seen, which is a phenomenon constantly witnessed at London *séances*) was an instance of direct spirit-writing." (Dan. v. 5.) In reply I quote the passage verbatim: "In the same hour came forth fingers *of a man's hand*, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." I deny that this is *spirit-writing*, or that this solemn token of impending judgment, sent direct and unexpectedly from God, and delivering His sentence in terms which a true prophet of God was alone able to interpret, bears any resemblance whatever to modern spiritualistic manifestations, which are always in reply to special invocation, which (as yet, at least) have never dared to claim such sanction, and which, moreover, by their contradiction of inspired truth, are plainly (whenever real) of the devil.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. vii. 11, 12; 1 Kings xviii. 19, *seq.*

“The whole of the mystical book of Ezekiel,” he continues, “with its continual reference to ‘visions,’ ‘spirit-hands,’ ‘elevation of the body,’ ‘spirit-writing,’ ‘spirit-lights’ and ‘spirit-voices,’ is clear when read in the light of modern spiritualism, and in no other way.” It has been commonly observed that those who quarrel with the Bible are ready dealers in gratuitous assertion, and of this unscrupulous habit the last extract furnishes a notable example. Of the six phenomena here presented between inverted commas as express quotations from the book of Ezekiel, and to which, we are falsely told, it continually refers, one only—“visions”—is to be found. And is Fritz really bold enough to liken Ezekiel’s visions of *the glory of God*, and which he saw only when the *hand of the Lord was upon him*,<sup>3</sup> to the revelations of a modern *séance*, addressed as these last are to an ungodly curiosity, not to an enquiring faith? I beg my readers also to remember, with reference to this and other like insults to the majesty of inspired truth, that the responsibility of this writer’s statements is shared to the full by the party which he represents, and in whose chief periodical his volume is so highly praised.

It is difficult to relate patiently the blasphemous comparisons which follow. “The direct spirit-voice, audible to and conversing with all present,” which is said to be “now a common occurrence at many *séances*,” is shamelessly paralleled with the voice which spake to Samuel and to Moses at the bush! We shall see hereafter by what new methods of interpretation

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. i. 3.

the guilt of such irreverent folly is evaded by the spiritualistic conscience; meanwhile, I cite further specimens. The voice that spake to Elijah on the mount of God, the voice that called to Saul of Tarsus as he journeyed to Damascus, the message to the Virgin Mary, and the acclamations of the heavenly host on the nativity of Jesus Christ, are represented as examples of the self-same kind. When the reader has gone through the third chapter of this little work, and heard what modern spirit-voices say, he will be better able to estimate 'this last comparison. With respect to the others, he may well enquire anxiously in what state of mind that man must be who can thus place upon a common footing appearances and revelations of the *Lord*, and of the angel who stands in the presence of God, with the deceptive phenomena of modern spiritualism? May the wickedness be pardoned, if it be possible, which thus dares to liken God to what denies Him equally in His holiness, His judgment, and His saving grace.

“The flight of Mrs. Guppy<sup>4</sup> which,” we are told, “caused considerable sensation,” is compared, with a view to a confirmation of the tale, with the catching away of Philip the evangelist by the Spirit of the Lord, with the lifting up of Ezekiel, and with the taking up to heaven of Elijah. But worse, if possible, remains. After likening the burning bush at Horeb, the smoking furnace and the lamp of fire which Abram saw, the pillar of fire in the wilderness, and the shining of

<sup>4</sup> An example of spiritualistic locomotion related with other phenomena in chap. v. of Fritz's book.

Moses' face on his descent from Sinai, to the "spirit-lights or fiery lights which in different forms and sizes are constantly seen at modern *séances*," and attempting to identify the writing on the tables of the law with the alleged "spirit-writing" on the same occasions—the finger, be it observed, of the living God with those of deceased mortals—Fritz crowns his pile of false and impious comparisons by referring in the same strain to the transfiguration of Christ, and the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost! The first is "paralleled by the illumined appearance of materialized spirit-forms, said to have frequently appeared at *séances* of spiritualists," while the latter is affirmed to be closely analogous to the "trance mediumship" of modern times!

As statements of this description are their own emphatic refutation in the judgment of all real Christians, I shall bestow no further notice on them, but hasten to complete, by a few further extracts, this self-drawn arraignment of modern spiritualism.

"There are also many accounts of VISIONS given in the Bible," he continues, "from that of Jacob's ladder to the Apocalypse of John. Many also are the prophecies that these shall yet be given (see Joel ii. 28), which has a singular connection with many of the phenomena of modern spiritualism." So that the state of John, the servant and beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, when in the spirit on the Lord's-day at Patmos, "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ"<sup>5</sup> was in close resemblance to that of a

<sup>5</sup> Rev. i. 1, 9, 10.

person who has surrendered himself to an unknown spiritual influence from motives of curiosity, stimulated by a sense of the insufficient and unsatisfactory character of what is written in the Scriptures! Such is the moral logic of spiritualism. Nor is this all. What Jacob saw in vision, let it be remembered, was not the ladder only, but *the Lord*,<sup>6</sup> whose glorious person also was revealed to John. Have any trance mediums professed to see Him, or even to interrogate His prophets or apostles? Not yet; for spiritualism, we are told, is in its infancy (though how this agrees with the earlier statement of its unbroken continuity of operation from the birth of time may be a little difficult to see); but the enemy is growing bolder with the growth of popular credulity. That lying communications therefore may hereafter be reported from Paul, as they have already been from John Knox and others, is quite possible.<sup>7</sup> Nay, even a higher name than his may peradventure be assumed; for false Christs, as well as false prophets and false teachers, must appear.

“In the present day,” we are further told, “the presence of strong spirit power during *séances* is frequently indicated by vibration of the furniture, the room, or even of the whole house; literally a quaking such as we read of in Acts iv. 31. When they had prayed the place was shaken, and they were all filled

<sup>6</sup> Gen. xxviii. 13.

<sup>7</sup> This was written before the catastrophe of that unhappy person whose assertion, that he had seen the apostle Peter and grasped him by the hand, was instantaneously followed by his death.

with the Holy Ghost." I tremble as I copy this extravagantly wicked statement, and ask myself, Is this a blasphemy to be forgiven? The Lord only knows. Acts xvi. 25, 26, we are also invited to assume, describes merely a demonstration of spiritualism in an earlier form.

A remarkably bold lie is uttered in the next ensuing paragraph of Fritz's book, wherein it is asserted that the "healing power now possessed by hundreds of modern spirit-mediums is frequently spoken of in the Old and New Testaments; Elisha restores a child to life from apparent death." (See 2 Kings iv. 32-35.) Why "*apparent*"? I may ask. "The child was *dead*," the Scripture says, and had been so since noon. But such an admission would make too grossly evident the falsehood of the comparison here implied. Do hundreds of modern spirit-mediums, I enquire further, raise the dead? Elisha did, Paul did, Peter did; in the name of Him to whom alone that power belongs. Of Elisha we read that he "shut his door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord." But prayer is pronounced to be a superfluity by the chief oracle of modern spiritualism.<sup>8</sup>

It is a weary and revolting task (yet, for the truth's sake, a welcome labour also) to follow this writer through the long series of his unholy comparisons. The cure of Naaman is, as might be expected, spiritualistic in his view. But his audacity, or his infatuation, reaches its climax when, after noticing Christ's gift of healing power to His disciples in

<sup>8</sup> A. J. Davis, quoted at page 121 of Fritz's book.

Luke x., he quotes His parting words—"These signs shall follow those that believe" (Mark xvi. 17), and finds in the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20), a pledge of continuity to the spiritualism which he affirms to have been in operation since the world began. For has he already forgotten that his earnest and strenuous appeal is *from* "faith" to "common sense"? Such signs, the Lord said, were to follow those that *believe*. *In His name*, such acts of faith were to be wrought. "But what," asks Fritz, towards the close of his book,<sup>9</sup> "is the use of believing in the necessity of Christ as a Saviour?" Truly God "turneth the wise backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish." May it not of such a reasoner in truth be said: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"<sup>1</sup> It will not surprise the reader after this to find that Fritz is not ashamed to appeal to 1 Cor. xiv. also, as a sanction and fair precedent of the methods and practisings of modern spiritualism.

In further proof that the "angels" referred to in the Bible were "most probably the spirits of departed human beings," Fritz quotes Rev. xxii. 9, and compares it with verse 16 of the same chapter, drawing his inference accordingly. But it has been already shown that a difference of *nature* exists between angels and mankind. As to the passages now cited, the meaning is quite clear. The angel who speaks to John is, *as God's creature and Christ's messenger*, a fellow-

<sup>9</sup> At page 193.<sup>1</sup> Isa. xliv. 20, 25.

servant of John and of the prophets, but in no other sense. "Similar expressions in the Old Testament prove," he adds, "that where the words 'the Lord speaketh' are used, it means the angel or messenger *from*, and not the Lord Himself." Assertions, if plainly untrue, are best met by simple contradiction. I utterly deny the existence of any such proof. But were it even otherwise, I fail to see the value of the observation, since, according to Fritz, spiritualistic communications are merely *human voices*, communicating to us the fruit of their own enlarged experiences in the spirit-world. They do not as yet profess to be angelic messengers from God. "Again," he says, "in Heb. i. 13, 14, we find the words, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'" Thank God, there are such words to be found and eaten, with whatever else has proceeded out of the mouth of God, by His believing people; but what have such ministering spirits, whose nature, we are told expressly, Christ did *not* assume, in common with "the spirits of departed human beings"? What, alas! it must be further asked, has a denier of the need of a Redeemer to do with such a text at all?

"Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we find evidence," insists Fritz, "that communicating with the spirit-world was then practised pretty much in the same way as it is done in our own day. Samuel, after his departure from the world, is said to have had a long conversation with Saul through the mediumship of a woman who had 'a familiar

spirit' (1 Sam. xxviii. 7-25), in which instance not only did the spirit prophecy (as modern clairvoyants do), but we get a remarkable corroboration of the theory that the future life begins immediately after death, and is not delayed until the final day of judgment; for Samuel says to Saul, 'To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.' I believe this statement, for my own part, without any difficulty. There were wizards and necromancers then, and there are now, and will be such again. But let us carefully observe the conditions of the intercourse above related. Saul, we are distinctly told, enquired first of *the Lord*, but "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."<sup>2</sup> Then, and not till then, Saul seeks the witch, who was allowed judicially to give him his desire. Even so is it now. The modern seekers of familiar spirits have their backs toward the Lord, and plead avowedly their dissatisfaction with the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ as a motive for seeking elsewhere than in God's inspired word a revelation of futurity more to their own mind. The resemblance is indeed but too exact. Fritz, like many of his fellows, appeals to Scripture where it seems to his darkened mind to countenance his views, and would by all means have us think that he entertains a reverence for God. But this very chapter might have shown him that the practice which he advocates was declared by God's law to be a capital offence.<sup>3</sup> So long as Saul outwardly honoured God

<sup>2</sup> Verse 6.

<sup>3</sup> Exod xxii. 18. The attempt to justify modern necromancy

he suppressed with a high hand the spiritualism of the day. I am but adopting Fritz's own conclusion in thus writing; for communication with the spirit-world was then, he says, practised "pretty much in the same way as it is done in our own day;" *i.e.* men turn now, as then, from truth to falsehood, from God to Satan, and from life to death!

"The different phases of modern mediumship are also singularly illustrated," we are next informed, by the apostle's teaching in 1 Cor. xii., the trance mediumship of Messrs. Morse and A. J. Davis being paralleled to the gift of "the word of wisdom," &c. I shall, in the following chapter, submit to the Christian reader's judgment samples of these modern revelations, in sufficient number and measure, to enable him to determine the propriety or otherwise of this comparison. Meanwhile I follow Fritz to the conclusion which he draws from these extended biblical enquiries.

"In the face of the foregoing facts," he says (referring to the Scriptural instances just noticed), "it is a marvellous circumstance, that the clergy and the most sincere believers in the veracity of the Bible . . . . are the very first to scout the idea," of crediting even the best attested modern spiritual phenomena. I would say, in reply to this remark, that Fritz's knowledge of genuine Christian sentiment and opinion appears to be extremely limited. No doubt many persons who answer to the above descriptions act as by an appeal to the change of dispensation from law to grace will be noticed further on.

he has said; but assuredly no sound-minded and well-taught believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will have any difficulty in crediting supernatural phenomena, when sustained by sufficient external testimony. No, such persons do not reject the facts when credibly attested; but they refer the phenomena in question to their true origin, which is, by Fritz's own showing, mere human wilfulness, but very evidently acted on and flattered by Satanic power and deceit. Nor is it surprising to find that the same writer, who thus chides the incredulity of society at large with respect to spiritualism, is self-exposed to the same charge, only in an inverse order as to dates. For *modern* phenomena Fritz has a warm and ready welcome at all times, for they are numerous and respectably attested; while of God's inspired scribes he discontentedly remarks, that "the witnesses who left any record of their testimony are exceedingly small in number, and their accounts are not by any means harmonious." The last sentence is a mere echo of the common slander which in every age has been repeated by the enemies of righteousness. In short, whatever is within the Bible is, in his eye, at best unsatisfactory and suspicious. For him and his fellows the truth which is to benefit mankind lies elsewhere than "in Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

As I am not a disbeliever of "phenomena," I need take no especial notice of the extra-scriptural authorities to which Fritz refers in further support of his views. An extract, quoted from the *Spiritual Magazine* for June, 1873, is however too apposite to be

<sup>4</sup> Eph. iv. 20, 21.

omitted. It speaks as follows: "Ancient Greece and Rome had their oracles and sibyls, as Judæa had its prophets; they divined by stools and tables, and by a suspended ring striking against the alphabetic characters placed round the rim of a circular disc, and so spelling out responses. All this corresponds closely to some of the spirit manifestations of our time." Let us accept this ingenuous statement as it is given, and what then? The Bible, which, though "unsatisfactory," has been claimed and largely cited as a supposed approving witness of modern spiritualism, must be heard on this point also. What then does it say with reference to the customs of the heathen, and the observances of Gentile worship? Not to multiply quotations, the Gentiles did their service, the apostle says, to *demons*, not to *God*, and he would not that Christians should have fellowship with such, their cup and table could not be the cup and table of the *Lord*.<sup>5</sup> It was an oracular spirit also that opposed the Holy Ghost in His testimony at Philippi, until exorcised by the same apostle in the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> But if this be so, modern spiritualism, which acknowledges its affinity to the ancient oracular demonstrations, stands self-confessed as an infernal and God-denying energy.

After citing Paul's statement in 1 Cor. xv. as to the "spiritual body," and introducing a quotation from Dr. Nichols of Malvern, with the view of suggesting an analogy between the mystery of the resurrection of

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. x. 20, 21, *δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ τῷ Θεῷ*.

<sup>6</sup> *πνεῦμα πύθωνος*, Acts xvi. 16-18.

the just and the visible and palpable forms said to be at times revealed to spiritualists, Fritz considers that clear proof has been afforded of the fact, "that disembodied spirits have in all ages been trying to communicate with their fellow-creatures in the flesh," but without reciprocation, he goes on to say, "since the time of the Bible history" on the part of the latter. "Modern spiritualism then," he explains, "is simply an attempt to effect this object." Now considering that the time of the Bible history is in its beginning exceedingly remote, and that "Bible history" itself describes, with more or less distinctness, the acts and mutual relations of the Creator and His creatures, both in heaven and on earth, from the original iniquity of Lucifer to the ever-blessed work of man's redemption by the incarnate Son of God, and its effects, it is not easy to represent to one's imagination those times of earlier reciprocity, when the living and the dead abode in a conscious and happy neighbourhood, and were mutually and "satisfactorily" at home.<sup>7</sup>

But the folly which rages against the wisdom of God, though utterly contemptible when steadily regarded in the light of truth, is of too malignant a character to be effectually dispelled by ridicule. With shame it must be owned that it is that native "hatred of God," which is, alas! our common brand while unregenerate,<sup>8</sup> that prompts men to turn thus readily from the living to the dead. This comes out broadly

<sup>7</sup> The reader will not fail to notice the denial, sometimes, as in this instance, tacit, at other times express, of sin as the efficient cause of death in man.

<sup>8</sup> Rom. i. 30.

in the following passage : " Seeing that the revelation regarding the future world, as disclosed by the Bible, cannot be reasonably accepted as final, or even satisfactory, we may at least assume that a little further information would be very desirable, as tending to remove a good deal of the mystery that hangs over the process of death, and to give us a better idea of the life to come, and the nature of the rewards and punishments we may then anticipate. If we doubt the expediency of seeking information upon such a subject, or whether (as some people phrase it) " God intended " us to seek information in that way, all we can conclude is that if it were not desirable it would not be permitted, and he must be obtuse indeed who can conscientiously say he believes such information would be not worth the seeking."

I have already shown sufficiently, I hope, the true character of these complaints as to the imperfection of the Bible. What I would beg the reader to observe here is the outspoken ungodliness of the *principle* so nakedly affirmed in the above extract ; namely, that whatever is *permitted* to human wilfulness is also *desirable* on our parts. Stated logically, we have this doctrinal syllogism as a rudimental tenet of the new gospel of spiritualism : Whatever is permitted is desirable. Now wickedness (of all kinds) is permitted in this world ; therefore wickedness (of all kinds) is desirable ! Such a persuasion cometh not of Him who calls His people into the grace of Christ : nor need we enquire whence this wisdom comes.<sup>9</sup> The

<sup>9</sup> Gal. i. 6 ; v. 8 ; Jas. iii. 15.

sentiment recalls rather to one's mind this inspired declaration: "The transgression of the wicked saith within mine heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes."<sup>1</sup> It is in fit company with such a statement that we find also the contemptuous fling in which Fritz here indulges at the "obtuseness" of those who find contentment in the green pastures of the Lord, their hearts filled and ruled by the peace of God which passeth understanding, who have access by J sus Christ into the grace wherein they stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. No; this new wine of spiritualism will have no attractions for any who have learned through grace to stay their souls on what is "meat and drink indeed."<sup>2</sup>

And thus it is that men, inflated with false knowledge, and goaded by the restless cravings of a will that refuses subjection to its Maker, are found so often in this evil day to turn displeased away from the bread of God's providing and to ask a stone at the hands of the devil. In so expressing myself I neither exaggerate nor misrepresent; for if all things pertaining to life and godliness be furnished, as they are, in the Holy Scriptures for the perfecting of such as please God by their faith,<sup>3</sup> then of a surety death only and ungodliness are found elsewhere. If *all* the promises of God are yea and Amen in Christ to them that cleave by faith to *Him*, they who prefer "common sense" to faith can find, as the reward of their "permitted" but forbidden necromancy, only the specious but fatal deceptions of the father of lies.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxvi. 1.                      <sup>2</sup> John vi. 55.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

Referring once more to the subject of this chapter, it will, I think, be evident to every Christian who has followed me in this enquiry, that in claiming for modern spiritualism the sanction of Scripture, Fritz both deludes himself and practises a fraud upon his readers. That his error is one of ignorance, and not of malice, I would willingly believe; but it is not less real and dangerous on that account. For, to put evil for good and darkness for light, as he has done; to compare the voice of the Almighty in the sovereign utterances of His will to the words spoken from beneath in answer to the forbidden enquiries of men, is, I will not say a sin incapable of pardon—for the Lord's longsuffering must not be limited by man—but assuredly to continue in this course is to invite that fiery indignation which is in reserve for the impenitent, and from which in the day of wrath there can be no escape.<sup>4</sup>

Repudiating therefore utterly this false and impossible alliance between truth and falsehood, I propose in the next chapter to make spiritualism its own witness, and to prove its origin and nature by its own description of itself.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. v. 20, 21; Ps. vii. 11, 12; l. 16-22; 2 Peter ii. 1-3.

## CHAPTER III.

THE CLAIMS OF SPIRITUALISM AS A SYSTEM, AND  
THE CHARACTER AND RESULTS OF ITS POSITIVE  
TEACHING.

OUR attention has been hitherto given principally to the first and second chapters of Fritz's book. Of the twelve which remain, the larger part is engrossed by historical details of the origin and progress of modern spiritualism in America and in England, correspondence, descriptions of the *modus operandi* of communicative spirits, &c., with all which I have at present no concern. For it is no part of my design to discuss the *rationale* of clairvoyance or spiritualism under any of its forms, but solely to examine it in its avowed principle and its declared results. I deal with it, in short, as a moral power which professes to benefit mankind in various ways, and especially by conferring upon such as will submit to its control a knowledge of futurity both larger and more satisfactory than that which is obtainable by faith, and thus giving to "Christianity proper"—to borrow Fritz's bold pseudonym for his "common-sense" gospel of spiritualism—a character essentially dissimilar to that which hitherto has borne that name.

I intend therefore to take in the present chapter a

general survey of the claims and positive teachings of spiritualism, so far as these are enunciated in the book before me, that the Christian reader's judgment of this proposed addition to his faith may rest on no vague assumptions of my own, but on the positive evidence of the chief authorities and expounders of the system. In the last chapter of his book Fritz lays before his readers "an outline of the principles of modern spiritualism,"<sup>1</sup> which is at least sufficiently comprehensive and explicit. I shall here transcribe its chief articles :

"Spiritualism, in its broad sense, as a philosophical system, relates to spirit, spiritual existences, and spiritual forces ; especially all truths relative to the human spirit, its nature, capacities, laws of manifestation, its disembodied existence, the conditions of that existence, and the modes of communication between that and earth-life. It is thus a system of universal philosophy, embracing in its ample scope all phenomena of life, motion, and development ; all causation, immediate or remote ; all existence, animal, human, and divine. It has consequently its phenomenal, philosophical, and theological departments." This limitless scheme, which contains God and His creatures equally, and a perusal of which leaves one's mind in mere amaze at the folly and audacity which could venture to give it utterance, is followed immediately by a confession that "in neither of these departments is it as

<sup>1</sup> These "Principles" were adopted by the fifth annual convention of American spiritualists, and are published separately for distribution.

yet clearly and completely defined to general acceptance." "Hence," it is added, "there is no distinct system now before the public which can with propriety be called spiritualism or the spiritual philosophy." There follows then a second and much more modest definition of modern spiritualism, which, in its actual state of development, amounts only to "that belief or conviction which is peculiar to or universally held by the people now called spiritualists," and is summed up in the following proposition: "That disembodied human spirits sometimes manifest themselves, or make known their presence and power, to persons in the earthly body, and hold realized communication with them." "Whoever believes this one fact, whatever else he may believe or disbelieve in theology, philosophy, or morals, is a spiritualist according to the modern use of the term." Those among them, however, who believe the Bible to be "divinely inspired and authoritative interpret its teachings," we are told, "somewhat differently from any of the prominent sects of Christendom, in the light of modern revelation." Some examples of this difference have been already before the reader, who will also be enabled presently to see what ideas are attached by spiritualists to the terms "inspiration" and "authority," as well as to what extent apostolic Christianity is meant to be rectified by the "modern revelations" of dead men.

To the "statement of principles" there is subjoined a lengthened summary of the views on various important topics of "the more intelligent class of spiritualists." It consists of twenty-nine propositions,

partly theoretical and partly practical. I shall quote most of each class as they are numbered in the original, omitting those only which contain nothing specially contradictory of revealed truth, and briefly commenting as we proceed.

“I. THEORETICAL.”

1. “That man has a spiritual nature as well as a corporeal; in other words, the real man is a spirit, which spirit has an original form, composed of sublimated material, with parts and organs corresponding to those of the corporeal body.” This declaration contains first, a false definition of man—“man is a spirit;” and secondly, a gratuitous assumption as to his spiritual form. In the language of absolute truth, “*God* is a spirit.” It is written also that “He maketh His angels spirits.” But Adam was *formed* and *named* before he was animated by his Maker’s breath. So also Christ, the last Adam, the true image and glory of God, albeit He is “a quickening Spirit,” and the divine giver of eternal life to His elect, rejects in His own person the above definition. “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have,” are His words of reassurance when in demonstrated power, as the resurrection and the life, He took again that place in the midst of His disciples which He had for a little while vacated for their sakes and ours.<sup>2</sup> Spirit, soul, and body are the three constituents of humanity. As to the last of these, it is declared further that there is a spiritual body and a natural body.<sup>3</sup> But these are

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 39; Rom. i. 4.   <sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Cor. i. xv. 44, *seq.*

not co-existent in the language of the Bible. The one succeeds the other at the resurrection of the just. The above definition therefore is unsound, while the assumption of a "spirit-form" corresponding to the corporeal body "seems merely an indirect denial of the doctrine of a bodily resurrection. For the spiritual body of which the Scriptures speak is the quickened and changed *mortal* body of the believer.<sup>4</sup>

5. That happiness or suffering in the spiritual state, as in this, depends not on arbitrary decree or special provision, but on character, aspirations, and degree of harmonization, or of personal conformity to universal and divine law. With this new revelation let us now briefly compare the old: "By grace are ye saved through faith," says the Holy Ghost through His living apostolic medium; "and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."<sup>5</sup> Of the only "divine law" mentioned in the Bible, it is written that it worketh *wrath*; <sup>6</sup> and if men are justified, it is declared to be "*freely, by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,*" &c.<sup>7</sup> The only hope in the future known to the Holy Spirit (and be it always remembered Fritz professes to acknowledge the Bible as God's word) is "Jesus Christ our hope;"<sup>8</sup> and they whom God has called by His grace declare the *reason* of that good hope that is in them, when with meekness and fear, as well as confidence

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 11.    <sup>5</sup> Eph. ii. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. iv. 15.    <sup>7</sup> Rom. iii. 24, 25.    <sup>8</sup> 1 Tim. i. 1.

and joy, they make willing confession of that Name.<sup>9</sup> Damnation, on the other hand, is for the unbelieving despisers of His grace.<sup>1</sup> Not to fill pages with additional quotations, it is quite evident that apostolic doctrine, under the "somewhat different" interpretation of spiritualists, or "Christianity proper," as Fritz speaks, bears but little resemblance to its original form. All in effect that, in the estimation of those who have lived and died, or are now living, in the *faith of God*, has constituted the distinctive essence of Christianity is here set aside or changed. The sovereignty of God, the "special provision" of His ever-blessed Lamb, the justification of the ungodly through faith in His name, and other like doctrines of the gospel of free grace, depart as morning mists before this late-risen sun of spiritualism! Old truths must be read backwards in this renovating light. It is of works that men may boast, and no longer, as Paul once thought and wrote;<sup>2</sup> willing and running, or "character and aspirations" are now to be all, and divine mercy a mere weak and beggarly element in the eyes of "Christians proper."<sup>3</sup> Thus boldly does Satan, through the lying lips of these his ministers, again erect himself against Jehovah and His Christ. To proceed—

6. "Hence that the experience and attainments of the present life lay the foundation on which the next commences." This is, observe, an immediate

<sup>9</sup> 1 Peter iii. 15; Rom. x. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14-16.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 3; 2 Thess. i. 8; ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ix. 16.

deduction from the preceding position. Could any "medium," I ask, induce the spirit of the penitent thief now in paradise to ratify this statement?

7. "That since growth is the law of the human being in the present life, and since the process called death is in fact but a birth into another condition of life, retaining all the advantages gained in the experiences of this life, it may be inferred that growth, development, expansion, or progression is the endless destiny of the human spirit." Now considering that spiritualism undertakes, as we have seen, to explain amongst other things "all causation," it might be not unreasonably expected that "the process called death" should be accounted for. The Bible does so explicitly, letting us know that death came into the world by *sin*; assuring us also that inasmuch as "by nature men are children of wrath," and "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," the advantages gained in the experiences of this life will not tell greatly for the future benefit of those to whom not *death* only is appointed, but also, by the same witness, *judgment after death*.<sup>4</sup> In this particular then, as well as in the others already noticed, the doctrine of the Lord stands manifestly in an irreconcilable opposition to the theory of spiritualism.

Perhaps the most thoroughly satanic of these theoretic propositions is the following:

11. "That communications from the spirit-world, whether by mental impression, inspiration, or any other mode of transmission, are not necessarily in-

<sup>4</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

fallible truth, but, on the contrary, partake unavoidably of the imperfections of the minds from which they emanate, and of the channels through which they come, and are moreover liable to misrepresentation by those to whom they are addressed." Why I call this proposition emphatically satanic is, first, because it justifies the rejection *ad libitum* of what is written in the Bible (for all Scripture is on their view merely spiritualism misinterpreted usually and misunderstood), and then, because with consummate adroitness it seeks to lure the human mind by flatteries to the point of believing in its own infallibility as the judge of what is true, through a deferential humouring of its prejudices and habits of thought. For instance, a spirit might, and no doubt will, ere long, call Jesus an impostor. This would, in the actual state of popular sentiment, be disallowed as an extravagance by the more intelligent spiritualist. If, on the other hand, His Deity be insisted on (as in one instance it has been), this, while propitiating and enticing onward those unwary Christians who may be tampering with necromancy, will by the same class of people be treated as an overcharged statement of the truth. The extreme opinions which divide mankind are to be calmed and neutralized by a balancing of spiritual evidences, to the gradual extinction of all dogmatism, but that of spiritualism itself, when it assumes its final form. Meanwhile the immediate aim, as we shall yet further see, of this most evil energy, is the assertion and encouragement of those fatal but falsely called "rights of mind," which are

the most conspicuous blazonry upon the standard which men in their naturally rebellious state are wont to raise against their Maker. This comes out still more evidently in the four following propositions :

12. "Hence that no inspired communication, in this or any age (whatever claims may have been set up as to its source), is authoritative any further than as it expresses truth to the individual consciousness, which last is the final standard to which all inspired or spiritual teachings must be brought for judgment." The atheistic folly of this position is transparent. Paul was on this showing as right when persecuting as when preaching Christ ; although he calls himself the chief of sinners. And when he preached Jesus and the resurrection to Athenians, those who mocked were as guiltless as those who believed God's messenger, and clave to him. For the Gospel, though preached by the commandment of the everlasting God, is to be esteemed "authoritative," not with reference to its source, but solely when ratified by the voluntary choice of those who may give ear to it ; the "obedience of faith" being now superseded by the "verdict of common sense," as that much-fluctuating faculty may shape itself in individual minds ! Here is indeed a breaking asunder of the bands and a casting away of the cords.<sup>5</sup> Human responsibility is at an end. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts," &c., is, for the spiritualistic neochristian, a mere antiquated rudiment of the times of ignorance. "Our lips are our own ; who is Lord over us ?"<sup>6</sup> is the real

<sup>5</sup> Ps. ii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. xii. 4.

language of the heart which, in willing ignorance that God has spoken, can thus enfold itself deliberately in the mist of its own delusions.

13. "That inspiration, or influx of ideas and promptings from the spiritual realm, is not a miracle of a past age, but a perpetual fact—the ceaseless method of the divine economy for human elevation." This, of course, means that the inspired writings of the Bible are merely links of a continuous chain, which in our own day is changing from a Biblical to a spiritualistic form; that consequently, for Christians to "let that abide in them which they have heard from the beginning," to be "mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," &c.,<sup>7</sup> is quite a mistaken superfluity of religious sentiment operating in an erroneous direction, since "human elevation" is now far more effectually attained through the later and more "satisfactory" revelations of modern spirit-voices than by confining ourselves to the imperfect communications of ancient mediumship! Mark, too, the transparent self-contradiction of this hypocritical prating about the "divine economy for human elevation." For what do these men or any other men know; what *can* they know of divine economy if God, as they imply, is voiceless, and His will is to be learnt solely through a study of "laws" which, if "fixed" in the abstract are practically subject to the equally true or equally false interpretations of "individual consciousness"?

<sup>7</sup> 1 John ii. 24; 2 Peter iii. 2.

14. "That all angelic and all demoniac beings, which have manifested themselves or interposed in human affairs in the past, were simply disembodied spirits in different grades of advancement." Thus the Angel who called to Abraham out of heaven—the Angel who redeemed Jacob—the Angel of the Covenant, &c., were simply deceased mortals in different grades of advancement! The essential falsehood of this blasphemous folly I have sufficiently noticed and refuted at an earlier page.<sup>8</sup>

15. "That all authentic miracles (so-called) in the past, such as the raising of the apparently dead, &c. &c., have been produced in harmony with universal laws, and hence may be repeated at any time under suitable conditions." Observe here, again, the same characteristic shutting of eyes against the true light of the glory of God. Martha's misgivings at the door of her brother's sepulchre were, of course, chimerical. Lazarus was only "apparently dead." So also the widow's tears for her departed child, and the mourning for Tabitha were a mistaken waste of emotion. In a word, what Christ did, in the manifesting of His glory as the Son of God, was no more than a masterly demonstration of His power as the chief of spiritualists, and may consequently be repeated "at any time;" not as His apostles did by the power of His name, but by a sufficiently accomplished medium "under suitable conditions"! Now the Lord ascribed all works of power which He wrought to the Father who dwelt in Him, and uttered

<sup>8</sup> *Ante*, page 38.

a fearful burden of denunciation against any who imputed to Beelzebub the operations of the Holy Ghost.<sup>9</sup> Had the framers of this and similar propositions no remembrance of His words when seeking thus to turn the truth of God into a lie?

Propositions 16 and 17 enunciate the Gnostic idea of dualism in the divine nature, but are otherwise unworthy of remark.

18. We are next told that man has in him, as the offspring of God, "a germ of divinity" which is "eventually to free itself from all imperfections incident to a rudimental or earthly condition, and finally triumph over evil." Then clearly, to a holder of this view, the Lord's doctrine of the new birth was, to speak with reverence, a psychological mistake!

19. "All evil is disharmony, greater or less, with this divine principle; and hence, whatever prompts and aids man to bring his external nature into subjection to and harmony with the divine in him, in whatever religious system or formula it may be embodied, is 'a means of salvation' from evil." Most surely, then, Christ died in vain for such as hold this principle, every man being, sooner or later, his own saviour from evil. The victory belongs no more to the arm of the Lord, and to the faith which finds its life and hope in Jesus Christ, but to the fully-developed Adamic humanity, which is to attain perfection by the operation of a fixed and universal law!

Such, then, are the theoretical principles of spiritualism, the doctrinal elements of "Christianity proper."

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xii. 24-32.

We must turn now to its practical side. "The hearty and intelligent conviction" of the theoretical principles just examined, "with a realization of spiritual communion, tends," we are told—

1. "To enkindle lofty desires and spiritual aspirations—an effect opposite to that of a grovelling materialism, which limits existence to the present life." I would remark on this, that Satan is not divided against himself; but there are manifold differences in his methods of deceit. Materialism is, with all other forms of evil, of the devil *remotely*, but immediately and characteristically *of man*. It is the creature haughtily entrenching itself within its known experimental conditions of existence, and thence ignoring its Creator and His will. But Satan is a *spirit*, and therefore materialistic theories cannot bring out fully the force of his opposition to the living God; for it is in *rivalry* rather than *denial* that the point of his antagonism lies. Hence, as the end approaches, we may expect to see the power of antichristian evil operating more and more, and the palpable stupidity of materialism yielding to the subtler and more positive forms of spiritual wickedness. No surprise, therefore, need be felt at the strength of language with which materialism is denounced in this and other spiritualistic works. The Scriptures emphatically warn us that lying wonders are to signalize the close of a dispensation which opened with the miracles of truth and love; and this "enkindling of lofty desires and spiritual aspirations," apart from the doctrine of the cross, is a mere jugglery of Satan, whose habit it has ever been to fool

his dupes, by high-sounding promises and flattering suggestions, to a captive subjection to his will.

2. "To deliver from painful fears of death, and dread of imaginary evils consequent thereupon, as well as to prevent inordinate sorrow and mourning for deceased friends." How true believers lose their fear of death, and find deliverance from consequent evils of no imaginary kind; how also their sorrow for departed friends is quieted to peaceful hope, we have already seen.<sup>1</sup> But how plainly and malignantly does the above quoted statement crucify the Son of God afresh, and do despite to the Spirit of grace! The appointed judgment after death is merely an "imaginary evil;" while the fear which hath torment, and which harasses the spirit of a yet unpardoned sinner, is to be dispelled, not as the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, dispels it, for all who are of faith, by referring to the suffering grace and everlasting victory of Him who gave Himself for our sins,<sup>2</sup> but by a conviction that the "process of dying" is nothing but a stage in the natural course of things, and by a recollection of the "innate germ of divinity" which is eventually to triumph over all evil.

3. "To give a rational and inviting conception of the after life to those who use the present worthily." The apostle Peter teaches believers how to give a reason of the hope that is in them, and gives certainly an inviting as well as a trustworthy conception of their after life, when he tells of the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, page 12, *seq.* .    <sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 14, 15.

away," which is reserved in heaven for such as God keeps by His power through their faith unto the salvation which is ready to be revealed.<sup>3</sup> Whether the posthumous improvement of mortal experiences, and the progressive "expansion" and "gravitation towards the higher spheres," which spiritualism offers to its disciples, be a more rational and attractive expectation than the comfort of the Holy Ghost, must be left to the decision of my readers.

4. "To stimulate to the highest and worthiest possible employment of the present life, in view of its momentous relations to the future." One might suppose, with the example before our eyes both of Jesus personally and of those who, both before and since His first appearing, put their trust in Him, that "the highest and worthiest possible employment of the present life" would be to know and do the will of God. But this is not "Christianity proper." The spiritualist's dualistic God, who with his male and female attributes of love and wisdom, gives no intelligible token of the former, and certainly but a sorry specimen of the latter quality in the publication of this necromantic gospel, is in too helpless a case—being bound, like the rest of us, by "fixed and universal laws"—to have any appreciable will at all; so that on this view of things, the summit of worthy aspiration is, in fact, but to cultivate and please one's loftier *self*.

5. "To energize the soul in all that is good and elevating, and to restrain the passions from all that

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter iii. 15; i. 4, 5.

is evil and impure. This must result, according to the laws of moral influence, from a knowledge of the constant presence or cognizance of the loved and pure." It seems here to have been forgotten by the framers of this new religion that among the theoretical positions, not previously quoted, it is laid down not only "that we are constantly under the cognizance of spiritual beings," but also that the spiritual state "includes all grades of character from the lowest to the highest," so that in fact this alleged salutary influence is at best of an extremely imperfect and hazardous description, being tantamount only to the conflicting influences of good and bad moral example among living men. But not to dwell on this, what is to be thought of the above statement? It is indeed, in its low-thoughted folly, worthy of those who seek motives of conduct from beneath instead of from above. Let us again turn to the book whose sanction Fritz so boldly claims upon his title-page. Was it then the presence of Joseph's dead relations that fortified his chastity in the hour of trial? or was it not rather the dread of sinning *against God*?<sup>4</sup> "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever," says the Holy Ghost.<sup>5</sup> "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is the injunction of the Father of spirits to them that call, as professing Christians, on His name.<sup>6</sup> A Christian is exhorted, because he is already holy by his faith, to walk worthy of his calling—to abhor evil and to cleave to what is good, and as a child of light to be far, in the spirit and habit of his walk, from the un-

<sup>4</sup> Gen. xxxix. 9.   <sup>5</sup> Ps. xix. 9.   <sup>6</sup> 1 Peter i. 16, 17.

fruitful works of darkness; in a word, to be an imitator of God, whose searching eye is on him not for evil but for good.<sup>7</sup> He is watched and tended not by the spirits of dead men, but by the gracious Shepherd and Bishop of his soul.<sup>8</sup>

6. "To prompt our earnest endeavours by purity of life, by unselfishness, and by loftiness of aspiration, to live constantly *en rapport* with the highest condition of spirit-life and thought." Compare with this vague and delusive balderdash the words of the Spirit of truth in 1 John i. 6, 7; ii. 4, 5; iii. 3, &c. As to "unselfishness," a favourite word always with false teachers, we have already seen abundantly that self is, in fact, the very alpha and omega of this system. It begins with a perverse and divinely forbidden longing, and seeks its goal in a self-devised and self-attained ideal.

7. "To stimulate the mind to the largest investigation, and the freest thought on all subjects—especially on the vital themes of a spiritual philosophy and all cognate matters—that it may be qualified to judge for itself what is right and true." God's children are counselled to take heed how they hear, to prove all things, and hold fast what is good. But the believer's standard of proof is not his own mind, whose imaginings he knows well to be vain, but the quickening and life-sustaining word of God. That he possesses in the Bible words which God has really uttered, is the very ground of all his confidence and joy. His fitness to "try the spirits," and to judge the

<sup>7</sup> Eph. iv. 1; v. 1-11; Ps. cxxxix.    <sup>8</sup> 1 Peter ii. 25.

words of men, is proportioned to the degree to which his own soul has first been searched and mastered by the word of God; imaginations having been cast down, and every thought being brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

8. "To deliver from all bondage to authority, whether vested in creed, book, or church, except that of perceived truth." We have here but a bolder and fuller expression of the defiance of divine authority already uttered in an earlier page.<sup>1</sup> *God's* book is of course included in this general disclaimer of authority; and His sayings, if not "satisfactory," are to be disregarded as decidedly as those of men. But this fancied emancipation from authority is in reality, and will shortly prove itself to be, but an exchange of "the perfect law of liberty" for a state of hopeless thralldom to the power of darkness. What is accepted by spiritualists as "perceived truth" is already beginning to assume dogmatic forms, and will no doubt become more magisterial as men weary of God's true gospel, and crying, "Who will show us any good?" are induced to turn a larger ear to these new tidings from the dead. The *Spiritualist* of May, 1873, records, among positive discoveries of truth—"things proved"—the following: "That the better lives men lead on earth, by doing good to everybody and every thing, the happier will they be hereafter,"<sup>2</sup> that sorrow

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. x. 5.

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, page 64.

<sup>2</sup> There is something quite characteristic in this impudent attempt to treat the notion of retribution as a spiritualistic discovery. Did this writer never read the second chapter of the

and trouble result from evil deeds, not as an arbitrary punishment, but by a process of natural law; that the angels in heaven and upon earth are happy in proportion to the goodness and usefulness of their lives, and that there is no eternal punishment." These then are already accepted articles of the spiritualistic creed or religion. They are to the "Christian proper" *perceived truth*; because these lying oracles, whose aim it is to gain the world, speak in agreement with the thoughts and desires, latent or expressed, which belong naturally to the unregenerate mind. They flatter self-righteousness, and make the heart of the wicked glad. The anticipative commentary of the Holy Ghost on such a proposition as the above may be read in Proverbs xxvi. 12; Isaiah v. 20, 21; and John ix. 41.

9. "To cultivate self-reliance and careful investigation, by taking away the support of authorities, and leaving each mind to exercise its own truth-determining powers." But this newly opened path of wisdom is but folly in the sight of God. For in the estimation of His Spirit "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."<sup>3</sup> And again, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."<sup>4</sup> Alas, one may well

epistle to the Romans, nor the Lord's words in John v. 28, 29? not to speak now of other like testimonies. But then the Bible is not "satisfactory" on this point, since it spoils this doctrine of its moral beauty in their eyes by referring finally all results to the "arbitrary" judgment of Almighty God! As in all other forms of infidelity, the essential feature of spiritualism is its virtual dethronement of the living God.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xxviii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 20.

exclaim, for the man who rejoices in the loss of the support of authority! No mental condition can be imagined more truly pitiable and forlorn. Nothing to believe, nothing to trust, nothing to rest on but the dreams of one's own besotted fancy or the lie of some deceiving spirit! No honey nor honey-comb for such! No lying down in peace, no banishing of fear by the spoken assurance of redeeming love, no rock to rest one's weary soul upon! No song; for to whom shall this autocratic determiner of truth address his song? No worship; for that implies the existence of a God, whose known will is our life and law, and a bowing down of heart in the consciousness of native ignorance and helplessness, and of sovereign light and grace received. Every man, finally, a law to himself, and with no outlook of hope above the dreary level of his own self-deluded impotency. Such is the joyless *unrest* that remains for these infatuated seekers of *themselves!*

Spiritualism, or "Christianity proper," delivers its last practical utterance as follows:

10. "To quicken all philanthropic impulses, stimulating to enlightened and unselfish labours for human good, under the encouraging assurance that the redeemed and exalted spirits of our race, instead of retiring to idle away an eternity of inglorious ease, are encompassing us about as a cloud of witnesses, inspiring us to the work and aiding it forward to a certain and glorious issue." The pure devilism of this conclusion will strike at once every thoughtful Christian. Let it only be remembered that the first essay of the "old serpent" was in the character of a

philanthropist. He would "elevate" God's image by inciting Eve to sin. God had said things to His creatures which, if taken seriously, he insinuated, were obstructive of men's best and highest aspirations. It was upon the "unsatisfactory" character of the original commandment that the tempter dwelt in his fraudulent parley with his victim, and the refuge which he opened from the difficulties and discouragements which he suggested with such murderous intent lay then, as now, within *themselves*. "Ye shall be as gods," was his promise, if they only gave their ears to him instead of to their Maker. Wisdom and self-elevation were the prime lure of the deceiver; shame and self-degradation its judicial fruits. God also, whom these men (let us hope in ignorance) so frightfully blaspheme, is a philanthropist, if one may with reverence so speak. His kindness and love to man<sup>5</sup> have taken, in the cross of His ever-blessed Son, a practical and saving form. Such is the tenor, for all who hearken to the voice of God's true messengers, of "the faith once delivered to the saints." And now the rule of Christian philanthropy is to love and aid one's brother according to *that* pattern of the perfect love of God.<sup>6</sup> But modern needs and aspirations, Fritz assures us, are not satisfied by this light bread. As spiritualists, or "Christians proper," we are to be as gods, knowing good and evil—judging, discerning, aiding, serving, &c., in the sufficiency of our own conscious and native powers. And thus, as in reprobate Israel of

<sup>5</sup> ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ. (Titus iii. 4.)

<sup>6</sup> I John iii. 16; iv. 11.

old, "the carpenter shall again encourage the goldsmith,"<sup>7</sup> &c. The unsanctified powers of the human mind will reciprocally work the will of the deceiver, until the last object of idolatry shall rise to its appointed place and receive the fatal homage of the nations who forget their Maker and deny the Lord that bought them, while, in a willing ignorance of what was written for their warning, they have in a self-destructive admiration the proud usurper of His name and place.<sup>8</sup>

Mark also in this last extract the shameless hypocrisy of the allusion to Hebrews xi., as well as the sneering misrepresentation of the true hope of glory, and of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. God's cloud of witnesses all bear His seal. They trusted Him, and lived and died upon His words. But those that fill the dream of modern spiritualists are of a widely different sort. They are deceased mortals who are said to be continuing their former life upon the basis of their earthly experience, and expanding gradually, and refining towards the imagined consummation of their natural perfectibility. Christ's saints wait for the adoption—to wit, the redemption of their bodies. But who and what are these "redeemed and exalted spirits," whose redemption is not by blood, and whose honour and dignity proceed from themselves, but lying phantoms of a heart deceived? And do these despisers of the birthright know the meaning of their words when they describe the being glorified and reigning with Christ, according to the

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah xli. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. xiii. ; 2 Thess. ii. 7-12.

fulfilment of His people's hope, as "idling an eternity of inglorious ease"?

Enough, and much more than enough, has been already laid before the reader to show the true character of spiritualism, as contrasted with the gospel of the grace of God. I shall, however, complete the picture by producing some specimens of the revelations made from time to time through both speaking and writing mediums. There will appear in these plain evidences of both will and power tending to the same evil end—the estrangement, namely, of men's hearts from Him who gave His flesh for the life of the world, and their preparation for yet further and more entire subjection to the adversary.

Of the numerous and well-attested examples of merely personal communications contained in Fritz's book I shall take no notice whatever. The *teachings* from the "spirit-world" are alone of any real interest or importance, as affording decisive evidence of their source. I premise an explanation of "trance-mediumship," as given by one of Fritz's quoted authorities: "The will-power of the controlling spirit enters the muscular and nervous system of the medium, and the connecting links between the mind and body are for the time being at the service of another intelligence." It is thus very similar to the ordinary method of mesmerizing, as the same writer remarks, a spirit only being substituted for an operator in the flesh. God's true prophets—the holy men of old—spake, the apostle Peter tells us, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."<sup>9</sup> We have now to listen to the words

<sup>9</sup> 2 Peter i. 21.

of men obeying the will of a controlling spirit of another kind, in whose service their communicative faculty is for the time being absolutely exercised.

I begin with some quotations from an address delivered at the Cavendish rooms on Sunday, August 28, 1872, "through" Mr. Morse. A variety of topics are touched in this address, such as the "locality of the spirit-world," "the nature, clothing, &c., of spirits," &c. &c. I shall confine myself at present to those which have a direct bearing on the subject of Christianity. The following is on "popular theology." After assuming, for argument's sake, "that man is a fallen and sinful creature, and that heaven or hell is his destiny," Mr. Morse proceeds: "Spiritualism, then, if its manifestations, as they purport to be, do really come from the inhabitants of the other life, must support the doctrines of Christianity. And we should naturally expect to receive from this supermundane source the ideas that constitute Christianity. But, as a rule, the direct contrary takes place; for communicating spirits are nearly always opposed to the theological ideas of the present day. They overturn, demolish, and annihilate these dogmas of total depravity, and heaven or hell being the destiny of man," &c. We may notice here the absence of any direct mention of the name of Jesus. Presently he continues: "Spiritualism claims a higher destiny for man. It reveals to the mind of the investigator that the life of the better land is a counterpart of this, saving that there the intellect has more scope for development, and is consequently more perfect in

its manifestations than on this side of life. It reveals also the fact that the heaven and hell of the Christian theologian are mythical existences built upon the fanatical zeal of partisan intolerance." Then follows the proposed substitute for these exploded doctrines, of which we have already had samples in sufficient number, and which I need not therefore here transcribe.

On the "principle of future rewards" we have this explicit declaration: "Spirits teach that their position in the spirit-world is determined not by their theological convictions when on earth; not by their beliefs, creeds, or theories, but by their individual motives and actions. As they did to others, so is it meted out to them in return." I have before noted the true drift of this.<sup>1</sup> It is one of Satan's commonest "methods" to use God's truth as a spice for his own lie. So here, the Lord's words as to conduct and its effects are employed in corroboration of a statement which entirely denies the gospel of the grace of God.

My next quotation shall relate to "self-improvement." "Spiritualism teaches that man has inherent power to improve within himself, both in this life and the life to come; that he shall progress infinitely, and thus be his own saviour. Hence individual reform is the burden of spiritualism, and knowledge is a necessity connected therewith." It is needless to comment on this. I add a further extract on "creeds in spirit-life:" "False creeds are transmitted with

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, page 73, note.

the human soul after death, and are perpetuated in the future life, causing misery and unhappiness to the possessor." Now a Christianity that looks to Jesus, and founds all its hopes upon His cross, is, of course, in the estimation of this oracle, a false creed. In other words, we are apprised from beneath that "misery and unhappiness" are the perpetuated condition, in the life to come, of those who hold the faith of God's elect! Lastly, we have the following question and reply: *Q.* "Are prayers touching earthly affairs ever answered by guardian spirits?" *A.* "Yes, so-called providential interventions and responses are cases of that kind."

It would be easy to add to these quotations, but it is not necessary. I dismiss, therefore, this witness, in order to call another. Andrew Jackson Davis, represented as an illiterate American cobbler, is reported to have fallen, in 1844, into a trance of two days' duration, and while in this state to have announced his intention of delivering, says Fritz, "a series of lectures which were to be taken down in writing in the presence of witnesses of integrity, and afterwards published. The result was that 157 lectures were thus delivered while the author was entranced; they occupied about four hours each day in delivery, and extended over a period of fifteen months." These spirit-lectures, which deal with all sorts of topics, among which "errors in the Bible" hold a prominent place, are characterized by the American professor Bush, who bestows on them the most lavish commendation, as "a profound and elaborate discussion

of the *philosophy of the universe.*" "The grand doctrine," he informs us, "insisted on throughout is that of *spiritual causation*, or, in other words, that all natural forms and organisms are effects, mirrors, and expressions of internal spiritual principles that are their cause, just as the human soul is the proximate cause of the human body." The reader will note here at the outset a complete inversion of the Scriptural account of the formation and subsequent animation of God's created image. "These spiritual essences," continues the American eulogist, "are from God the infinite Spirit, and they work by inherent forces which are laws. As a necessary result, there are no immediate creations by a Divine *fiat*, but a constant evolving chain of developments, in an ascending series, from the lowest types of organization to the highest." But whence these base *beginnings*? will be naturally asked. Did they originate themselves? For creative fiat is not to be allowed in this new "Philosophy of the Universe." It will be perceived at once, by any one accustomed to such speculations, that this new "Genesis" has no originality to recommend it. Wherever the Creator's glory is denied, there is a general resemblance in the unhappy family of Gnostic "imagination," which contend vainly for the honour which belongs only to the truth which they refuse.

"This theory," the professor adds, "is reasoned out with consummate ability, and its application to the geological history of our globe and its varied productions forms one of the most finished specimens of

philosophical argument which is to be met with in the English language. Yet the scope of the work is as far as possible from being purely speculative. It constantly aims at a practical result—the reunion of the race in a grand fraternity of interest and affection; and the sole reason of introducing the Biblical and theological discussion, is to show the operation of the religious element in producing the disunion and antagonism that now exist in the world, and which must in some way be abolished before universal harmony can be compassed.” Thus far Professor Bush. The English publisher is not less loud in his praise of the book, as displaying “a knowledge so profound and comprehensive, and generalisation so eminently philosophical and vast, that it must inevitably, from its intrinsic character, command the respectful attention of learned and inquiring minds.”<sup>2</sup>

That a wholly illiterate person should exhibit high powers of intellect and mastery of language while in a state of trance implies, I readily admit, the effective agency of some supernatural energy. Whether the modern revelations excel intrinsically “the glorious gospel of the blessed God,”<sup>3</sup> which they are avowedly intended to supplant, the reader has already had some means of judging laid before him, and shall have more presently. Let us first, however, notice the characteristic difference, in respect of style and method, of these rival testimonies. Paul was not in a trance

<sup>2</sup> The title of this book is, *The Principles of Nature; her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind.* By A. J. Davis. The English edition appeared in 1847. <sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 11.

when he wrote to the Corinthian saints, and reminded them that he came *not* with excellency of speech or of wisdom; that he determined to know nothing among them, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; that his speech and his preaching was *not* with enticing words of man's wisdom; and he gives his reason—"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the *power of God.*"<sup>4</sup> The lying spirit, on the other hand, who uses as his medium A. J. Davis, seeks first to compel men's homage to his messenger, and to the doctrine which he utters, by an unusual display of knowledge on all subjects, and a captivating brilliancy of style. The message of *God* disallows all human pretensions, and publishes salvation freely through the preaching of the cross. The unconscious channel of Satanic delusion tickles men's ears with high-sounding transcendentalisms, and labours to inflate them with the vain idea of self-elevation and self-procured salvation, appealing thus directly to the native pride of fallen humanity, and fixing deliberately a gulf impassable between the grace of their Maker and themselves.

But it is time to examine a little more closely this extravagantly praised production, concerning which Fritz exclaims: "If spiritualism never accomplished any other good work, the present age will have abundant reason to be grateful for the wisdom which is to be found in the pages of this writer." As was to be expected, the declarations of the Bible are interpreted by A. J. D. in a "spiritual," *i.e.* a contrary, sense.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 1-5.

For example, Adam and Eve were, we are told, "the names of two tribes of the most perfect form of man that had at this period been developed on the earth, and they were located near the rivers Euphrates and Tigris." "Originally," he continues, "men communicated their thoughts by the expressions of the countenance and outward physical signs; and during this time they were free from all cupidity and absolute deception. Gradually sounds—mere monosyllables—were substituted for gesticulation, and these were ultimately developed into a rude language. These verbal sounds sometimes created misconceptions, which led to disunity in social affection," &c. &c. "It was in this manner that their eyes were opened, and they were enabled to see their own deceptions and imperfections. And having a new power of conversing with one another, they clothed their real and imperfect thoughts by false sheaths or deceptive *aprons* of obscurity." The wretchedness arising from this state of things resulted, he goes on to say, in the dispersion of the race into three different nations, who thus left the Eden of their former days. Afterwards further subdivisions took place, and a war at last ensued between two of these branches, respectively known as Cain and Abel.

And all this dreary trash, commended by such lofty eulogy, is now offered to mankind as a just interpretation of the first four chapters of the book of Genesis! That the world lieth in the wicked one is a solemn truth of revelation.<sup>5</sup> But assuredly the

<sup>5</sup> 1 John v. 19.

arch-deceiver can have entertained no high respect for the "common sense" and discernment of the present age, when he felt emboldened to address it thus. Yet he has judged, no doubt, correctly in his subtlety. He knows that credulity is ever mated with self-confidence, and notes with satisfaction the growing resemblance of modern Christendom to the prophetic description of its latest phase.<sup>6</sup> There are, it is affirmed, already more than six millions of spiritualists in America. In England also and in Germany a rapid increase of their number is said to be taking place. Many men of note in literature, science, and art are expressed by name in Fritz's book as disciples of the system. All this is, alas! but too possible; for God has said that men love leasing more than truth, and that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with Him;<sup>7</sup> but that minds dissatisfied with the Scriptural account of creation, sin, death, the ordinance of marriage, Gentile dispersion, &c., should find in this pretentious absurdity of development, wherein God is Himself made the source, by a natural process of evolution, of all the evil in the world, a "satisfactory" solution of their difficulties, is a sad and truly marvellous proof of the mind-degrading effect of unbelief. The "erroneous" ideas of the fall of man, of redemption through Christ, &c., are, of course, corrected seriatim by this eminent authority in favour of the more elevating doctrine of personal sufficiency already laid before the reader.

The difficulty arising from the *language* of the Bible,

<sup>6</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. <sup>7</sup> Ps. iv. 2; John viii. 45; 1 Cor. iii. 19.

which obliges most readers of its pages to regard the prophets who spoke in the name of Jehovah either as men truly inspired, or else as the most astonishing and inexplicable of impostors, is solved by this new "voice to mankind," in the following manner. Referring to the Old Testament accounts of divine interposition, and audaciously affirming that it was a habit among all eastern nations to use the formula, "The Lord spake" to express the evolution of a thought, he says, "So it became a universal expression among the prophetic writers that the Lord spake unto them, constructed plans, instituted questions, suggested signs, &c. ; for these, they supposed, came by direct influx from the thoughts of the divine mind. This conception of the invisible origin of thoughts was a natural result of the uninformed state of their minds concerning the causes of mental phenomena. They used the term 'Lord' in the same sense as I use the term 'impression.' For their thoughts were caused by associations with similar truths to those with which I associate. So if, instead of using the expression, 'the Lord spake,' they had said, 'I am impressed with such or such a thought,' then would theologians of the present day have comprehended the mystery." The bold effrontery of the assertion that the thoughts of God's prophets were caused by association with similar truths to those with which A. J. D. associated is not easily paralleled. The "present age" should no doubt be deeply grateful to this modern instructor of the foolish for thus stilling the voice of the living God, and presenting it with a dead man's impressions in

its stead! The Satanic origin of such an idea as that above expressed is self-evident. It is too atrociously *cruel* to have proceeded from man only. No human father offers his child a scorpion for a fish; but to take from man the word of his true and faithful Creator, and to persuade him that what he once took implicitly for absolute verity, is merely a series of "impressions" felt from time to time by certain imperfectly educated Hebrews, is a far more ruthless and irremediable wrong.

The existence of the devil—original sin—the resurrection of the body, &c., are, as we might expect, among the "errors in the Bible," which A. J. D. was commissioned from beneath to correct. As a sample of the sort of stuff which they who are willing to be deceived extol as the perfection of sound reasoning take the following: A J. D. "points out" that "all things possess mutual affinities, and *that things differ only as to the degrees and states of development.* Thus is established what has been before declared, *that opposites or antagonistic principles cannot exist*; that all things were created and are animated by one living essence; and that it is injustice to the character of that divine essence for men on earth to say or believe that there is a principle or habitation existing opposed to the general happiness, or to that celestial purity which joins together all created things." There is something contemptuous in the boldness of tone with which these newly "established" dogmas are enounced. But Satan well knows that no lie is too gross for them to swallow whose backs are turned

deliberately to the truth. And so men who stumble at the testimonies of the Spirit of God, and find His words unsatisfactory, are both charmed and convinced by this monstrous necromantic logic, which makes sin to be only undeveloped righteousness, and "establishes" that good and evil, instead of being contrary to each other, as inspired men have thought, are really and ultimately the same. God of course "animated" both Cain and Abel—Paul and Bar-jesus. That the slayer of his brother was "of that wicked one" is a rash biblical statement requiring correction. What is by old-fashioned Christians erroneously spoken of as the Adversary is only God in an imperfect state of development! &c.

On the subject of revelations, A. J. D. remarks that "great truths have at all times been given to the world through persons not named in the Bible; e.g., Confucius, Brama, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Galen, the Seeress of Prevorst, Martin Luther, and Charles Fourier." As to the teachings of the last of these, "they are," he says, "most exceedingly sublime, seeking a level with, and being confirmed by, the teachings of Jesus." To the above list he adds also approvingly the name of Emanuel Swedenborg. "The cause of all wickedness," he then goes on to teach, "is *the undeveloped state of wisdom*, and *not* the supposed innate depravity of the human soul." Commenting on what he describes as orthodox theology, he asks whether mankind are not compelled to love God because they are frightened by the imaginary devil, who is only a "sectarian phantom." "Can you

not see," he exclaims, "that your love is born of hate and fear, and a mysterious consternation? Can you not see that your thoughts are crushed, and that the exercise of your reason is prohibited because it is called carnal?"

"We love Him because He first loved us" is the heart as well as lip language of one truly "orthodox" divine;<sup>8</sup> while another not less sound assures us that it was after that the world by wisdom knew not God, that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."<sup>9</sup> Without extending further the contrast on these points between the earlier and later voices, I remark as to the personal devil, whose existence is disallowed unanimously by these muterers from the dust of death, that it is very easy to imagine the anxiety of that old serpent to dissuade men if possible from believing in his reality. But Christians know that if there were no real devil there certainly could be no real Christ, seeing that in the only book which claims to speak with original authority of Him (a claim not yet openly denied by Fritz) it is declared expressly that "for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."<sup>1</sup> Nor is it possible to conceive that any one could be a true and sound-minded partaker of the "common faith," and also a disbeliever in the personal existence of the devil, since the holding of such an idea must falsify the distinct teaching of the entire word of God.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John iv. 19.      <sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 8; cf. Heb. ii. 14.

The lying spirit that speaks through A. J. D. makes much of Jesus and His teachings after the fashion of his kind, as we meet it daily in the pseudo-Christian press and pulpits of the age, while utterly denying the very reason of that sacred and ever-blessed name.<sup>2</sup> For there is no such thing as sin in the scriptural sense, we are told, and therefore, of course, no atoning sacrifice, nor need of any. Society is, to be sure, allowed to be "in a state of disorder," for which other remedies are proposed than that of a return to God. Prayer is a clerical mistake. Morality "is not," he says, "in your systems of religion, but is immovably established in nature and in man. Every true and righteous prayer consists in an unchanging devotion to the principles of nature and the teachings of a benevolent Father." Who this parental abstraction may be (for spiritualists deny a personal God who has an active will, and speaks to men) requires explanation, which is not, however, here vouchsafed. It is at least quite evident that the divinity of this new gospel of the shades is *not* He whom apostles worshipped as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

With considerable force and pungency A. J. D. describes the operation and effects of sectarian bitterness in the professing church, and excuses sin by an attempt to show that it is impossible for men "to be moral and good when all influences are corrupting and vitiating." For "they exist," he adds, "from birth to the grave amid uncontrollable circumstances." "Nevertheless," he continues, "these circumstances

<sup>2</sup> Matt. i. 21.

are themselves the creations of *man*, and he possesses power to seal their everlasting destruction and to create superior ones in their stead to bless his existence!" Compare with this false and self-contradictory but, it seems, much admired fustian, the sweet but solemn words of the true Comforter of men: "For when we were yet *without strength*, in' due time Christ died for the ungodly," &c.<sup>3</sup>

"Finally, he insists on the imperative necessity of *action, not preaching*. The teaching of Christ's doctrines will never reform society; but such teachings will rather be the *effects* and not the *cause* of the re-organization of society which is so much required." Such is Fritz's summary of the revelations of "the voice" on this point, adding the following quotations: "The golden rule, the feeling of brotherly love, love to the neighbour, and such like, are not causes but effects, which will be realized and consummated ere long upon earth," by means, no doubt, of these glad tidings from beneath! And again, "He most honours the teachings of Jesus, *who is active in instituting principles and movements of reform*, so that the grand *effect* of love to the neighbour may be fully and unchangeably established." Christians are taught in the Bible that "love is of God," and that it is in the believer the first-fruit and operative effect of a faith that has the Father in the Son. The voice from below affirms it to be "of man," and the result of an enlightened sentiment of self-interest. Thus having turned the truth of God's gospel into a lie, and

<sup>3</sup> Rom. v. 6.

trampled contemptuously upon the cross, the last insult is offered to the Lamb of God by extolling Jesus in the new system of "Christianity proper," as a chief teacher of reform!

The abundant attestation of these "lectures," which are declared to have been delivered "by an ignorant young man, utterly and absolutely incompetent in his natural state" to the utterances embodied in his work, by one who knew him well,<sup>4</sup> leaves no room, when the nature and quality of the utterances are duly considered, for any other than the obvious conclusion that he spoke under demoniac inspiration.

"Spirit-writing" and "spirit-photographs" appear, from the evidence presented in Fritz's book, to be not less convincingly authenticated than "trance-speakers;" some of the instances alleged being of a very striking kind. The latter have their evil interest as examples of the power of Satan to practise objective deceptions on those who follow a forbidden search, but are entitled to no further notice here. A specimen of the former, purporting to be the joint testimony of the spirits of Newton, Locke, and Boyle, is couched in a tone of philosophic theism. Another, from the spirit of "a young minister" who died some time ago, lets us know that the "creeds and sectarianisms of earth-life are but the out-shoots of the spirit enshackled, seeking after, feeling (as it were in the dark) for truth. Truth is different to different minds," &c. Unlike the spirit that prompted A. J. D., this new

<sup>4</sup> Professor George Bush, himself one of the hearers of A. J. D.

voice recommends prayer, talks of the deity of Christ, &c., speaks, in short, very much *in character*, saving only that positive Christian doctrine (with the single exception of the Lord's divinity) is set aside as superfluous, the "old theological notions" being declared to be not only valueless intrinsically, but "hindrances to a higher life." On the other hand, spiritualism is "the preparation or pioneer for Christ's personal reign on earth, and God's kingdom is thus to be re-established." How this consummation is to be effected is then explained: "When once spirit-communion is accepted in its proper way, as a means of help to a higher life, but not to supersede the inner revelation from God's spirit, or the teachings of the Bible, then will the truth shine through error, and the real use of spiritualism become apparent." Bearing in mind the positive doctrines of spiritualism, as they have been already stated, and their utter contrariety to apostolic teaching, and remembering also that among the "teachings of the Bible" there is found the most emphatic condemnation of the practice of necromancy in any shape, it is plainly evident that the "message" from this reverend deceiver, or rather from the lying spirit that personates him, is nothing but a cunning bait of the destroyer, designed, by the admission of a cardinal point of Christian doctrine, to conciliate and win over to this "heresy of destruction" such Christians as may be induced to lend their ears to its fair speeches and great swelling words.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 2 Peter ii. 1; Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Some further reference will be made to this witness, for the purpose of estimating at its

Here is another sample from a different voice, and ministering stronger spiritualistic meat : " Spirit-life is very different from what I expected. It is active and full of energy. I see no God, as a personage, or actual being ; but I see God in all, and feel Him in every thing, and I believe that all on earth are created in the image of the Father, and that all can become more and more godlike in nature by striving and struggling to overcome the material nature, and to live like gods on earth." That " the Father " of such a race of earth-gods, who need no new birth, but rise up to the assertion of their inheritance in the sufficiency of their native strength, is the father of lies, and not the God of truth, must be self-evident to every real believer of His words.

Spiritualistic inspiration takes also not unfrequently a poetic form. Specimens of this, in the several styles of Byron, Pollok, and Burns, are exhibited by Fritz. Of these I remark generally that they agree in tone and tendency with the " messages " above quoted. One of Fritz's extracts, from an American spirit-poet, whom he seems to regard with an especial admiration, opens with the following line :

" The thirst of knowledge never made men bad," &c., reminding one, by the force of contrast, of the exordium of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and pointedly indicating the true source of its inspiration by its flat contradiction of the Holy Ghost in Gen. iii. Some

true value the above mentioned admission, in the closing chapter of this book.

clever stanzas in the manner of the Scottish lyricist tell us that—

“The upright, honest-hearted man,  
Who strives to do the best he can,  
Need never fear the Church’s ban,  
Or hell’s damnation ;  
For God will need no special plan  
For his salvation,” &c.

As a rule the style of these effusions, on which Fritz bestows almost as much praise as on the revelations of A. J. D., is turgid and contemptible ; but they are all on a par as contradictions of the truth of God.

Of painting and drawing mediums, to which Fritz also largely refers, I will here say no more than that they seem to be not less real and well-authenticated than the rest, and are some of them, if faithfully described, of a truly surprising kind. To my own mind such phenomena appear to be prelude to that last art-miracle of prophecy which is, at the time appointed, to obtain the mastery of all those wills which have persistently refused to bow the knee to Jesus Christ,<sup>6</sup> or, having rendered Him external homage, have withheld from Him the true devotion of their hearts.<sup>7</sup>

What spiritualism is, what sort of benefit is offered by it to mankind, and in what manner it supports its claim to their acceptance, the reader has now had clearly set before him. At its own mouth unexceptionable evidence in abundant measure has been taken of the nature and drift of its authentic teachings, and these have been sufficiently compared with the

<sup>6</sup> Rev. xiii.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

voices of God's prophets and apostles to demonstrate the absolute incompatibility of the former with the latter. Deferring till the close of this little work any further inferential observations of a practical kind, I pass on to notice in the next chapter the defence put forward by Fritz against some earlier objections to the system.

## CHAPTER IV.

HOW "CLERICAL" OBJECTIONS ARE MET BY  
SPIRITUALISTS.

It is admitted by Fritz that the "serious question" of the lawfulness or the desirableness of holding communion with the dead must sooner or later arise in most people's minds, and from society in general he anticipates a large amount of repugnance to the adoption of spiritualistic views. "It is not to be expected," he says "that men and women will throw over the cherished opinions of their ancestors, until they are first thoroughly convinced of the necessity of taking such a step."

Reminding my reader that there is something paramount to traditional religious opinion which must also be "thrown over" before a real Christian can be brought to seek the living among the dead—even "the faith of God's elect and the doctrine which is according to godliness"—I proceed at once to examine his reply to such objections as are noticed in his book.

With Fritz, as before remarked, "the clergy" only seemed properly concerned with questions of this sort; but it will, I trust, be acknowledged by every Christian reader of these pages, that the battle of the faith is to be fought by all who are themselves "of faith,"

and that the duty of opposing the liar and deceiver belongs to all who truly name the name of Christ. "Some of the clergy," complains Fritz, "have already sounded a note of alarm, although many of them are secretly converts to spiritualism; others have not scrupled to denounce the sin of necromancy," &c. I rejoice to hear it for my part, praying only that they who contend for masteries may be enabled in all things to contend lawfully. The objection raised by others again to "an unholy prying into divine mysteries" is dealt with as follows: "As if," says Fritz (to use the words of a recent spirit communication), "God were unable to protect His own mysteries, and to keep them from man, if He desired to do so, or as if there could be anything that God desired to keep from His intelligent and loving children." Now the impudence of this "communication" is not less noticeable than the grossness of its fraud. God is able to protect His own mysteries, no doubt. God was able also to defend the face of His incarnate Son from shame and spitting, and His sacred person from the scourge. He could have protected His prophets from being stoned and sawn asunder; He could paralyse a murderer's hand, and so prevent his crime; He could strike men dumb, and hinder them from blasphemy. He might, if it pleased Him, shut up Satan now, instead of still for a while longer permitting him to go at large and work his evil work; but then how should His purpose be fulfilled of trying the faith and patience of His saints, and of suffering iniquity to run its measured course?

Besides, it must be added, that God not only *can*, but *does*, protect His mysteries from lawless gaze. His secret is with the righteous, with such as fear Him, and whose walk is in His ways; but the froward are abominable in His eyes, and the feet of transgressors shall stumble in the very paths of light.<sup>1</sup> No real secret of His is searchable but by His own Spirit, which is given to His saints. But there are mysteries of iniquity as well as mysteries of grace. The former are revealed in warning, as the latter are ministered for comfort and instruction, to the Church by the Divine expounder of all truth. Nothing is reserved or hidden from God's true children, either of the fulness of His love or the perfection of His counsel, although as yet they only know in part. But "His intelligent and loving children" are not spiritualists, nor do they look for wisdom from beneath. The Christ who is their life is in the heavens, and from thence only they expect their hope. If they are intelligent, it is because the Son of God has come, and hath given them an understanding, that they may know Him that is true, and also that no lie, spiritualistic or otherwise, is of the truth;<sup>2</sup> and for that reason they cannot (though for a season some among them may peradventure be seduced from the way of righteousness) become permanently spiritualists, seeing that they *seek*, and when in their right minds also *find*, all truth in Him who is, to use the mildest form of this modern denial of the faith, a

<sup>1</sup> Prov. iii. 32; Ps. xxv. 14; Hosea xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John v. 20; ii. 20, 21.

*superfluity*. God's children become such *through faith in Jesus Christ*, having been begotten of His own will by the word of His truth. But such faith is, as we have seen, a matter of indifference to all spiritualists, while to the more enlightened and advanced it is a positive hindrance and offence. This lying spirit does, therefore, unwittingly a service to the truth, by manifesting thus emphatically the absolute contrariety of necromantic practisings with a true walking in the light.

On a passage quoted from *The Rock*, a religious newspaper, in which the genuineness of the alleged apparitions is denied, and reference is made to the ancient law of God against consulters of familiar spirits, &c., Fritz scornfully remarks: "We might be disposed to ask, What has the Mosaic dispensation to do with the nineteenth century?" I answer, *very much*, seeing that on the testimony of the chief apostolic expounder of the doctrines of grace "the law is good if a man use it lawfully;" and that it operates, now as heretofore, against whatever is contrary to sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.<sup>3</sup> But that spiritualism, which denies both sin and grace, is contrary to sound doctrine, has been already amply shown. I reply, further, that the prohibition of witchcraft and necromancy was not a "carnal ordinance," of typical significance and temporal validity, but a perpetual statute of essential and unalterable truth; that God, who spake by Moses, does not change; that He is,

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 9-11.

and must be, against evil-doers and workers of falsehood now as then; that the yoke of the law is changed for the believer, not into the licence of his natural will, but into the new and holy liberty of sonship, according to the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ; that seducing spirits and devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, are expressly declared by the Holy Ghost to be distinctive of the latter times, and that, in fine, the question has nothing to do with either law or grace specifically, but solely with the allegiance of the creature to his Maker, or the reverse.

"It may be uncertain," Fritz proceeds, "whether Christ intended to refer to modern spiritualism when He said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father;' but it is clear that St. John, in his epistle, where he says, 'Believe not every spirit, but try them,' impliedly sanctioned the practice, and ought therefore, according to *The Rock*, to have suffered death." It is difficult to deal with language of this kind, because it is expressive either of enormous wickedness or of the most pitiable infatuation, and one knows not which of these alternatives to impute to the writer. Charity hopeth all things; but could Fritz really be honest in thus insinuating that the Son of God, when promising the Comforter, whose office is to witness to the truth in *Him*, and describing the effect of His presence and energy in true believers, may have been referring to modern spiritualism, all whose teachings, as we have seen so

abundantly, tend to the subversion of the Christian faith? And then John's warning to believers to apply the test of Scriptural truth (themselves holding fast what they had heard from the beginning) to spiritual pretensions of all kinds "impliedly sanctions the practice," says this very unscrupulous commentator, of turning dissatisfied away from the imperfect testimony of the Bible, to seek better information as to the future from dead men! Nor is his stock of assurance exhausted even by this effort. "Christ Himself," he adds (quoting Matt. vii. 17-20), in cautioning His hearers against false prophets, recommends them to judge of the tree by its fruits; and spiritualists need certainly not be ashamed of the fruits and teachings of spiritualism." Surely "the fool rageth, and is confident," and "the unjust knoweth no shame,"<sup>4</sup> or so bold an affront could not have been offered to the personal majesty of truth as to present for the Saviour's commendation teachings which change His special glory to an empty lie. Of these "fruits" we shall have some samples offered to our contemplation presently. Meanwhile, with reference to the above quoted Scripture, I remark that I am for my own part now acting, to the best of my discernment, on my Master's admonition; with what result let the candid reader judge. What bearing also the apostolic injunction, so unblushingly appealed to by this writer, has properly upon the subject of spiritualism will be shown more precisely in the following chapter.

Having disposed, to his own satisfaction at least, of

<sup>4</sup> Prov. xiv. 16; Zeph. iii. 5.

the "silly objections" of *The Rock*, Fritz turns to deal with another "clerical denunciation" by a Mr. Jones of Liverpool, under the title of *Spiritualism the Work of Demons*. Mr. Jones would appear, from the extract given in Fritz's book, to have formed and expressed a sound scriptural judgment of these latter-day phenomena. But, according to Fritz, anything "weaker or more absurd" than his conclusions can hardly be imagined. The passage extracted from his pamphlet, after commenting on the policy of Satan and his ministers, as described in 2 Cor. xi. 14, concludes as follows: "They can afford for a while to preach love and charity and righteousness, if at the same time they can subtract from the creed of their victims all the virtue and saving points of the gospel. For the present they leave them the shell, after most carefully extracting the kernel. Yes, we repeat, demons can afford to proclaim morality, if at the same time they can destroy the notions of *natural depravity, of a Saviour, and an endless doom.*"

This witness is surely true. But hear the remarks of Fritz: "The loss of these cheerful elements of our popular theology," he mockingly exclaims, "is sad indeed." And then, after derisively lamenting the destruction of the very root of Christian doctrine, he is not ashamed to take Christ's words, "Suffer little children to come unto me," &c., and fling them at his opponent as a contemptuous refutation of the "popular fallacy" that a divine Saviour is really needed by mankind.

I pass by some further abuse of Mr. J. in order to

reach and examine a few specimens of those "fruits" of which such boastful mention has been made. "The late Dr. Elliotson," says Fritz, "as the editor of the *Zoist*, bitterly opposed spiritualism for a number of years, being himself a materialist. After his conversion to spiritualism, he said to Mr. Coleman,<sup>5</sup> 'You may tell the world that I deeply regret my folly in so long resisting the truth. When I leave the earth I shall die a Christian; and you may say that I owe my conversion to spiritualism.'" Now on this extract I have only to say, that unless Dr. Elliotson had some better trust on which to stay his soul than spiritualism can afford, as that system is expounded by its own chief advocates, he certainly did *not* die a *Christian*. The Lord truly knoweth them that are His, and the ultimate disposal of both dead and living is solely in His hand; but it would be plain treason against the sacred person of the Son of God for a believer to call by the name of *Christian* any one who rejects and decries the doctrine of redemption and remission of sins through His most precious blood. Moreover, to deny the Son as He is set forth in the Scriptures is to deny the Father also, and to contradict the testimony of the Holy Ghost. If Fritz knew better what to be a Christian means, he would have found nothing consolatory in the reported words of Dr. E. For they who are truly Christ's are not used to talk in such a strain, as if "to die a Christian" were a mere balancing of natural choice. They better know the

<sup>5</sup> The author of, *The Rise and Progress of Spiritualism in England*.

force and meaning of the Lord's own words in John vi. 65, and ascribe their conversion not to their own corrected judgment of natural or spiritual phenomena, but to the sovereign grace of Him who quickeneth the dead, and calls His chosen out of their native state of darkness into His own marvellous light.

Other cases of similar "conversion" are also cited by Fritz, to which the above remarks apply with equal force. The last of the series is that of "Dr. G. Sexton, the well-known lecturer on secularism, and confessedly an atheist and materialist," who in the *Medium* of September, 1872, announces his recantation of his former opinions as the effect of his recent conviction of the reality of spiritualism. "The truth"—it is thus that he expresses himself—"that there is no such thing as death is the noblest consolation that has ever blessed humanity!" Such is the phase under which this new gospel of delusions presents itself in the case of Dr. S.; and this false muttering from the dust, this blessing from beneath, this blasphemous contradiction of the witness of the Holy Ghost,<sup>6</sup> is exalted far above the everlasting consolation which is in Christ and the good hope which is by grace, and paraded with all confidence by this writer as a convincing proof of the acceptableness of spiritualism and its teachings in the sight of God! "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Such is the triumphant boast of them that glory in the Lord. For

<sup>6</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

the true believer death is indeed abolished, and both life and incorruption are brought to light in the person of the firstborn from the dead.<sup>7</sup> But for the unbeliever death and the judgment after death remain. If this truster in lying vanities be yet alive, may he live still to repent this sin of his great ignorance, and to taste the effectual mercy of Him who by the grace of God has tasted death for all!<sup>8</sup>

Conversion from "materialism" to "spiritualism" is not a turning from darkness to light, but simply a change from self to Satan. The former never has been, nor in its nature can be, a permanent conviction of mankind; for it fails to meet man's constitutional need as a dependent being. Self-reliant and boastful he may be, but in himself he cannot *rest*; a true or false hope must allure him to the end. There are cravings in the heart of every man to which only positive truth or positive delusion can respond. Spiritualism, which teaches men to trust their own impressions as the measure of all truth, stays itself upon the latter, accepting consolation from a voice which falsifies the plainest declarations of the word of God, while it places its deluded listener in a flattering but utterly indefinite and altogether imaginary and deceptive relation to his Maker.

The *Liberal Christian* is next cited, as a favourable witness to the admirable effects of spiritualism. It speaks as follows: "Among the people who bear this name and hold this belief, there are many who must be classed with the very best men and women that we

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57; 2 Tim. i. 10.      <sup>8</sup> Heb. ii. 9.

have known. Some of the most perfect and happy homes that now bless this world are those of spiritualist families. . . . They are thoughtful, reverent, and deep-hearted. Above all they are *true*, they are *faithful*. They love all things that are of good report. They love their fellow-men, and put their religion into their lives." It is painful to feel called on to scrutinize suspiciously a picture so alluring; but, beginning at the end of this eulogistic description, one is obliged to ask to *whom* these admirable men and women are so true, and to *what* they are so faithful? Humanitarian sympathies are not to be confounded with the obedient service of believers to the living God, nor will the tranquil and delusive self-complacency of a Christ-denying visionary bear comparison, in the light of God, with the love, joy, and peace, which are fruits of the Spirit in His saints. "By this we know that we love the *children* of God, when we love *God*, and keep His commandments," says the bosom friend of Christ;<sup>9</sup> but the motive of such love and such obedience as John describes can have no place in the hearts of those who turn away, as spiritualists do, from Jesus crucified to seek a better consolation in themselves. The description given in the same paper of a model spiritualist family is concluded in the following terms: There was found there "a sort of sweetness of disposition which comes, I think, from the habit of looking across the line, as if death were little or nothing; and with that, perhaps, a disposition to be social, to meet people half-way." "Thank God,"

<sup>9</sup> 1 John v. 2.

ejaculates this "Christian" (?) eulogist of falsehood, "for all such of whatever name."

After quoting two other extracts of a laudatory kind, but of too shallow and flashy a character to invite analysis, Fritz brings his chapter to a close in the following words: "In the face of facts like the foregoing, objections to spiritualism, as being the work of the devil, are surely deserving of being scouted by all sensible men, and if the clergy persist in raising the same cry against modern spiritualists that the Jews did against the greatest Spiritualist that ever lived, they need not be surprised if their taunts are turned upon them. Spiritualists may also fairly make use of Bible texts in retaliating. There is one in particular which is likely to be more telling than agreeable to those clergymen who determinedly oppose spiritualism. 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'"

I leave to "clergymen" the task of answering the challenge thus addressed to them. In the meanwhile, as a partaker, through grace, of the faith of God's elect, I reject as an impious blasphemy the false description here given of the incarnate Son of God, and expose the flagrant dishonesty involved in this attempt to put upon a moral par the resistance of the Jews to their Messiah, and the objections of true Christians to spiritualism. The attempt is dishonest, because Fritz cannot be ignorant that the Lord con-

stantly appealed to the *Jewish Scripture*, as well as to the outward and demonstrative tokens of His own divinity, in proof of the genuineness of His claim to recognition as the Son of God, and of His mission from on high. It was by a decisive reference to Ps. cx. that He silenced the religious objectors of all shades.<sup>1</sup> Now Fritz has dared to make a similar appeal in support of the claims of spiritualism, but with no other result, as we have seen, than to convict himself of either the grossest spiritual blindness, or the most audacious and unscrupulous mendacity.

As to the "telling" text also, which forms the last shaft in his exhausted quiver of invective, it is, like almost every other scriptural quotation in his book, falsely applied. I speak still as a Christian, *not* a clergyman, and on behalf of all who are partakers of like precious faith. In contending for the faith once delivered to the saints against the lying sophistries of spiritualism, we are not hypocrites, but speak as of sincerity and as of God, and in His sight. For we know whom we have believed, and have no fear of His ability to keep what we have severally committed unto Him against that day. We *believe*, and therefore speak.<sup>2</sup> We do not shut, but as confessors and preachers of the gospel of the grace of God we open widely, to all who have an ear to hear, that kingdom of heaven which Fritz in his ignorance blasphemes. Having ourselves entered, through the grace that called us, by the living Door, we would

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 46.    <sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12; 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 13.

answer our defamers by an entreaty to them to become even as we. For that Door is not yet closed, although we dare not say how soon it may be ; and these latter-day phenomena are themselves powerfully symptomatic of the near advent of that long-predicted time. Sure at least we are that they who seek to the dead for guidance to the path of life, while their ears and hearts are shut against the words of Him who still beseeches the rebellious to be reconciled, are playing what will prove at last a fatal game. They are sporting with their own deceivings, and will find too late, if they remain in the same mind, that the mist of eternal darkness is the certain close of that which they insanelly boast of as a new and brighter day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Isa. l. 11. ; Jude 12.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE ALTERNATIVE.

A STRIKING feature in the history of spiritualism is the frequent contradictoriness of the voices from beneath, a phenomenon which writers of that persuasion account for on the principle of personal identity. The departed are still, they say, as they were when on the earth, and hold unchanged the same opinions. They are said also to be influenced as to their answers by the opinions prevailing in the consulting circle of enquirers. It would demand much time and space to investigate thoroughly the alleged facts, and illustrate them by quotations. The practical effect however of this uncertainty in the oracle is to throw back the enquirer more entirely and absolutely on his own "common sense" for the final solution of all theological and other questions. Thus one spirit-voice had reported a change of sentiment in a deceased Unitarian; another, on being consulted, repudiated this statement, averring that the individual in question was "high and exalted, because in all he did he made use of the intellect God gave him, and preached that which he knew." He and his associates were further described as "revelling in truth," &c. In the earlier part of his response, the same spirit had stated and answered an important question in the following

terms: "Is or is not God a respecter of persons in regard to their beliefs? or, in other words, does the belief of an individual determine his spiritual position after death? We answer emphatically, No! Beliefs have nothing to do with the location of the soul; actions alone make the soul."

It is not necessary, after what has gone before, to quote Scripture at large in refutation of this bold lie of the deceiver. The story of Abel is but the beginning of a countless chain of evidences that God, who is no respecter of persons in any other sense, does put a difference between the believer and the disbeliever of *His words*. Once more referring to the discordant testimony above mentioned, it is manifest that the direct tendency of the candid admissions which are so frequently made of the possible untrustworthiness of spiritualistic communications, is to enhance and encourage the natural self-reliance of mankind. First, it is assumed that the difference between the living and the dead is no more than that of the same people on one side or the other of a curtain, the ideas and propensities of nature being the same in both these conditions; the effect of this assumption being to persuade men that there is nothing in the spiritual world to be sought to, or relied on, of a higher nature or power than themselves. Then, as a necessary consequence, *self* is enthroned as the supreme arbiter of every sort of question. The higher orders of spirits, as the higher castes of men in the flesh, are to receive a deferential regard proportioned to their personal qualities; but the decision

must be finally *one's own*. In other words, men "dissatisfied" with the voice of Him who speaks from heaven, and but partly reassured by words uttered from beneath, take counsel, honour, law, and license from *themselves*, fulfilling with a sad fidelity of detail the inspired description of the leaders of the apostasy of the last times. "Presumptuous are they, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities," &c. And that the judgment here expressed may rest on something more positive and convincing than any inferences of my own, I shall once again quote Fritz at length.

He anticipates, as the first and early effect of spiritualism, the destruction of its rival "materialism." But he expects also, as its second result, "*the overthrow of sectarianism,*"<sup>1</sup> and with reference to the latter he thus delivers himself in the closing pages of his work: "I have touched as little as possible upon the theological aspects of the subject; but it requires very little reflection to see that these must be very considerable. We have seen that the spirits who communicate are of all shades of character. I could have quoted instances of mediums being haunted by evil spirits of a very desperate character—such cases being known to all spiritualists—spirits of whose unfitness for heaven there could be very little question. If, then, it is once admitted that spirits of all shades, from the highest to the lowest, can communicate with and revisit us, what becomes of the orthodox notion of hell and heaven? Where can the orthodox per-

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* of Biblical Christianity. The italics are those of Fritz.

sonal devil be, seeing that not even the worst spirits have ever seen or heard of him? What is the use of believing in the natural depravity of man, when spirits tell us that all spirits are alike permitted to approach nearer to God by progressing upwards in the spiritual spheres, whatever their earthly creeds? What, again, is the use of believing in the necessity of Christ as a Saviour? A Saviour from what? the orthodox hell or the "wrath" of God? Seeing that the highest and the lowest spirits who communicate know nothing of either, but tell us a great deal of the *love* of God, and that our motives, thoughts, and actions in earth-life have a great deal more influence upon our future state and happiness than all the creeds and beliefs in the world, it is clear that spiritualism is destined soon to put the value of all sects to the proof of actual experience. The only 'day of judgment' that spirits believe in, or are acquainted with, is the day of their death, when they find themselves face to face with their own consciences—not face to face with their Maker as we imagine—and are forced to remember every act and thought of their past lives. What avail will a belief in Christ's atonement be to such an one, seeing that no spirit has ever discovered that such a belief obliterated the memory of his past crimes? On the other hand, spirits teach that they can and do help one another to rise—the higher acting as guardian angels to instruct and enlighten the lower ones, natural depravity notwithstanding. The reader will see from this short outline that spiritualism has a great work to accomplish in connection with theological discussions."

The "great work" proposed to themselves by these candid and explicit deniers of the Lord that bought them<sup>2</sup> is plainly no other than the supplanting, if possible, of patriarchal and apostolic faith by "Christianity proper"—to repeat now for the last time Fritz's impudent and senseless pseudonym—or, in plain words, by a Christless and man-flattering religion of unlimited self-reliance and creature-worship. And now, with reference to the foregoing extract, on the supposition that necromancers are sincere in their statements, one cannot fail to notice with astonishment the strange degree of simplicity which they exhibit. No spirit has anything to say about the devil, therefore there is none! A conclusion both convincing and satisfying, it would seem, to Fritz. But could infatuation reach a further point than this? I shall not ask here what he thinks of the inspired story of Ahab and his prophets,<sup>3</sup> but reminding him of the appeal which he has more than once made to Jesus as the supreme teacher of truth and (though I hate to repeat the phrase) "the greatest spiritualist that ever lived," I shall beg him to address to his own conscience this question: Were *His* teachings respecting the devil, his angels, his works, and his end, *true or false?* It is vain to seek an evasion of this test. If Christ be true, these spirits are speakers of lies,<sup>4</sup> as it is written, whose end shall be according to their work. But can any one who knows his Bible, and who believes in the personal reality of Jesus Christ, and the genuineness of apostolic testimony,

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter ii. 1.<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xxii.<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 2.

expect, on turning away from Him who is in the fullest and final sense "the truth," to enquire, in defiance of God's warning voice, at another mouth than His, to receive any other answer than a lie? Again, the witness of the Spirit from above is, "After death the judgment," and that a day is fixed for that assize;<sup>5</sup> but the voices from beneath know nothing of that day. Fritz would, I will still hope, say with the apostle: "Let God be true." Nay, he writes his book to show us, among other things, that spiritualism is "sanctioned by Scripture." Then let him once more face honestly this question: Is God's voice in the Scriptures, or in that which, published and commended by his own pen, so persistently and flatly contradicts them?

By far the most wicked, however, of the many lies contained in the above extract is that which testifies of the *love* of God, immediately after attempting to explode as a vain and illusory dream the idea of an atoning Saviour from the wrath to come. Does Fritz, or does he not, perceive that every word that he writes in this strain is an insulting contradiction of the name and personal glory of Him whom he and many others of the same persuasion still profess to honour? that in thus writing he is crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame? that he does despite to the Spirit of grace, and is lying against the Holy Ghost? For what has that witness testified by the hands of His inspired messengers? "In *this* was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ix. 27; Acts xvii. 31.

we might live through Him." And again, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Without shedding of blood" declares the same true oracle, "is no remission;" and satisfies His own demand by the assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of the Father cleanses all who will believe from every sin.<sup>6</sup> All this, and much more to the same ever-blessed effect, is now openly published in the world by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But, as the true proverb says, "the full soul loathes the honey-comb;"<sup>7</sup> and Fritz and his like are full, being fed even to stupefaction on the vain delusions of self-righteousness, and puffed up with the windy imagination of a fallen creature's innate capability of self-redemption and self-exaltation to the higher spheres. May his blinded eyes be even yet opened by the power of Him whose long-suffering is salvation, to behold and adoringly confess the brightness of the Father's glory, and the effective proof and witness of His love, in the once marred visage of His incarnate and self-offered Son!

The reader who carries the last extract in his memory will be able to appreciate more readily and justly the numerous eulogistic descriptions of spiritualism and its effects which Fritz has collected from other quarters and introduced into his book. And here I may notice the disposition evinced so strongly in all parts of his work to have men's persons in

<sup>6</sup> 1 John iv. 9; Rom. v. 8; Heb. ix. 22; 1 John i 7.

<sup>7</sup> Prov. xxvii. 7.

admiration because of advantage; a common token of apostasy from God on the part of such as complain and murmur at His words.<sup>8</sup> Frequent occasion is taken to call his readers' attention to the distinguished social, or literary, or scientific positions of known or alleged "adherents to spiritualism;" and at page 32 a list is given of upwards of thirty of the more prominent of these names, the last being that of the Poet Laureate. But Jesus received not honour from men, and such as are truly His disciples are taught that it is not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit that the works of God are wrought; and further, that the powers and authorities of this world are at no time to be regarded as trustworthy vouchers of what claims to be of God.<sup>9</sup> But, in fact, he dares not speak of spiritualism as the truth of God, although he does exalt it practically high above the Bible while professing to demonstrate its harmony with what is written there.

I shall now cite the words of another of these nursing-fathers of the new belief. After stating that there are already in America more than six millions of avowed spiritualists, Fritz quotes the words of the late American professor Mapes, whose numerous titles of scientific and literary distinction are duly and conspicuously set forth, as follows: "Nothing," he exclaims, when speaking of the utility of spiritualism, "has been so effective in reclaiming the vicious and rendering the family circle a perfect school-house for Christian feeling. It has been the means of educating

<sup>8</sup> Jude 16.    <sup>9</sup> Zech. iv. 6; 1 Cor. i. 19, 20; ii. 5-8.

many a wayward and inconstant heart into prayerful feeling, gentleness towards the creature, and reverent aspiration to the Creator." There is something speciously alluring in the picture, but will it bear examination? "Christian feeling," if these words have in them any real meaning, has for its immediate object Jesus Christ the Lord, and as its exciting cause and constant motive a grateful, though utterly inadequate, sense of His redeeming love. Nay, our modern guide will object, that is old and unenlightened Christianity—mere "blind faith." Let it be observed also that humanitarian sentiment—a selling of the ointment for the poor instead of pouring it upon the Master's feet<sup>1</sup>—is in a natural harmony with this self-styled "reverent aspiration to the Creator," which carefully ignores His plainest sayings. In other words, men who are strangers to the light of God see nothing really higher than *themselves*, and in contrast to the true confession of a Christian are emphatically "their own."<sup>2</sup> The charities of such are a flattering of their native pride, but to *worship truly* is beyond their thought. God's glory first, and man's advantage afterward, is the order of the Spirit's teaching always; but utilitarian Christianity inverts the Lord's command to seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As to the "prayerful feeling" here spoken of, it is a mere delusion so long as the one offering and high-priestly intercession of the Son of God are disallowed, for no man cometh to the Father but by Him. Nay, in the

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 3-6; Matt. xxvi. 6-9.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

creed of a spiritualist, as has been shown already,<sup>3</sup> God is "the *Creator*," even only by a figure of speech, since we are assured that nothing came, or could come, of an absolute "fiat," though it be written that "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."<sup>4</sup> Such an idea would put man in too low a place—the place (so dear to His unfallen angels and to them that now know Him in His Son) of listening dependence on his Maker. No; this "reverent aspiration" is, like other reverent "freehandlings" of the truth of God, a modern euphemism only for that "way of Cain" of which the Scripture speaks; which has marked the children of the wicked one from the beginning, which stamps broadly the current literature of the day, and must reach its predestined climax at the closing of this age.<sup>5</sup>

I add a quotation from an American paper, with which Fritz closes his supplementary chapter: "To say it (spiritualism) is the work of the devil, is only to repeat the 'Pharisees' babble concerning Jesus and His marvellous works; to condemn it, without long and patient investigation, is a mixture of unsurpassed insolence and bigotry. Spiritualism, 'rightly understood,' harmonizes perfectly with the religious teachings of Jesus and the apostles, and affords the only practical demonstration of a future conscious existence."

In reply to this series of assertions, I affirm that if, as I believe (and as the writer also probably admits), the Bible is God's truth, spiritualism is most surely of

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, page 82.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jude 11.

the devil; that I condemn it, not hastily, not arbitrarily, but after an attentive hearing of its advocates; that it is, and has been proved to be, emphatically *self-condemned*; and finally that nothing can possibly be more false than the closing sentences of the above extract. For "the teachings of Jesus" affirm, among other things, the utter depravity of the heart of man, and give us to understand that things highly esteemed among men are abomination in the sight of God. But spiritualism entirely repudiates this doctrine, and represents the natural man as in a continual progress toward perfection, "gravitating towards the higher spheres," as intrinsically capable of self-elevation, and consequently needing no redemption. Jesus, again, speaks of His flesh and of His blood as meat and drink indeed, declaring that they alone have life who eat the one and drink the other. But spiritualism utterly explodes the notion of either sin or sacrifice, as we have seen. Sin is, with them, but undeveloped righteousness, and atonement therefore an offensive superfluity. "The Lamb of God" is in their eyes but an empty shade, and I look in vain in Fritz's book for any acknowledgment of Jesus as *the Lord*. It is needless to pursue the contrast. The statement of this unhappy writer is a falsehood of the grossest kind, not mitigated in the least by the saving clause, "rightly understood." For a right understanding of God's words, is their acceptance *according to their plain and evident intention*; for He speaks to men, and in their native speech. If He speaks therefore of sin, He *means* sin, and faithfully describes its origin,

its penalties, and the sole means of its remission. When He speaks of atonement, of covenant, of sacrifice; of His people being bought with a price, of His own free gift by grace, of the faith of His elect, &c., He uses words which no unsophisticated mind could possibly misunderstand. Lastly, the assertion that spiritualism "affords the only practical demonstration of a future conscious existence," is a covert but very decided denial of the resurrection of the Lord.<sup>6</sup> Faith is, no doubt, to the unbeliever an unpractical thing; but not so to those to whom the risen Lord is evident, although unseen, and whose hearts are flooded with a joy that only such can share.<sup>7</sup>

It would be but too easy to multiply similar proofs of the antichristian drift of spiritualistic teachings; for unhappily the catalogue of "standard works on spiritualism" is already an extensive one, while there were, in this country at least, five periodicals at the time of the publication of Fritz's book (and this number is increasing, as well as advancing in boldness of tone) devoted to the furtherance of the same most evil work. But it cannot be necessary, for the sake of any whose hearts are governed by the love and fear of God, to search these "depths of Satan"<sup>8</sup> any further.

<sup>6</sup> This denial finds a more recent and emphatic utterance in No. 90 of the *Spiritual Magazine*, where "Jesus Himself" is placed at the head of those "best and holiest who have worn our humanity," who have "returned as spirits to hold converse with those still on earth," in pointed contradiction of the Lord's own words in Luke xxiv. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. xi. 1; 1 Peter i. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. ii. 24.

The true character of spiritualism, as a power acting extensively upon mankind, the reader of these pages is now in a position to judge. By its votaries it is extolled as an unexampled blessing, its cardinal principle (which is also its chief distinctive lie), "that there is no such thing as death," being declared by one of its witnesses to be "the noblest consolation that has ever blessed humanity." Taken on its own voucher, it offers temporal advantages to men. It meets and gratifies, upon its own conditions, the cravings of natural curiosity, and aids in many ways the search of those who seek their own. It even undertakes to cure diseases of the body, as well as to rid minds of uneasy fears. It is, in short, a *gospel*, whose preachers are not afraid nor ashamed to set it in their estimate in an advantageous contrast to the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles; while an attempt is made at the same time to propitiate Christians, and engage their sympathy, by alleging that it is in full harmony with those doctrines *rightly understood*. But the utter falsehood of this statement has already been distinctly proved. The Christ of whom spiritualists dream is not the Christ of *God*, nor is their God the true God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What goes under the name of spiritualism is, in fact, a bold and mighty aggression of the father of lies against the truth of God, and will be met therefore by the most uncompromising hostility on the part of all who perceive its nature and who really love the truth. Like other artifices of Satan, it borrows largely from

Scripture for the attainment of its ends ; but because its aim is not the glory of God, but the captivating and misleading of mankind, it employs scriptural maxims and principles much in the same manner as the devil in person used his biblical quotations as the immediate tempter of the Lord. A false and rebellious inference, that is to say, is invited from a clear and acknowledged truth. That God, for example, is love, is affirmed by Christ's apostles and by spiritualists alike ; but the former sustain their declaration by an open allegation of its proof, and set forth Christ crucified as the irrefragable token and substantiation of their doctrine. The latter, with the same assertion on their lips, leave nothing to support their statement but the empty echo of its sound, while they pour an undisguised contempt upon the Holy Spirit's testimony to the suffering grace of our Lord. In their eyes He was a victim merely to sacerdotal bigotry ; but of the determinate counsel of redeeming Love which wrought its pleasure through the ignorance of them that killed the Prince of life they take no note.<sup>9</sup> Jesus was, they say, a martyred reformer, and the very prince of spiritualists ; but of His agony at Gethsemane, and His death-cry upon the cross, they do not give account. That cry *was* however uttered by the gracious Sufferer, in fulfilment of a prophecy recorded full a thousand years before.<sup>1</sup> *And it must be accounted for.* If God indeed forsook the only Just One in that hour, there must be a *cause*. The Holy Ghost declares that cause, and gives thus His true and proper glory to

<sup>9</sup> Acts ii. 23 ; iii. 15, 17, 18.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxii. 1.

God's foreordained Lamb. The spiritualist denies the existence of that cause, and snuffs haughtily and with disdain at the only acceptable offering for sin.

There is therefore a gulf impassable between the former and the latter, the upper gospel and the nether voice. Whichever is true, the other is indubitably false. And this marks very distinctly the line of duty, for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, in the presence of existing facts. The "old serpent," who, as the seducer and corrupter of God's children, has laboured long at his vocation, is rising in this day of opportunity to a bolder and more truth-defiant attitude. To exclude Christianity in favour of a system of belief which grounds itself on new and purely sensible evidences, or, in other words, to supplant the faith of God by demonstrations of the spirit of delusion, is the present object of the adversary. And success is promised to his efforts within limits set from eternity by Him who worketh all things according to the good pleasure of His will. Meanwhile to every man's conscience there is presented the alternative of salvation or perdition, through the holding fast or letting slip of the true gospel of the grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

The general commandment, addressed to all who are truly Christ's, and to which such impious reference has been already made by Fritz,<sup>3</sup> is to "try the spirits whether they are of God."<sup>4</sup> Their competency for this duty is the unction which they have received, and

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 22, 23; Heb. ii. 3; x. 28, 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, page 102.

<sup>4</sup> I John iv. 1.

their criterion is the record which God Himself has given of His Son. It is in obedience to this injunction that I write; to declare, by God's enabling permission, what this work of darkness really is. Now these necromantic spirits *teach*. They claim our hearing as messengers of wisdom and instructors of mankind.<sup>5</sup> But their wisdom is not that which cometh from above, and is given to His children by the Father of lights, but is, as described by the same witness, "earthly, sensual (or natural),<sup>6</sup> and devilish (or demoniacal)."<sup>7</sup> For with Him there is no variable-ness nor shadow of turning, but in their lips all His uttered truth becomes a lie. This wisdom is *earthly*; for it speaks of earth, and promises continuance and an ever-growing amelioration to that which by the word of God is reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.<sup>8</sup> It is *sensual (or natural)*; because its appeals are avowedly from faith to sense, and so from God to man. Its operation therefore is to accelerate a negative solution of the Lord's prophetic question, which He put to His disciples with reference to these last times.<sup>9</sup> It is *demoniacal*; because it claims to exercise a power which is plainly superhuman, but which is most surely not of God, nor of those angels "that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word."<sup>1</sup> It stands therefore self-confessed as the energy of "that

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, page 83.

<sup>6</sup> ψυχική.

<sup>7</sup> δαιμονιώδης. Jas. i. 17; iii. 15.      <sup>8</sup> 2 Peter iii. 7.

<sup>9</sup> "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.)

<sup>1</sup> Ps. ciii. 20.

wicked one" and his subordinate hosts—of "the devil and his angels"—concerning whom, whose work and whose end, the words of God have left no obedient child of His in either ignorance or doubt.

The utterances of this wisdom are worthy of its source. The words of the voices from beneath are all of them, as has been fully shown, with many varieties of form and expression, against the majesty and truth of the eternal God. By imputing His very voice, and those of His angelic messengers, to the spirits of dead men,<sup>2</sup> they show themselves to be precursors and of true kin to him who is to "open his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."<sup>3</sup> Professing to be benefactors of mankind, they seek, by specious and fair-spoken words, to entice men from the true and only way of peace to the abyss of falsehood and corruption. While prating, with great swelling words of vanity, of human elevation and continuous improvement, and of the ennobling natural destiny of death-stricken worms, they destroy the very basis of morality, as well as true religion, by affirming that whatever is allowed is right;<sup>4</sup> turning thus the longsuffering of God, which is salvation to the penitent, into a snare of perdition to those who follow their pernicious ways. They teach men to deny the Lord that bought them, and they contradict expressly the plainest declarations of the Holy Ghost; not only as the Witness and glorifier of Jesus as the Son of God, but also in His original doctrine of the

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, pages 41, 42.    <sup>3</sup> Rev. xiii. 6.    <sup>4</sup> *Ante*, page 53.

Creator and His works.<sup>5</sup> And if there is found in the mouth of any of these spirits of error an outspoken confession of some cardinal truth, such an apparent deviation into the way of righteousness augments only, when rightly considered, and aggravates the conviction of their general lie. By one of these the deity of Christ is acknowledged and insisted on.<sup>6</sup> Now if Christ be divine His words are surely true, and perfect is His ever-blessed work of obedience unto death. But, as we have seen, these necromantic oracles give a varied but consentaneous denial of the former (save as they are sometimes wrested to the service of the evil spirit of delusion), and disallow entirely the latter. It is in the hope of ensnaring Christians that the witness just referred to speaks; but observe the Satanic fraud of his concession. For if Christ be, as He is, God manifest in flesh in the eyes of all true Christians, whence comes the faith which confesses thus the Father in the Son but through the *Scriptures*? But the same *Scriptures* teach as clearly, and with much more fulness of repetition, the remaining articles of Christian doctrine which these demoniac witnesses deny. Such a concession is therefore, to any thoughtful believer, a transparent artifice of the deceiver, delivered too, as it was, as an expression of religious opinion merely, and far more than counterbalanced by opposing voices from the same quarter on other occasions;<sup>7</sup> while the *soi-disant* "clergyman" who addressed to the itching ears of his God-forgetting listeners this professional

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, page 82. <sup>6</sup> *Ante*, page 94. <sup>7</sup> *Ante*, page 112, *seq.*

note of orthodoxy, effectually nullified it by the rest of his discourse, acting in this respect like so many of his broad-church brethren in the flesh. Thus a confession which is the honour and chief ornament of a living faith is, in the hypocritical lips of these spirits, who with a cauterized conscience are seeking to seduce men from the faith,<sup>8</sup> but a greater and intenser lie. And if any are deceived by such false words, and will accept what claims to be *Christian teaching* from beneath, *their* light will also turn to darkness and their truth to falsehood, even as apostate Israel swore falsely when they said, "Jehovah lives."<sup>9</sup>

Let those then who have hitherto been careless or incredulous as to the true nature and character of this modern portent, and who may think it peradventure a harmless, not to say a laudable curiosity, to see and hear for themselves, and to attend spiritualistic *séances* for that purpose, as Fritz suggests, beware how they neglect this admonitory caution, and tamper to their own hurt with the accursed thing. For to become a spiritualist, or to accept apparent benefits through any of these necromantic agencies, in the face of this distinct exposure of the true character and origin of spiritualism, would be too much like a voluntary reception of the fatal and wrath-ensuring mark or number of the beast.<sup>1</sup>

In taking my leave of this most dreary and heart-distressing subject, I would add a further word of warning, especially to those who are young in the faith, against the disposition so commonly manifested

<sup>8</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.    <sup>9</sup> Jer. v. 2.    <sup>1</sup> Rev. xiv. 9-11.

in the present day (and too often sanctioned by men who claim to guide and feed the flock of God) to treat points of divine doctrine as open questions. I take a ready example. By the combined effect of plausible argument, of rhetorical appeals to human sympathies, and of a false though often highly specious criticism, multitudes of nominal, and not a few, it may be feared, of real believers, have already been induced to renounce, as a mere dogma of ecclesiastical invention, the Lord's doctrine of eternal punishment. It will not be without a wholesome deterrent effect, I trust, on some whose minds may be tending in the same direction, when they learn that the voices of these lying spirits are *without exception* in favour of this heterodox view, which has been accordingly placed, as we have seen,<sup>2</sup> among the established formulæ of the spiritualistic creed. I would beg them also to reflect upon the necessary connection which subsists between the solemn doctrine above mentioned and that of a divine atonement for sin. None who deny the former can thoroughly and intelligently embrace the latter as it is set forth in the Scriptures. Satan is well aware of this, and of course consistently denies them both, with all else that pertains distinctively to the personal glory of the Son of God. I would entreat, therefore, any who may be opening their ears to the flattering appeals so continually made to the human understanding as the arbiter of truth, to remember that the condition of salvation is to bow our minds and ears to *God's* un-

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, page 73.

derstanding; to take His thoughts in preference to our own; to sit down at His feet, and to receive His words; and, by believing *Him*, to gain that wisdom which is far from the proud and inaccessible to natural effort, but which rests as a crown of life and righteousness upon the contrite seeker of His face.

But who, in a clamorous and self-assertive age, and in the presence of a generation of lofty eyes, and pure in their own sight, though unwashed,<sup>3</sup> can do this and not be thought a fool? None, surely. But is not this a part of Christ's reproach, to bear which has ever been the proper ornament of them that know Him in His grace? *Rational* Christianity, as men speak, is *false* Christianity always. For human thought is totally inadequate to sound the mysteries of God. "Common sense" prepared materials for Babel, and Babylon the Great, which is so soon to be destroyed, is settled on the base of human pride. But the foundation of God's city is the testimony borne by the apostles of the Lamb, and embraced by the common faith of God's elect.

We cannot serve God and Mammon; nor has Christ any fellowship with Belial. If, therefore, God's children would walk worthy of their calling and their hope, they must set their faces as a flint against the divers and strange doctrines which in so many forms oppose themselves to the simplicity of Christ. If a worldly-minded believer be a faltering witness, a "Christian spiritualist" is a walking lie. *Through faith in Christ Jesus* the Holy Scriptures are able to

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xxx. 12, 13.

make men wise unto salvation.<sup>4</sup> Without that faith, which spiritualism derides, God's words are but a gin and snare to the self-confident, and a sea of danger to the fearful. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world, and the sole means by which God's saving power operates in His elect.<sup>5</sup> To them who continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and keep the word of Christ's patience in the midst of a corrupt and gainsaying "profession," is the special promise made of preservation from the hour of temptation, which must try the dwellers upon earth.<sup>6</sup>

That the contents of this little book fully vindicate its title will, I trust, be acknowledged by all Christian readers. It has been proved that spiritualism is, under all its forms, a satanic contradiction of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. My task is at an end, and its judgment is with Him who is ready to appear.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 15.      <sup>5</sup> 1 John v. 4; 1 Peter i. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. iii. 10; Col. i. 23; Titus i. 15, 16.

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