**“Spiritualism in America” The Bible Echo 11, 31, pp. 242, 243.**

THE *Catholic Mirror*, of May 23, (Cardinal Gibbons’ organm in America), devotes a column of editorial comment to the prevalence of Spiritualism in Baltimore. “Every morning,” says the *Mirror*, “in the [Baltimore] *Sun* we find half a column of announcements of where wonderful mediums are to be seen and séances are to be held, and all over town one hears of signs and wonders. Last week Spiritualism even figured in a murder trial, and at least one juryman was governed in his contribution to the verdict by his belief in the reality of certain incidents that were sworn to as having occurred at a sitting where spirits were called up... {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 242.1}

“Everybody, it is said, attends these séances, and many do beyond doubt; otherwise the mediums, who, while dealing in unsubstantial things otherwise, handle only hard cash, would not flock here in such numbers. Some of them are declared to be coining money, and in their waiting rooms, as described to us, are gathered, morning after morning, crowds of visitors of all classes, the scene not unlike that at some fashionable physician’s.” {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 242.2}

What seems to have called forth this comment from the *Mirror*, is the fact that Roman Catholics are included among these visitors to the haunts of professed intercourse between the living and the dead; and at this the Catholic organ professes some surprise. “Catholics among the rest,” it says, “are said to go to these places; but one naturally wonders what sort of Catholics. By the church, dabbling in Spiritualism is distinctly forbidden, and Father Clarke, S. J., of England, in an interesting pamphlet, has pointed out why. Any one who consults mediums positively imperils his or her spiritual welfare. The sincere Spiritualists frankly admit that at least nine-tenths of the operators are frauds and their exhibitions the dreariest sort of humbuggery.... But if any part of the exhibitions given belongs to the other world, what world is it? Father Clarke plainly tells us that such manifestations can only come from a diabolic source, with which any God-fearing and sensible person wishes as little to do as possible.” {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 242.3}

This view given by “Father” Clarke and indorsed by the *Mirror* is undoubtedly true; but what consistent ground has either of these Catholic authorities for advocating it? Do they not both believe in communication between the living and the dead? Is not the Roman Catholic religion based upon the doctrine of prayers to the dead, which bring aid from the latter to the living? Does that religion not hold that prayers to the Virgin Mary and a large number of “saints” who have been many years dead, are of vital importance to our welfare? Does it not also countenance many tales of the miraculous appearances of the Virgin and these dead “saints” to the living? There can be no denial upon these points. How then can Roman Catholics consistently oppose the idea that the dead appear and communicate with the living in the manner which Spiritualism sets forth? {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 242.4}

We think it not at all strange that the city which is the seat of the highest papal authority in this country, should also be distinguished as a center of the manifestations of Spiritualism. The two religions are founded upon the same idea, and naturally belong together. {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 243.1}

The time will come,—has indeed all but come—when false religions and religious bodies which have fallen away from God and retain merely the forms of godliness, will join hands with Spiritualism for mutual support and advancement. The testimony of the dead, who are supposed to know so much more than do even the wisest of the living, and especially of men noted for their high moral standing in this life, is a source of power which the politico-religious “reformers” of our time cannot much evidence(?) of this nature may have come to the surface as yet, it is as certain as that Scripture is true that there will be plenty of it forthcoming when these “reform” movements shall have progressed a little further. It is in such communications that Sunday “laws” and other oppressive enactments against such as adhere to God’s moral code, will yet find one of their chief sources of support.—*American Sentinel*. {BEST August 10, 1896, p. 243.2}

**“How to Know that the Bible Is the Word of God” The Bible Echo 11, 32, p. 250.**

THE Bible comes to men as the word of God. In every part it speaks to men as from God and upon the authority of God. But how shall men who do not know God know that it is the word of God? This is the question that thousands of people ask. They ask, “What proof is there of this? Where is the evidence, that it is the word of God?” {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.1}

There is evidence—evidence that every man can have—evidence that is convincing and satisfactory. Where is it, then? Let us see. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.2}

**WHOM SHALL WE ASK**

Being the word of God, where could evidence be found that it is such? Where should we expect to find such evidence? Is there any one of greater knowledge than God, or of greater authority than He, of whom we may inquire?—Certainly not. For whoever God may be, there can be no higher authority, there can be none of greater knowledge. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.3}

Suppose, then, we were to ask God whether this is His word, and suppose He should tell us, in so many words, “The Bible is My word,” we should then have only *His word* for it. But *we have already*, over and over; so that even then we have no more evidence than we now have in abundance: and the evidence would be in nowise different; for it would be the evidence *of His word*, and that we already have. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.4}

The word of God bears *in itself* the evidence that it is the word of God. It is impossible that it could be otherwise. If God had never yet spoken a word to the human family, and should this day send a message to all people at once, and in their own native tongues, that word, being the word of God, would *have* to bear in itself the evidence of its being the word of God; for the people could not possibly inquire of any other, because there is no person whose knowledge or authority is equal to this. Bearing in itself the evidence of its being the word of God, all the people could obtain this evidence by accepting it *as the word of God*. Each one who did this would know that it was the word of God; for he would have the evidence in the word, and by accepting it, also in himself. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.5}

**HOW TO GET THE EVIDENCE**

This is precisely the position that the Bible occupies toward the people of this world. It comes as the word of God. As such, it must bear the evidence in itself; for there can be no higher, no better, evidence. Whoever receives it as the word of God receives in it and in himself the evidence that it is the word of God. And so it is written, “When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it *not as the word of men*, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which *effectually worketh also* in you that believe.” 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 17:12. And again: “A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true *in him and in you*.” 1 John 2:8. And again: “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will [is willing to] do his will, *he shall know* of the doctrine, *whether it be of God*, or whether I speak of Myself.” John 7:16, 17. Thus he who accepts the word as the word of God has the evidence that it is the word of God. He who will not accept the word can not have the evidence. In rejecting the word, he rejects the evidences, because the evidence is in the word. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.6}

To make this yet plainer, if possible, especially to those who do not know that the Bible is the word of God, we may, for the sake of the case, suppose that the Bible were not the word of God, and that the God of the Bible were not the true God. Suppose, then, that we should find the true God, and ask him whether the Bible is the word of God; and suppose he should say, “It is not the word of God.” We should then have only *His word;* and the only way that we could know whether or not this answer were true would be by believing it, by accepting it as the word of God. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.7}

So, then, the only possible way in which any person could surely know that the Bible is not the word of God would be by the word of God. And even though he had the word of God to this effect, the only way that he could be sure of it—the only *evidence* he could have—would be by believing that word. But there is no word of God that the Scriptures are not the word of God, while there is the word of God that the Scriptures are the word of God. That word of God bears in itself the evidence that it is the word of God; and every soul who will receive it as it is, will have the evidence. The evidence will be plain to him who believes the word. {BEST August 17, 1896, p. 250.8}

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