

Spiritualism -- Its Claims

SPIRITUALISM claims that when a person dies it is merely the body or outer shell of the individual that actually ceases to exist. It is alleged that the real person -- sometimes described as the ethereal body -- continues to live. This real person can, it is claimed, and often does, communicate with friends and relatives still occupying the earthly, or corporeal, body.

Spiritualists, including the late Sir Conan Doyle, have produced too many evidences of their success in communicating with intelligent beings unseen by man to thoughtlessly dismiss their claims as having no foundation. If we accept the plain teachings of the Bible that "the dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes 9:5), then reason demands that some other scriptural explanation should be found for the phenomenal things that may be seen and heard in the séance chambers of modern spiritualism.

If the theory of spiritualism is true, all those in the spirit world must indeed be very much more intelligent now than when they were here upon the earth as men and women. To be able to communicate with these and obtain the benefit not only of what they learned here, but also what they have discovered and experienced since departing this life should, indeed, result in a great enrichment of our knowledge and an increasing clarity of our vision of the meaning of life. But has anything of the kind come to pass? In reply to this question we can do no better than to quote the statement of the late Horace L. Hastings as follows:

"They have had free access to the public mind and public press, with no end of mediums ready to receive their communications, and thousands and thousands of inquirers who have anxiously questioned them, and earnestly desired to obtain information from them. They have had tables and slates and pens and pencils and banjos and pianos and cabinets and bells and violins and guitars; and what have we to show for it all? Their business in this world has been to instruct men, to help them, to make them wiser and better. They have talked and rapped, they have tipped and rattled, they have fiddled and scribbled, they have materialized and dematerialized, they have entranced and exhibited; they have told us many things which we knew before; many things which we do not know yet; and many other things which it was no matter whether we knew or not; but when we come to real instruction, reliable information, or profitable and valuable knowledge, spiritualism is as barren as Sahara, as empty as a hollow gourd."

However we may explain the supernatural phenomena of spiritualism, it remains a fact that its claims run counter to the positive teachings of God's Word with respect to the condition of the dead. David gives us an emphatic declaration concerning the state of the dead, saying of man, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." -- Psalm 146:4

The New Testament agrees with the Old in emphasizing the great scriptural truth that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and that death means the cessation of life, not a transfer to another form of life. The account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus is to the point in this connection. Jesus did not attempt to communicate with Lazarus while he was dead. He knew that the only way that Martha and Mary could speak with their brother again was dependent upon his being raised from death. Similarly, all the dead will eventually be raised and thus be able to talk with the living.

While Lazarus was dead, Jesus spoke of him as being asleep, thus resting in unconsciousness until the resurrection. That this is what he meant by his use of the term "sleep" is evident from his

explanation to his disciples, in which he said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." He did not say that it was merely the corporeal body of Lazarus that was dead but, rather, that Lazarus himself was dead; and when the Master called him forth from the tomb, "he that was dead came forth." -- John 11:1-46

In 1 Corinthians 15:12-18, where the apostle sets forth his great lesson on the resurrection of the dead, he explains that if there be no resurrection of the dead then "they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Certainly the Apostle Paul was all wrong in this statement if the claims of spiritualism are true.

From the time of man's creation Satan, the great deceiver, has attempted to prove that death is not a reality. God stated to our first parents that they would surely die if they disobeyed his law. (Genesis 2:17) In his dialog with Eve, Satan countered with the claim, "Ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4) In the light of unscriptural theology which has developed throughout the ages since that first lie was told by Satan, his assertion, "Ye shall not surely die," has come to mean, "You only seem to die."

However, this is wrong. We should accept as truth only that which comes from God in response to his invitation to "search the Scriptures." We believe that this is the safe course, especially in view of the fact that God's prophet recommends it rather than the methods of the spiritualists who seek information from the dead through the medium of those who "have familiar spirits," and of the "wizards that peep, and that mutter." -- Isaiah 8:19

Who, then, are these spirits of spiritualism? That the mediums of spiritualism do receive messages from beings and from a realm ordinarily separate and beyond the human, there seems little doubt. If these personalities with whom they communicate are not the departed spirits of the dead, who are they?

We believe there is positive scriptural testimony that not only some, but all, of these spirits are "evil spirits," "lying spirits," "seducing spirits." The Scriptures forbid that humanity should look to these for information, but clearly inform us that these demons or "devils" are "those angels which kept not their first estate."

These angels misused the power granted them of materializing in human form, to start another race. (Genesis 6:1-6) Their illicit progeny was blotted out with the Flood, and they were thereafter restrained from the liberty of assuming physical bodies, as well as isolated from the holy angels who had kept their angelic estate inviolate.

The Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:4) mentions these, saying, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, [**Tartarus**] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Jude (6) also mentions this class, saying, "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [proper condition], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Notice three points with reference to these evil angels:

(1) They are imprisoned in **Tartarus** -- restrained, but not destroyed. **Tartarus** is nowhere else rendered "hell" but in this one passage. It does not signify the grave, neither does it signify the second death, symbolized by "the lake of fire and brimstone"; but it does signify the air or atmosphere of earth.

(2) They have some liberties in this imprisoned condition, yet they are chained, or restrained, in one respect -- they are not permitted to exercise their powers in the light, being "in everlasting chains under darkness."

(3) This restriction was to continue until "the judgment of the great day," the great millennial day.

These fallen angels, or demons, are not to be confused with Satan the prince of demons, or devils, whose evil career began long before -- who was the first, and for a long time the only, enemy of the divine government; who, having been created an angel of a Superior order, sought to establish himself as a rival to the Almighty and to deceive and ensnare Adam and his race to be his servants. And to a large extent, for a time at least, he has succeeded.

As "the prince of this world" who "now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience," he has indeed a very multitudinous host of deceived and enslaved followers. Naturally he would appreciate the deflection of "the angels who kept not their first estate," and who were restrained at the time of the Flood; and hence he is spoken of as their chief, "the prince of devils"; and no doubt as a superior order of being he exercises some degree of control over the others.

The history of these demons, as given in the Scriptures, would seem to show that the evil concupiscence which led to their fall before the Flood still continues with them. They still have their principal pleasure in that which is lascivious and degrading; and the general tendency of their influence upon mankind is toward working mischief against the well-disposed and the debauchery of those over whom they gain absolute control.

We are well aware that many Christian people reached the conclusion that the Lord and the apostles were deceived when they attributed to the works of demons conduct that is now considered human propensity and mental unbalance and fits. But all should admit that if our Lord was in error on this subject, his teachings would be an unsafe guide upon any subject.

Notice the personality and intelligence attributed to these demons in the following scriptures: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19) Do human propensities "believe and tremble"?

The demons said to our Lord, "Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak (further): for they knew that he was Christ." -- Luke 4:41

Another said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" -- Acts 19:15

The young woman from whom Paul cast out the spirit of soothsaying and divination (Acts 16:16-19) is a good illustration. Can it be claimed by any that the apostle deprived the woman of any proper talent or power? Must it not be confessed to have been a spirit which possessed and used her body -- an evil spirit, unfit to be tolerated there?

Many of those who claim that the demons of the Scriptures were the spirits of wicked men and women who died and that these are the "lying spirits" acknowledged by spiritualists, have still another difficulty, for generally they claim that the spirits of wicked dead go to hell-torments, as they wrongly interpret **sheol** and **hades** to mean.* If so, how could they be so much at liberty?

* See "The Truth About Hell," a booklet in which every text of Scripture containing the word hell is cited and carefully examined in the light of reason, together with other scriptures and parables supposed to teach eternal torment.

"Witchcraft," "necromancy," the "black art," "sorcery," etc., are supposed by many to be wholly delusions. But when we find that they had a firm hold upon the Egyptians, and that God made special provision against them with Israel, we are satisfied that he made no such restrictions either against that which was good or against that which had no existence whatever.

The instruction to Israel was very explicit: they should not have any communion nor make any inquiries through necromancers (those who claimed to speak for the dead; that is, spirit mediums); nor with any wizard or witch; nor with any who had occult powers or charms; nor with those who work miracles by means of sorcery and incantation. Read carefully all of the following scriptures -- Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; 2 Kings 21:2,6,9,11; 1 Chronicles 10:13,14; Acts 16:16-18; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8; Isaiah 8:19,20; 19:3

The Bible story of King Saul's "séance" with the witch of Endor, a necromancer or spirit medium, as related in 1 Samuel 28:7-20, is an illustration of what is claimed to be performed today. Although the law with reference to these mediums was very strict and the punishment was death, there were some who were willing to risk their lives because of the gains which could thus be obtained from people who believed that they were obtaining supernatural information from their dead friends -- just as with spirit-mediums today.

King Saul was well aware that there were many of these mediums residing in Israel contrary to the divine injunction and his own law, and his servants apparently had no difficulty in finding the one at Endor. Saul disguised himself for the interview, but no doubt the crafty woman knew well the stately form of Saul -- head and shoulders taller than any other man in Israel. (1 Samuel 9:2) Hence her particularity to secure a promise and oath from his own lips that no harm should befall her for the service.

The methods used by the evil spirits through the medium at Endor were similar to those in use today. They caused to pass before the medium's mental vision the familiar likeness of the aged prophet, Samuel, wearing as was his custom a long mantle. When she described the mental picture, Saul recognized it at once as a description of Samuel; but Saul himself saw nothing -- he "perceived" from the description that it was Samuel.

Easily convinced, as people under such circumstances usually are, Saul did not stop to question how it could be that Samuel looked as old and as stooped as he looked in his fleshly life if he was now a spirit being and far better off; nor did he inquire why he wore the same old mantle in the spirit world that he had worn when he knew him as an earthly being. Saul had been forsaken by the Lord and was now easily deceived by these "lying spirits," who impersonated the prophet and spoke to Saul in his name, through their medium, the witch, necromancer, spiritualist.

The fallen spirits are not only well-informed with respect to all the affairs of earth, but they are adept in deceit. In answering Saul, the manner and style, and, as nearly as could be judged, the sentiments, of the dead prophet were assumed -- the better to deceive. Thus these lying spirits always seek to counterfeit the face, manner, and disposition of the dead. The response was, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?"

This answer corresponds to the Jewish belief that when one died he became unconscious in "**sheol**," the grave, waiting for a resurrection. (Job 14:12-15,21; Psalm 90:3; Ecclesiastes 9:5,6) Hence the representation is that Samuel was brought "**up**" from the grave, and not **down** from

heaven, and that his rest or peaceful "steep" was disturbed or "disquieted." -- Psalm 13:3; Job 14:12; Psalm 90:5; John 11:11,14

Saul was easily deceived into thinking that the Prophet Samuel, who had refused to visit him to have any further converse with him while alive, had been forced to commune with him by the wonderful powers of the witch. (see 1 Samuel 15:26,35) Saul's own testimony was, "God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams." -- 1 Samuel 28:15

Any rightly informed person will readily see the absurdity of supposing that Samuel would hold any conference whatever with Saul under the circumstances. (1) Samuel (when living) was aware that God had forsaken Saul, and hence Samuel had no right to speak to him and no right to give him any information which the Lord was unwilling to give to him. And Samuel would not do so. (2) It is thoroughly absurd to suppose that a spirit medium under condemnation of the Lord and prohibited the right of residence in the land of Israel could have the power at the instance of a wicked king whom God had deserted, to "disquiet" Samuel and to bring him "up" out of **sheol**.

Was Samuel down in the earth, or was he afar off in heaven? And had the witch the power in either case to command him to present himself before King Saul to answer his question? Or is it reasonable to suppose that any spirit mediums have the power to "disquiet" and "bring up" or in any other manner cause the dead to appear to answer the speculative questions of the living?

The "familiar spirit" of the witch, impersonating Samuel, foretold nothing which Saul himself did not anticipate. Saul knew that God's Word had been passed that the kingdom would be taken from him and his family, and he had sought the witch because of his fear of the Philistine hosts in battle array for the morrow. He expected no mercy for himself and his family, God having told him that David would be his successor. He even anticipated, therefore, the statement which was the only feature connected with this story that indicates in any degree a supernatural knowledge; namely, "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines."

The well-informed demons knew far better than did Saul the strength of the Philistines' position and army, and the weakness of Saul's position and army, and that he himself was already panic-stricken and making this inquiry of the witch medium because he was distracted at the situation.

Any one familiar with the warfare of that time would know (1) that one day's battle would probably settle the question, and (2) that the death of the king and his household would be the only logical result. Nevertheless, the familiar spirit erred, for two of Saul's sons escaped and lived for years. It is even denied by scholars that the battle and the death of Saul occurred the next day, but rather several days after the visit to the witch.

It is not surprising that Satan and the fallen angels, his consorts in evil, should know considerably more than do men concerning many of life's affairs. We must remember that by nature they are a higher, more intelligent order than men; for man was made "a little lower than the angels." (Psalm 8:5) Besides, let us remember their thousands of years of experience, unimpaired by decay and death, as compared with man's "few years and full of trouble," soon cut off in death.

But where was Samuel the prophet, if Saul would be with him the day following? Clearly, the meeting place would not be heaven, for wicked Saul was surely unfit to enter there (John 3:5); nor could the meeting be in a place of flames and torment, for surely Samuel was not in such a place. No, the familiar spirit spoke to Saul from the standpoint of the general faith of that time,

taught by Samuel and all the patriarchs and prophets; namely, that all who die, good and bad alike, go to **sheol**, the grave, the state of death, the sleep from which naught can awaken except the resurrection power of Michael, the archangel. -- Daniel 12:1,2

Of this passage Charles Wesley wrote:

"What do these solemn words portend?
A gleam of hope when life shall end? --
Thou and thy sons shall surely be
Tomorrow in repose with me:
Not in a state of hellish pain,
If Saul with Samuel remain;
Not in a state of damned despair,
If loving Jonathan be there."

Obsession at the First Advent

In the days of our Lord and the Early Church the method of operations on the part of these demons had changed somewhat from the practices in the days of Saul, and we read nothing in the New Testament about witches, wizards, and necromancy, but a great deal about persons possessed by devils -- obsession. Apparently there were great numbers thus possessed throughout the land of Israel. Many cases are mentioned in which our Lord cast out devils; and the power to cast them out was one of those conferred upon the twelve apostles and afterward upon the seventy that were sent out. The same power was possessed and exercised by the Apostle Paul. -- See Luke 9:1; 10:17; Acts 13:8-11; 16:18

Mary Magdalene, we remember, had been possessed of seven devils (Luke 8:2) and being set free from their control, she became a very loyal servant of the Lord. Another instance is mentioned in which a legion of spirits had taken possession of one man. (Luke 8:30; 4:35,36,41) No wonder that his poor brain, assaulted and operated upon by a legion of different minds, would be demented. This tendency of these fallen spirits to congregate in one person indicates the desire they have still to exercise the power originally given them; namely, the power materialize as men. Deprived of this power apparently have comparatively rare opportunities of getting possession of human beings.

Apparently the human will must consent before these evil spirits have power to take possession. But when they do take possession, apparently the willpower is so broken down that the individual is almost helpless to resist their presence and further encroachment, even though he so desires. Our Lord intimates such a condition (Matthew 12:43-45), suggesting that, even after an evil spirit had been cast out and the heart swept and garnished, if it were still empty there would be danger of the return of the evil spirit with others to repossess themselves of the man -- hence the necessity for having Christ enthroned within if we would be kept for the Master's use and be used in his service.

The same apostle who speaks of these evil spirits as "lying wonders" and "seducing spirits" (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; compare Ezekiel 13:6; 1 Kings 22:22,23) tells us that the heathen sacrificed to these demons. (1 Corinthians 10:20) And so indeed we find that in various parts of the world there are demon manifestations.

Among the Chinese these demon powers are frequently recognized, and sacrifices are offered to them: so also in India and in Africa. Among the North American Indians in their savage state these evil spirits operated after much the same manner as elsewhere.

The claim of spiritualists is that spiritualism is the new gospel which is shortly to revolutionize the world -- socially, religiously, politically. But, as we have just seen, spiritualism, under various garbs, has long held possession of the world and borne bad fruit in every clime.

It is well over 100 years since the rapping and tipping manifestations first occurred in Rochester, N.Y. (1848), and gave start to what is at present known in the United States as spiritualism. It began with strange noises in a "haunted house" and first answered a little girl who addressed the unseen author of the noises as "Old Splithoof." It had a rapid run of popularity, and judges, doctors, lawyers, and ministers and hundreds of thousands of others speedily became its votaries, until its friends and its enemies claimed that its adherents numbered over ten millions.

Believing in the consciousness of the dead, ignorant of the Scripture teachings on the subject of death and of their prohibition from holding communion with mediums, and very generally disbelieving in evil spirits, it is not surprising that intelligent men and women, having proved to their own satisfaction that supernatural powers were in their midst, as manifested by the rappings, tipplings, slate-writings, answers to questions through mediums, clairvoyances, etc., should believe these invisible powers which desire to converse with them to be what they profess -- their deceased friends.

These demons who impersonate the dead, seeing that a new dispensation is about to open, were prompt to apply their knowledge as far as possible to the advancement of their own cause and freely declared a new dispensation at hand, with spiritualism the guiding angel which was to lead mankind safely into it; and they have not hesitated to declare that the new dispensation means the utter wreck of the present social order and the establishment of spiritualism as the new order.

The strongly marked tendency of spiritualism toward free-lovism served to bring it into general disrepute amongst the pure-minded, who concluded that if the influence of the dead was properly represented in some living advocates of spiritualism -- then the social conditions beyond the vale of death must be much worse, much more impure, than they are in the present life, instead of much better, as these demon spirits claim.

Furthermore, abundant testimony could be quoted from prominent spiritualists proving that the tendencies of spiritualism are extremely demoralizing. So bold and outspokenly immoral did some of the prominent representatives of spiritualism become, especially the female mediums (and most of its mediums are females), that the moral sense of civilization was shocked; and for a time demonism under the name of "spiritualism" languished.

Now that its past is measurably forgotten or denied, it is reviving, but along somewhat different lines. The new method seems to be to have less tipping and rapping and fewer special mediums, but rather to make of each believer a medium, by the use of mechanical appliances. Indeed, almost all who become investigators are assured that **they** would make excellent mediums. This flattery is no doubt intended to lure them on, their ability to do "wonders" having a great fascination, especially for people of naturally mediocre talents.

Nor is the statement untrue: none but idiots are so stupid or so ignorant that they cannot be used as **mediums**; and they may become powerful mediums in proportion as they yield themselves

obediently to the "control" of these "seducing spirits" and their "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1) and are "led captive" by Satan at his will. -- 2 Timothy 2:26

The term "seducing spirits" exactly fits the case. From amusement of curiosity and answering of questions, sometimes quite truthfully, they proceed to gain the confidence of their victims, and in a plausible manner to break down the willpower and make slaves of them. Then they tyrannize in a most diabolical manner, leading into excesses of various kinds. Should conscience rebel or an attempt be made to get free from this slavery, all reserve is cast aside and the victim is taunted with his fall, persuaded that there is no hope for him, and that his only future pleasure must be in diabolism -- scriptures being skillfully quoted and cited apparently to prove this.

Good Spirits

There are good spirits, as the Scriptures freely declare; and these holy angels are charged with the care of all who are fully consecrated to the Lord. These, however, do not operate in darkness, nor through mediums, and have better employment than tipping tables, rapping out answers to foolish questions, and entertaining humanity. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" -- Hebrews 1:14

There is no basis for seeking or expecting communications from these holy guardian angels, God's will being that his "elect" shall walk by faith and not by unusual manifestations of sights or sounds. To this end he has prepared his Word as a storehouse of knowledge, from which his faithful shall be supplied with "meat in due season"; and he declares it to be sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. -- 2 Timothy 3:17

Furthermore, it may be set down as a sure sign of evil (either germinating or developed) for anyone to attempt to get control of the will and mind of another -- as in mesmerism, spirit mediumship, hypnotism, and the like. The Lord respects our individuality and appeals to it and urges our self-control in harmony with the principles of righteousness laid down in his Word.

But spiritualism asks an abandonment of self-control in favor of spirit control. No one of ordinary prudence would dare to give up the use and control of his mind and will to fellow men, much less to unseen powers which merely profess to be good and great and wise. No Christian who has the slightest confidence in the Bible as the inspired Word of God should submit himself to these influences as a medium, or even become an investigator of that concerning which God's Word has given us such explicit warnings that it is a way that leads from God and righteousness to sin and ruin -- mental, moral, and physical.

"We Are Not Ignorant of His Devices"

While a pure faith in the first principles of the doctrines of Christ is not to be accepted as a substitute for good morals, the latter are nevertheless to be considered as concomitants to every manifestation of divine favor and power. All, therefore, who deny our Lord Jesus as the Redeemer of mankind, "who gave his life a ransom for many," are not of God; and their "wonderful works," whether good or bad, are not to be credited to divine power.

It may be questioned by some whether Satan and his associates can be charged on the one hand with causing sickness and death (Hebrews 2:14), and on the other hand with healing the sick and casting out devils. Would not this seem to be an opposition to his own kingdom not supposable of any intelligent being? "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" -- Matthew 12:25,26; Mark 3:24-26

Very true. And this shows to what straits "the prince of this world" is reduced by the great increase of intelligence shining in upon the world during the past century. The demons must sham to be "angels of light," teachers of advanced truths and good physicians, both of souls and bodies, in order to re-ensnare those who are feeling after God, if haply they might find him. -- Acts 17:27

The words of inspiration give us to understand that Satan's struggles to retain control of mankind will be especially desperate at its close -- before he is "bound" for the thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more. -- Revelation 20:1-3

Here will be one of the "strong delusions" mentioned by the Apostle Paul, to cope with which God's people will have need of "the whole armor of God," that they "may be able to stand in this evil day." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Ephesians 6:11-13) We are now in the period of which he cautions us to be especially on guard against "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4:1) And the Apostle Peter tells us to "beware lest ye also, being led away [seduced] with the error of the wicked [one] fall from your own steadfastness." -- 2 Peter 3:17

The Lord tells us to watch and pray to escape the delusions which will be so strong as to "deceive if it were possible the very elect." (Matthew 24:24) Shall we, in view of these warnings, expect no "strong delusions," deceptions from the wicked spirits?

Satanic Powers Malefic

But if Satan and his faithful have a knowledge of curative agencies and skill in their application, let us not forget that he has also mighty to cause great harm. This has already been demonstrated. Take the case of Jannes and Jambres, the celebrated mediums and magicians of Egypt, who in the presence of Pharaoh duplicated many of the miracles performed by divine power through Moses and Aaron. They could transform their rods into serpents; they turned water into blood; they also produced frogs, although they could not duplicate the plagues of lice, etc. -- Exodus 7:11,22; 8:7,18

We have every reason to believe that the fallen spirits have learned a great deal during the past four thousand years and that they have a much wider range of power today. Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" and is malevolent enough to exercise his powers to the extent of divine permission.

There is no question that Satan and his legions are as able and as willing as ever to do all the mischief that divine wisdom may see fit to permit them to do. It only remains, therefore, to notice that God has not only foretold that he will permit them to have great power in the end of this age but also why he does so. He tells us that he is about to "pour out his indignation, even all his fierce anger," upon the world of mankind as a chastisement for sin and for a correction toward righteousness, to humble mankind and to prepare them for the blessings of the millennial kingdom.

All are familiar with the plagues foretold in the Book of Revelation about to be poured upon the world during the final judgment of this age. Of these the plagues upon Egypt were illustrations -- even though the coming plagues be described in symbols. But let us always remember God's care over his people to preserve them from every calamity which would not under divine supervision work out for them some valuable lesson or experience; and let us remember that he is able and willing to overrule the wrath of men and of devils, and to restrain the remainder that would hinder his grand purposes.

It is no wonder that spiritualism makes such a strong appeal to so many people. Who is there among the living that has not lost loved ones in death and who would not, if it were possible, thrill with the prospect of being able to communicate with them?

The true Christian hope concerning the dead is that they are to be awakened from the sleep of death and returned to their loved ones. We have already referred to the miraculous awakening of Lazarus from the sleep of death. Following this miracle, his sisters Mary and Martha were surely able to communicate with him. Indeed, they had him restored to them, and together they were able to resume the enjoyment their fellowship and home. This was but an illustration of God's provision for all the dead. "Verily, verily," the Master said, "the hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live." -- John 5:25; 6:40,44,54

The resurrection of the dead will take place when Christ's thousand-year kingdom is established in the earth. The Apostle Paul declares that Christ will reign until all enemies are destroyed, including man's great enemy, death. (1 Corinthians 15:25,26) In Hebrews 2:14 we are informed by the inspired apostle that Satan has the power of death, and that he is also to be destroyed by Christ. This means that never again will he be permitted to deceive mankind or enslave the people in the bondage of sin and death.

Man's recovery will mean his restoration to the perfection of life in which our first parents were originally created. It will mean also that restoration of man's dominion over the earth. The kingdom work of raising the dead is concurrent with the thousand year judgment-day period when those being brought back from the tomb will be on trial for everlasting life. Those who pass the trial successfully are represented by the sheep of the parable, to whom it will be said, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." -- Matthew 25:34; Genesis 1:27,28

But there are "goats" in this parable also; that is, those who, under the favorable conditions of that time, will refuse to co-operate with the laws of the kingdom, still insisting upon their own course of selfishness. These will be destroyed everlastingly. Their destruction is pictured by "everlasting fire," and it is recorded prophetically of them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41) From this we are assured that all who continue willfully to oppose God and righteousness are to suffer the penalty of sin, which is death.

When that final death penalty is inflicted upon the incorrigible, there will be no one, among either angels or men, who will be permitted to deceive the people regarding the nature of the punishment. No, Satan will not then be permitted to repeat his lie, "Thou shalt not surely die," (Genesis 3:4) nor will his angels, in an attempt to prove that the fallen Lucifer told the truth, be there to palm themselves off upon the unwary as the spirits of the incorrigibly wicked dead, for both Satan and all his evil messengers, who appear as angels of light, will be no more. Then every creature in heaven and in earth will heard giving honor and praise to the great Creator, Jehovah, who sitteth upon the throne of the universe, and unto his Son, the Lamb of God, forever.

Meanwhile, may we suggest to those who already have been ensnared by the deceptive practices of the fallen spirits, and who now recognize the truth concerning these feigned angels of light, that through earnest Bible study and prayer they seek to free themselves from this error of the wicked one. It will require fortitude of character and faith in God to do this, but we are assured that divine help is available for those who are determined to obey the Word of the Lord. Claim God's promises and rejoice in the freedom of the truth!