**“Is It Not Spiritualism?” The Signs of the Times, 19, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

Nothing is more pitiful than to see people running into danger of which they are unconscious. And the fact that they might have known of the danger ought not to prevent people from sympathizing with them and trying to help them. We do not refuse to help a drowning man, although his own carelessness has precipitated him into the water. But nothing calls for more sympathetic help than that of men who are running into the snares of the devil when they think that they are in the way of life. True, the word of God is so plain that there is no need of anybody’s mistaking the way, but that should not cause us to censure. Men pity the blind, even though their blindness is due to their own fault. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.20}

It is therefore only for the purpose of helping those who may be in danger, that we call attention to the following paragraph; for we are sure that very many are in the same condition, who do not know their danger. On December 4, Dr. Talmage preached a sermon about “Rizpah on the Rock” watching the dead bodies of her relatives. After drawing many parallels, he said near the close:— {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.21}

I wonder if now there is an after-death watching. I think there is. There are Rizpahs who have passed death and who are still watching. They look down from their supernal and glorified state upon us, and it not that the after-death watching? I cannot believe that those who before their death were interested in us have since their death become indifferent as to what happens to us. Not one hour of the six months during which Rizpah watched seated upon the rocks was the more alert, or diligent, or armed for them than one another if glorified is alert and diligent and armed for us. It is not now Rizpah on a Rock, but Rizpah on a throne. How long has your mother been dead? Do you think she has been dead long enough to forget you? My mother has been dead twenty-nine years. I believe she knows more about me now than she did when I stood in her presence, and I am no Spiritualist either. The Bible says, “are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?” Young man, better look out what you do and where you go, for your glorified mother is looking at you. You sometimes say to yourself, “What would mother say if she knew this?” She does know. You might cheat her now, but you cannot cheat her now. Does it embarrass us to think she knows all about us now? If she had to put up with so much when she was here, surely she will not be the less patient or excusatory now. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.22}

Oh, this tremendous thought of my text, this after-death watching! What an uplifting consideration! And what a comforting thought! Young mother, you who have just lost your babe, and who feel the need of a nearer solace than that which comes from ordinary sympathy, your mother knows all about it. You cannot run in and talk it all over with her as you would if she were still a terrestrial resident, but it will comfort you some, I think, yes, it will comfort you a good deal, to know that she understands it all. You see that the victories of the heavenly conditions are so great that it would not take her half a second to come to your heart. Oh, these mothers in heaven! They can do more for us now than before they went away. The bridge between this world and the next is not broken down. They approach the bridge from both ways, departing spirits, and coming spirits, down, profound spirits, and sympathizing spirits. And so let us walk as to be worthy of the supernal companionships. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.23}

Dr. Talmage says that he is no Spiritualist. We can however, leave him entirely up to the question while we consider, for the benefit of others, whether or not that to which he has given utterance is Spiritualism. The question is: Does a belief in the conscious existence of the dead, and that they are interested in human affairs, and can even communicate with the living, constitute Spiritualism? Surely none can answer this better than those whose knowledge themselves to be Spiritualists. In order to learn what Methodism is, we go to Methodists themselves; to learn about Presbyterianism, we apply to Presbyterians, and so for a definition of Spiritualism, we must ask Spiritualists. From the standing made of the *Spiritual Magazine*, for many years the leading Spiritualist publication in England, we take the following statement:— {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.24}

Spiritualism is based on the cardinal fact of open communion and influx. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.25}

Also from a leading Spiritualist journal of America, we take the two following definitions:— {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.26}

The central idea of modern Spiritualism is the keystone of the religious arch. That is, a continued existence. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.27}

The very central truth of Spiritualism is the power and possibility of spirit return, under certain conditions, to communicate with those in the material form. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.28}

The idea that the spirits of the dead have a conscious existence, and that they can, under certain conditions, return and communicate with the living, is the sum and substance of Spiritualism. Therefore all who believe that the dead are conscious, and that they can return to earth to communicate with these with whom they were associated in life, are Spiritualists, whatever name they may bear. And it is a fact that there are thousands who would be shocked at the intimation that they could ever by any possibility become Spiritualists, who hold exactly these ideas. Why is it that they have such a dread of the name? It is because they think that Spiritualism is nothing but jugglery and trickery. They have associated it with table tipping, immorality, etc. It is true that such things have been connected with Spiritualism, but they are but manifestations of Spiritualism. Spiritualism itself is, as we have seen, nothing but a belief in the return and communion of the dead. Whatever is connected with Spiritualism is an outgrowth of that idea. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.29}

Having learned in brief what Spiritualism is we now consider the question of whether or not it is wrong in itself, and if so, wherein the evil consists. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.30}

**SPIRITUALISM AND THE BIBLE**

We have learned from the word of Spiritualists themselves that Spiritualism is nothing more or less than a belief in the doctrine that the dead do not really die, but that after the change which men call death they continue to exist, with keener perceptions and larger knowledge than they had while on the earth, and that they can under certain conditions communicate with people still on the earth. The question now before us is, Is this true? The Bible must furnish us with the answer to this question. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.31}

“The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness, I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is removed, and is carried away from me as a shepherd’s tent; I have rolled up like a weaver my life, he will cut me off from the loom; from day even to night will thou make an end of me.... But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee. Death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.” Isaiah 34:6-9, Revised Version. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.32}

“For to him that is joined with all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead man. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. And their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:4-6. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.33}

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Verse 10. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.34}

“While I live will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalm 146:2-4. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.35}

Still further, the patriarch Job asked the question, “if a man die, shall he live again?” and immediately answered it thus, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” Job 14:14, 15. What this “change” is we learn from the word of the Lord by the apostle Paul:— {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.36}

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.37}

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:4, 5. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.38}

Note carefully all these scriptures. The first four plainly state that the dead have no consciousness whatever. Therefore to claim that the dead are conscious is to contradict the Bible. Spiritualism does make that claim. Therefore Spiritualism is a direct contradiction of the Bible. The last three texts speak of “living again,” and of a change that takes place in order that men once death may “live again.” A man cannot go to Paris “again” if he has never been there once and gone away. If he was born in Paris, and has never left the city, it is impossible to speak of him, and speak correctly, as being in Paris “again.” So with living. The man who has never ceased to live cannot be spoken of as being alive “again.” In order for that to be truly said of him, he must have ceased to live, and then have been made alive once more. So the scriptures last quoted teach us that when man dies he ceases to live, and that in order to live “again,” so that he may praise the Lord, and receive a reward, a change must take place in him. This change takes place at the coming of the Lord. But Spiritualism teaches that men never cease to live; that at the change which people call death, they are more alive than ever before, therefore, again we find that Spiritualism is in positive contradiction to the Bible. But the Bible is the truth of God. Therefore Spiritualism is a lie of the devil. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.39}

And so we find it. In the form of a serpent the devil deceived Eve, and thus caused the loss of Eden. God had told our first parents not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, saying that if they did so they should surely die. But the devil said to the woman, “Ye shall not surely die.” That is just what Spiritualism says. It is because Spiritualism is only a deception of Satan that we feel so sorrowful to see men embracing the teaching of Spiritualism, while they think that they are opposed to that system. {SITI February 20, 1893, p. 119.40}

**“Spiritualism Against the Gospel” The Signs of the Times, 19, 17.**

E. J. Waggoner

Let it not be forgotten that Spiritualism is simply the belief that the dead are conscious, that they are interested in the affairs of men on the earth, and that they may communicate with them. That it is against the gospel is sufficiently shown in the fact that it contradicts the Bible. But we wish to trace a little more minutely its natural working. Take, for instance, the paragraphs quoted from Dr. Talmage last week. Read them carefully again, and see what is set forth as the motive for right doing. Is it the approval of the Lord Jesus?-Not at all, it is the approval of dead friends. The words are, “Young man! Better look out what you do and where you go, for your glorified mother is looking at you.” But that is not the motive to set before any man, in order to get him to do right. Even if his mother were alive, something higher than the fact that she is looking at him ought to be the motive of his actions. But the idea that people are alive after they are dead, and that they are watching the living, puts them in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ and the people. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.41}

Here is a fragment of an editorial in a religious paper that has a circulation of many thousands among all denominations of Christians:— {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.42}

Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds in loving communion with their children in heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life struggles, because of their constant sense of the overwatching presence of their dead parents. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.43}

That is the Spiritualist way of being glorified. But now read the Bible way: “But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6. That which can in reality be done only by the Lord Jesus Christ, Spiritualism thinks to have done by the spirits of the departed. Thus the Lord is robbed of the honor due him. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.44}

But further. Life and righteousness are inseparable. “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6. This is so because God alone is good. See Romans 3:9-12 and Mark 10:17. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and therefore the life of Christ was the life of God. His life is the only perfectly sinless life that was ever manifested on this earth. Therefore no one can be righteous unless he has the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God by faith. It is by the righteousness of one that many are to be made righteous. Romans 5:19. That one is Christ. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.45}

But as the life of God in Christ is the only righteous life, and righteousness is inseparable from the life of Christ, it follows that all who are made righteous by his obedience, are made so by having his life in them. It is in him that we are made the righteousness of God. So we read, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.46}

Now since righteousness is inseparable from the life of God, it follows that both eternal life and righteousness are attributes of Divinity. For one to claim that he has life in himself regardless of his faith, is to claim that he has also righteousness in himself, and that he has no need for the Saviour. For nothing is more certain than that Christ came to this earth for the sole purpose of giving life to men. See John 3:16; Colossians 3:3, 4; John 10:10. Therefore Spiritualism is opposed to the very fundamental truth of the gospel. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.47}

It is an easy matter to show, as we have many times, that Christ gives righteousness by giving his own life. But that teaching that would make out that man has life in himself, frustrates the grace of God, and makes out that Christ died in vain. The apostle Paul, after showing the necessity of faith in Christ as the only means of righteousness, says, “I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21. And in the next chapter he says, “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” Wherever life is, there is righteousness. Therefore the man who thinks that he has life in himself, unconsciously denies that Christ is the source of righteousness for us. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.48}

The tendency of this teaching is to throw man upon himself for righteousness. Thus the Pharisees who would not come to Christ that they might have life, “trusted in themselves that they were righteous.” But this tends most directly to vice and immorality, for man is by nature corrupt, and out of evil only evil can come. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.49}

Again, take the temptation by which Eve was made to fall. Satan said, “Ye shall not surely die.” Being deceived, she ate, and gave to her husband, and he ate. This disobedience “brought death into the world and all our woe.” All the iniquity in the world shall has resulted from a belief of the words, “Ye shall not surely die.” Nothing but evil can come from that belief. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.50}

For this reason we lift up our voice in warning against any approach to the doctrine of Spiritualism. Shun as a pestilence any teaching that makes Christ and His sacrifice of none effect; accept nothing but the teaching of the word of God; and remember that man has life only by that same word. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.51}

**THE RESULT OF SPIRITUALISM**

The statements made in the previous paragraphs may seem too strong by some who have not given the matter much consideration and therefore a few words further are in place. It is not charged that all who have held the doctrine that man does not in reality die are immoral. That would be a gross perversion of facts. Among the adherents of that doctrine have been some excellent men, and so there are still. Yet that does not disprove the charges made against the doctrine. An error is not made truth, nor is its error lessened in the least, because it is held by good men. The fact that Luther believed in the Real Presence did not make that theory true, but diminish the evil which must result from it. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.52}

While it is true that many good Christians have held the doctrine that the dead are conscious, let it not be forgotten that they held that doctrine in common with all the heathen. Moreover, that doctrine was at the very bottom of the heathenism. There has been this difference, however, namely, that comparatively few of the Christians who have believed it have in time just carried it to its logical conclusion, and held that the dead could return and communicate with the living. But it is an alarming fact that of late years a belief in spirit return and communication has greatly increased among professed Christians. It is in this feature that the greatest danger lies; but whatever results from this must be charged to the belief of consciousness in death, from which is springs. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.53}

The way has been prepared for the prevalence of vice in the last days, even as great as it was in the days of Noah. In connection with what has preceded. A few quotations will suffice to show how it will be brought about. A few years ago Dr. Curry, a leading Methodist divine, in a conversation with a visitor, as he lay on his death bed, said, “I have perfect confidence in the truth of Christianity, although I expect my conceptions to be changed when I get over there.” {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.54}

Most people would doubtless consider that a very natural thing. It only serves to show that they are expecting to have their conceptions of Christianity changed after death. And that indicates a doubt as to the perfect truth of that which they now hold. But what we are concerned with is the effect that such ideas may have on the living. As a matter of fact, those who die have no consciousness of truth or error; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave. When a man dies, he returneth to his earth, and in that very day his thoughts perish. But it is a fact that many people have seen the appearance of their departed friends, and have talked with them. How was this? Why, simply that Satan, who originated the doctrine that the dead are alive, and who is able to transform himself into the appearance of even an angel of life (2 Corinthians 11:14), is working to propagate the false doctrine which he started in Eden. All the appearances of the dead, and the communications from them, are in reality from the spirits of devils. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 119.55}

Now for another point. A few years ago a popular Baptist preacher in California became an avowed Spiritualist. He had, however, for a long time before he gave up his Baptist pulpit, been holding communications with spirits, whom he supposed to be the spirits of his dead friends. These spirits were familiar visitors to his family. Speaking of some of his experiences, he said:— {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.1}

Nearly half a score of old Baptist preachers, with whom I have been associated in the past, have already come to our home, and explained wherein their former teaching was erroneous. The whole system of biblical interpretation is far away from the truth, as everyone will find when he enters the spiritual world. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.2}

At a great religious gathering held in London less than two years ago, at which there were leading Protestant ministers from all parts of the world, one of the most applauded remarks was by a member who said: “We speak of holding fast to the faith of the fathers; how do we know what the faith of the fathers is now?” The idea was that the fathers may have made great changes in their faith since their departure from this life. Well, the spirits of devils will take care that all who are willing to be deceived in that way shall know what the faith of the “fathers” is now. These spirits will come with every appearance of those departed ministers, and will tell them, as they did the Baptist minister before referred to, that the Bible means a great deal differently from what it says. And those who believe that it does not mean what it says in regard to the condition of man in death, will be prepared to believe anything that these spirits tell them as to what it does mean. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.3}

This is an exact fulfillment of the words of inspiration by the apostle Paul: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy.” 1 Timothy 4:1, 2. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.4}

When men have thus cut themselves loose from the Bible, what is going to hold them?-Manifestly nothing. The Bible is the only safeguard against sin. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” Psalm 119:11. “The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” Psalm 37:31. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” John 15:3. Man can live only by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. So when men come to trust themselves into the hands of the devil, for an understanding of the Bible, what can follow except that he will lead them into the sins of which he is the author? And this he will do while he is flattering them with the belief that they are making advancement in truth and righteousness. Thus it was when he deceived Eve, and the apostle says to the members of the church of Christ, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.5}

It was even thus that the flood of error and superstition and immorality came into the church in the first centuries after Christ, resulting in the Dark Ages. As the result mainly of the influence of Origen, the mass of professed Christians came to believe that the Bible does not mean what it says. His teaching was that it means often directly contrary to what it reads, and can be understood only by a certain few. Of course the practical result of this was to take the Bible out of the hands of the people. For they would soon cease to read a book which they were told they could not understand, and which would be more apt to mislead them than to lead them right. Consequently they had nothing by which to test the truth of that which was given to them by their teachers, and so imbibed the grossest errors. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.6}

More than this, the teachers themselves soon ceased to read the word of God. For since when they did read the Bible, they put their own interpretation upon it, making it mean whatever they pleased, it naturally came to pass that they soon fell into the practice of manufacturing scripture without the formality of reading the Bible before giving it to the people. Since it was only their own ideas that they taught the people, it made no difference whether they read the Bible, and then gave out their opinions, or gave out their opinions without reading the Bible. And so the whole world was open to the reception of the grossest errors. The result was seen in the frightful immorality that prevailed everywhere, and nowhere more than among those who professed to be Christians. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.7}

When Moses went to Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel, the magicians withstood him with their enchantments. These magicians were Spiritualist mediums, and their enchantments were by the power of their master, the devil. Now read the apostle’s description of how it will be in the last days, even among those who profess godliness:— {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.8}

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” 2 Timothy 3:1-8. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.9}

There are many good people who do not believe that they could ever be thus deceived. They cannot if they hold fast to the truth of God. But as long as they hold to error, they have no safeguard. It is the first step that contains all the rest. There are many who believe that the dead are conscious, who do not believe in spirit return and communication. But when they see the exact images of their departed friends, and receive communications from them, they will believe errors in spite of themselves. Only those who are settled beforehand in the truth that the dead know not anything, that life comes from Christ alone, and that immortality is bestowed only at his coming, and that all spiritual manifestations are from the devil, will be able to stand. May the Lord help all the readers of this to cleave to Christ and his word. {SITI February 27, 1893, p. 270.10}