

## ORIGINS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

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### I. INTRODUCTION

"Spiritualism is spreading out its talons, the demons are working at top speed because they know their time is short, and our churches are fast falling into the clutches of the Enemy." <sup>1</sup> This ominous word of warning was given by Raphael Gasson, a former spiritualist medium, in 1966. To the historian who views history without spiritual eyes this statement will seem absurd. But to those who know that Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4) and that we are involved in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12), these words are most sobering. All we have to do is to take a look around, and it becomes quite apparent that occultism and spiritualism are on the rise in our culture. Television, motion pictures, and magazines are being saturated with "scientific" documentation of psychic phenomena.

True believers are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:11). Rev. Walter Cummins provides us with Satan's motive, "The Devil's primary motive was and is to be like the Most High as God, His coequal and to sit on God's throne, getting people to worship him in the place of the true God." <sup>2</sup> Today, Satan still is not able to come out blatantly and demand worship, so he promulgates spiritualism as a step in that direction. Again Gasson issues a warning:

Satan is demanding that people should worship him, but men love themselves too much to worship knowingly either the Prince of this world, or God. As a result, Satan has given the people something tangible in Spiritualism, which is not apparently Satanic, thus getting the worship that he requires indirectly.<sup>3</sup>

This paper will trace the events which have led to the resurgence of spiritualism in our day and time. The thesis of this paper is that Satan launched a major assault on several fronts during the nineteenth century to bring about the incredible popularity of spiritualism today. More specifically, he chose 1848 as the year to commence this assault. This date marks the beginning of a rising tide in political and social liberalism, scientific materialism, and liberal theology. We shall see how these things came to dominate Western thought during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and have paved the way for the new spiritualism. The year 1848 also marks the beginning of the new era in the history of spiritualism and occultism. The manner in which these different ideas and events coincide is absolutely incredible.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, science came to replace religion "as society's official truth seeking activity."<sup>4</sup>  
The new God of the nineteenth century was materialistic<sup>5</sup> and scientists developed a new religion of atheism. Barzun writes,

The important thing to grasp is that mid-nineteenth century scientists chose to assume that matter was the source of everything in the universe, including life and consciousness. Everything else was either an illusion or else subjective impression which could be 'reduced' to material fact.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, new ideologies were rising up, being based on

this scientific materialism. They rejected God and an after<sup>7</sup> life, and they looked for a millenium to be set up on earth.

Because of the new "truths" of science (such as Darwinism) and the political and social liberalism which stressed man rather than God, the integrity of the Bible came under great criticism during the nineteenth century. Basically, the Church bowed before the criticism. Before the nineteenth century the Bible was regarded by Christians to have been inspired by God. However, Church leaders were caught up in the current of liberalism.

The evolutionary interpretation of reality, which has so powerfully influenced the thinking of the Western world, assigned the Bible, in its different parts, a place within the supposed gradual development of religion from the crude apprehensions of primitive man in his cave-dwelling to the refined concept of ethical monotheism of our day.<sup>8</sup>

Not only was the Bible challenged from the outside, but it was now becoming fashionable for Christian leaders to deny<sup>9</sup> its true inspiration.

Satan's master plan was beginning to unfold. First, he opened up with a new "scientific" outlook which denied God and the spiritual meaning of life. Secondly, the integrity of the Word was no longer believed within the Church. The result of this is stated by former astronaut Edgar Mitchell, "The denial of the non-material aspect of life--its sacred participation in the miracle of existence--leaves people with no source of meaning and direction."<sup>10</sup>

As the mainstream of the nineteenth century thought (this materialistic outlook, began to breed hopelessness, the Devil

was slipping spiritualism in the back door, almost unnoticed. Spiritualism was being offered as an alternative to the scientific realism. It offered to people a false direction and meaning. One man who sees a connection is Barzun. In the book, Darwin, Marx and Wagner he observes:

No sooner, it seemed, had mid-century materialists destroyed the last remnant of belief in the hereafter then appeared spiritualism, psychical research, Theosophy, Christian science, Yogi and innumerable shapes of New Thought. The coincidence of the dates is remarkable...11

Throughout this paper keep in mind the year 1848. The events of that year can hardly be attributed to accident or coincidence. In that year Karl Marx issued the Communist Manifesto, Europe was shocked by a series of revolutions, an American theologian presented a new theory of language, and modern-day spiritualism was born. We will be looking at the background, development and significance of these events and ideas.

## II. POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

The scene is the continent of Europe. Under the leadership of Metternick, European governments are tied together under a tight conservative grip. Among the intellectuals and the working classes, unrest is brewing. The old order holds precarious authority throughout the continent. Suddenly in the spring of 1848 the whole continent erupts with revolution. Fifteen countries feel the impact of revolution as the old order struggles to maintain control. They are successful in crushing the rebellion, and yet in winning the battle, they are soon to lose the war.

The revolutions of 1848 "ushered in a new era in the political life of the West."<sup>12</sup> The conservative regimes were only able to keep control temporarily. And yet it was not the working classes which achieved the victory, but a group of intellectuals. As the historian, Lewis Namier, put it:

...intellectuals played in it an extraordinary, prominent role. They formulated the revolutionary theories and slogans, led the mobs and took charge of the national assemblies and provisional governments that came into power once legitimate authority collapsed.<sup>13</sup>

The revolutions were not won with military armaments, but by the power of words and with a philosophy of socialism. The intellectuals promised the improvement of the human race. One group of historians noted the results of these revolutions.

"The year 1848 marked the end of conservatism in its classical, Metternichian guise as a factor in European politics. After a brief initial reaction, the decades that followed witnessed the unimpeded spread of liberal principles and doctrines."<sup>14</sup>

The greatest of these new intellectuals was preparing what was perhaps the most influential political doctrine of all time. The man was Karl Marx; the document was the Communist Manifesto. A biographer of Marx claims, "As an instrument of destructive propaganda it has no equal anywhere; its effect upon succeeding generations is unparalleled outside religious history."<sup>15</sup> Is it mere coincidence that this document was written in 1848 and that it proposed one of the most godless socio-economic systems in the history of man? We shall see how this was a vital link in the Adversary's plan to bring about the spiritualism which is spreading across our world today.

The thesis of the Communist Manifesto, as stated by Marx, is "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."<sup>16</sup> Marx looked at history through the lenses of materialism. In 1848 this class struggle, fanned by the intellectuals, was heightened. Throughout the nineteenth century the idea of struggle was promoted.

Under the Marxist system little value was placed on the individual. Alexeiv notes, "According to the Marxist theory, man as a historical fact has no higher value, no absolute moral value. Marxism acknowledges human value only in so far as man's life is conditioned by the course of history."<sup>17</sup>

Marxism sees only the outer man of body and soul, and it rejects the inner man of spirit as being a mere illusion. Thus human reason dominates over revelation knowledge.

Marx contended that men's thoughts and ideals are formulated and changed in their quest for material goods. He said,

Morals, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies and the forms of consciousness corresponding to them, here no longer retain a look of independence. They have no history, they have no development, but men, in developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter along with this reality of theirs, their thoughts and the product of their thoughts.<sup>18</sup>

As you can see, this way of looking at history rejects completely the idea of truth, and it leads to a belief in the evolution of thoughts. Marx saw this evolution carry over into the social sphere, where the individual lost significance and it was the class which counted.<sup>19</sup>

The outstanding man on the scientific scene was Charles Darwin, a man to whom Marx was deeply indebted. Darwin's new and revolutionary theory of evolution (first declared in the Origin of Species in 1859) gave great support to Marx's political theories. Darwin argued that nature is also in struggle, with only the fittest surviving. Throughout nature is an evolution of species with no need for a Godly design. Under such conditions the notion of a Deity with a will was ruled out, as was also any individual purpose other than survival or reproduction.<sup>20</sup> You can see how easily Marx could use Darwin to degrade the individual and exalt the class.

Perhaps the most profound impact of Darwinism was its effect on the Bible. According to Cairns, "The biological dogma of evolution, when applied to the Bible by analogy, made Christianity the product of a system of religious evolution. The denial of the authority of the Bible was a logical outcome."<sup>21</sup>

The effects of this new concept of religious evolution

were quite serious. Man was not guilty of original sin, for he was progressing and had never fallen. Thus there was no need  
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for Jesus Christ as a saviour.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution rested on some very tenuous premises. However, because of the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, it was welcomed with opened arms and became accepted as scientific truth. This is a prime example of how the Adversary systematizes error. Even Darwin himself had serious doubts.

It may not be widely known, but the great and idolized Darwin himself seemed to have grown somewhat skeptical and stated outright that if even the slightest fault was ever detected in his theory of mechanistic-materialistic evolution the whole structure would, and should collapse. Such faults actually were detected, but the collapse did not happen. Instead the Neo-Darwinists arose.<sup>23</sup>

Marx and Darwin proved to be two of the three great intellectual giants of the mid-nineteenth century. The third man responsible for the spread of the new liberalism across Europe was Richard Wagner. Wagner said in 1849, "My task is this: to  
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bring revolution wherever I go."

Wagner was just beginning to come to fame in the musical world when the revolutions of 1848 broke out. He was involved in the uprisings in France and Germany, and he wrote in a tract in 1848, "I will destroy the existing order of things... So up, ye peoples of the earth. Up, ye mourners, ye oppressed, ye  
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poor."

There is no question that Marx as a political economist and Darwin as a scientist had a tremendous impact on the history



of civilization, but how much influence could a musician have? Plato wrote in The Republic that, "the introduction of a new kind of music must be shunned as imperiling the whole state; since styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions."<sup>26</sup> Richard Wagner changed the course of music and by the turn of the century "he all but dominated the intellectual life of the Western world."<sup>27</sup>

The doctrines which arose from Marx and Darwin can be termed pantheism. Rev. Kelly gives this definition and analysis,

Pantheism is a favorite doctrine of collectivists, because it offers a concept of man which, on religious grounds, subordinates the individual to the collective. It also functions as an effective tool in the subversion of God-centered religion by making religion man-centered and thereby giving a religious sanction to the doctrines and programs of political collectivism. At the same time pantheism can be used as a stage in bringing people from theism to atheistic materialism.<sup>28</sup>

Wagner did much to promote this pantheism in the field of music and German nationalism. In order to set a background for Wagner, let us look briefly at Beethoven. His last symphony was the Ninth. This symphony profoundly influenced Wagner, remaining his ideal throughout his life. In fact, Wagner believed his works to be a continuation of Beethoven's Ninth.<sup>29</sup> Wagner himself wrote,

The last symphony of Beethoven is the redemption of music from out of her peculiar element into the realm of universal art. It is the human evangel of art of the future. Beyond it no further step is possible, for upon it the perfect art work of the future alone can follow: the universal drama which Beethoven forged the key.<sup>30</sup>

Notice the terms "universal", and "human evangel". These are very much in fitting with the new intellectual outlook of

the nineteenth century. Schonberg mentions some of the features of this symphony which so affected Wagner. He said that it was "a defiance of form, a call for brotherhood, a titanic explosion, a spiritual influence... It is absolute music, but it clearly represents struggle..."<sup>31</sup>

Building his art on the foundation laid by Beethoven, Wagner established what Barzun terms a "movement-Wagnerism-- a state of mind, a religion ... the spread of Wagner's influence far beyond the confines of the musical world; the fanatical devotion of non-musicians to his name, and of Perfect Wagnerites to his cult."<sup>32</sup> Wagner himself fed his ego on this movement. In 1855 Francois Joseph Fetis, a French writer, wrote a most alarming commentary on this movement,

...a party has been formed only a few years ago that has the audacity to proclaim itself as the creator of the only true and complete art, and anything previous to it has been mere preparation. The disdain which they affect toward form proceeds from the difficulty they have adhering to it without betraying poverty of matter. Disorder, phrases merely sketched and without construction ...In Germany they have taken control of magazines to ensure the triumph of their revolutionary attempts. A silence as of death reigns in those same writings about the work of artists who follow other ways. Some serious men have tried to enlighten public opinion by a rational criticism to this shameful socialism, but have not been able to make their voices heard. All approaches to the press have been closed to them. It would take too long to relate the means used by the brethren and friends for the glorification of their chief; their maneuvers to get possession of theaters; their falsehoods to smother the truth when it tries to make itself heard; their concerted plan to blacken and eliminate those not with them.<sup>33</sup>

Apparently there was great effort exerted to see that the ideas which Wagner promoted became rooted in the culture. A Wagner production was "evolutionary, social and nationalistic" and intended to "usher in the regeneration of mankind."<sup>34</sup> Considering Wagner's musical arrangements and themes, it is not surprising that Adolph Hitler remarked, "Whoever wants to understand National Socialistic German must know Wagner."<sup>35</sup>

Brotherhood would be the call of the new liberalism as Marx and Darwin promoted their theories of biological and class struggles. Wagner picked up on this idea of struggle and built it into his operas. According to Dorpulen,

The dominant theme of most of his operas is that of a world ruined by greed and deceit in which the hero succumbs to the forces of evil. In his writings Wagner saw these forces embodied in a materialistic civilization that catered to man's lowest instincts and whose corrupting influence was aided and abetted by the capitalist system.<sup>36</sup>

Together Darwin, Marx and Wagner represent realism and scientific truth.<sup>37</sup> Dorpulen writes,

The world then, which Darwin, Marx and Wagner pictured, was a world of mechanical materialism, propelled by impersonal automatic forces, a world which was amoral and unfeeling, a world without beauty, and sensitivity, and one in which art could have no function of its own, but could merely serve ulterior social ends...<sup>38</sup>

Marx, Darwin and Wagner thus were instrumental in bringing about the destruction of a spiritual side of life, and replacing it with scientific materialism. Barzun sums it up thus: "I have spoken of their contributions as forming a single stream of influence which I have called mechanical materialism, the cold world in which man's feelings are illusory and his will powerless."<sup>39</sup>



### III. THEOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

Perhaps the most significant development of the spiritual assault of the nineteenth century was the corrupting of the Word in the theological world. A new view of Biblical scholarship was being taken. The same problem arose that Paul warned about in II Corinthians 2:17, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God ..." The word "corrupt" means to adulterate or to water down. When Jesus Christ and when Paul spoke, as when any man speaks the truth with believing, their word was with power. In Matthew 7:28-29 we read, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." In the nineteenth century the religious leaders began to compromise and to lose the power and authority of the Word.

Richardson, himself a liberal theologian, gives a beautiful statement of the change in Biblical research,

At the end of the eighteenth century, as throughout it, the traditional conception of divine revelation was still everywhere accepted in Western Christendom. Catholics and Protestants alike conceived of revelation as contained in inerrant propositions written down in the Bible by authors who were directly inspired by the Spirit of God. By the end of the nineteenth century this traditional view was no longer possible for those who had accepted the implication of what we have called the revolution in historical method.<sup>40</sup>

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, it was re-

garded as the theologian's role to arrange in logical order  
the inerrant, revealed truths in the Bible.<sup>41</sup> The Holy Spirit  
was regarded as the author of the entire Word and the whole Bible  
was considered equally true. The belief was that "God's rev-  
elation of himself was something which he had communicated to  
mankind in the form of propositions written in a book."<sup>42</sup>

With the revolution in the historical method, there was a  
change of view in regard to Biblical revelation, authority,  
and inspiration. God was no longer regarded as the author, and  
it was "possible to admit that the Bible was not everywhere eq-  
ually true, but that there were different conceptions of God's  
nature and human responsibilities in different parts."<sup>43</sup>

A great summary of what has happened to Biblical theology  
in the last 125 years is provided by Hughes,

Correlative with this outlook are the concep-  
tions of the Bible as not in itself the Word of God,  
but as containing the Word of God, as conveying truth  
through the 'kernel' of myth, independently of whether  
or not the 'outer shell'-- in which the myth is en-  
closed-is historically true, and even as -- by a str-  
ange quirk in divine providence-- conveying truth  
through error. Conceptions of this kind are marked  
by a subjectivism which contrasts noticeably with the  
classical view of the Bible as an objective revelation  
given by God.<sup>44</sup>

Darwin's new "scientific" approach shook the theological  
world, and Christian leaders for the most part admitted the er-  
ror of their ways. This was particularly true in regard to the  
Genesis account of creation, where they began to admit that  
science and not the Bible was correct.<sup>45</sup> This compromise, which  
granted "science" more integrity than the Bible, vastly affected

Biblical scholarship. It became profoundly influenced by the theory of evolution. Another liberal theologian states,

Happily, however, science had been proving itself to be a handmaiden of biblical studies in a more effective if less spectacular way. Throughout the century there had been developing a new approach to the Bible, based on scientific methods of historical and literary criticism which was able in the end to present the Church with a rational and intelligent alternative to a dog-in-the manger adherence to the doctrine of the verbal infallibility of Scripture. In this the principle of evolution found its proper place.<sup>46</sup>

The beginning of the revolution occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century with a Prussian theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher.<sup>47</sup> This man, according to the Encyclopedia

Britannica, was "one of the most influential thinkers of nineteenth century Protestantism."<sup>48</sup> Qualleon adds that Schleiermacher "became, in fact, the founder of a New Rationalism which has largely dominated the religious thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."<sup>49</sup>

Let us take a look at some of the views of Schleiermacher. His greatest argument was that the absolute authority was Christ and not the scriptures.<sup>50</sup> Thus he opened the doors to finding Christ through inner experiences rather than intellectual propositions.<sup>51</sup> The scriptures form only part of the entire testimony of the Church in presenting Christ to men and do not require an exegetical treatment unique to themselves.<sup>52</sup> According to Cairns, Schleiermacher "made feelings or emotions the element out of which religious experience develops. Man is freed from a dependence upon an historical revelation of the will of God and needs only to cultivate a feeling of dependence to enjoy a

satisfactory religious experience."

Perhaps the most influential American theologian of the nineteenth century was the Congregationalist minister, Horace Bushnell. He has been termed the Father of American Liberalism. We will be looking at his ideas, and specifically, at a theory of language he first declared at Harvard in 1848, and then had published in 1849 and revised in 1851. Again, take note of that date, 1848, in relationship to the other things which were occurring at that time.

Ahlstrom sets the significance of Bushnell's life. He calls Bushnell the "American Schleiermacher," and claims "that more than any other one theologian he stands at the head of the main current of American theological liberalism."<sup>54</sup> Cross adds that Bushnell "mapped the course by which orthodoxy was moving toward liberal Protestantism."<sup>55</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica contributes this analysis about Bushnell:

Nevertheless his thought was so coherent, his argumentation so plausible and his manner of expression so persuasive that his interpretation of Christianity worked a powerful influence on the course of liberal theology in America. He remains a major figure in the country's intellectual history.<sup>56</sup>

Bushnell came upon the scene when traditional beliefs in the integrity of the Bible were being challenged by science,<sup>57</sup> apathy, materialism and other factors. His work is described by Ahlstrom as conciliatory and apologetic, for Bushnell was "overwhelmed by the apparent fact that 'a time of jeopardy has come.'<"<sup>58</sup> By the time the Origin of Species was published in 1859, Bushnell had laid the foundations which would allow Darwinism to be incorporated in Christian religion. Ahlstrom writes,



Time was to prove these foundations very satisfactory for the construction of a comprehensive alternative theory of development which would in a religious way incorporate all that Darwin was to say and nearly all that the 'Social Darwinians' were claiming.<sup>59</sup>

Bushnell's first volley was fired in 1847 in a book called Christian Nurture. He expressed that there was no need for the experience of conversion, but that a child grows into grace rather than growing in grace. Furthermore, he held to a moral influence theory of atonement.<sup>60</sup> This did away with the legal requirements of atonement, and the need to accept the fall of man. Thus evolution was a perfectly plausible explanation.

The bomb was dropped in 1848 in a speech at Harvard and then in 1849 in the writing, "Dissertation on Language." Perhaps Bushnell's work has not been regarded by historians with great importance, as have Marx's Communist Manifesto or Darwin's Origin of Species, but it may have much more significance from a spiritual perspective. Ahlstrom gives this analysis of Bushnell's theory of language, "Above all, his conception of religious language altered traditional views of creeds, and opened the way for the understanding and reinterpretation of the Scriptures and of Christian doctrine."<sup>61</sup>

Bushnell lost trust in the divine language of the scriptures and he looked to science for promise of a language in which truth would be consistent and permanent.<sup>62</sup> He believed that there was such a difference between spiritual thought and form that language served only to distort it.<sup>63</sup>

Anlstrom provides this summary of Bushnell's work:

The most useful key to Bushnell's method of achieving his purpose is the theory of language which he made public in 1849. To him all words are faded and indistinct metaphors. Except in their simplest and least used sense they can not be transferred from one mind to another like coins. Each word is organically related to its history, its user's history and the situation-- that is, to a context whose only limit is the Logos of the creation. Creeds, confessions, doctrinal statements and even the scriptures must be so understood. They are linguistic and hence poetic efforts to speak the unspeakable, to frame the illimitable Mystery. Paradox and contradiction thus appear as unavoidable aspects of religious discourse.<sup>64</sup>

A few excerpts will now be provided from Bushnell's "Dissertation on Language." From these quotations you will see that Bushnell believes in the lack of integrity of words and language; that they cannot express absolute, but only relative truth. In fact language is likely to express spiritual truth falsely according to Bushnell.

Words of thought or spirit are not only inexact in their significance, never measuring the truth or giving its precise equivalent, but they always affirm something which is false, or contrary to the truth intended.<sup>65</sup>

Words...are only hints, or images, held up before the mind of another, to put him on generating or reproducing the same thought.<sup>66</sup>

There is no word of thought or spirit that exactly measures its ideas, or does anything more than offer some proximate notion, or shadow of the thought intended.<sup>67</sup>

In algebra and geometry, the ideas themselves being absolute, the terms or names also may be; but in mental science or religion, no such exactness is possible, because our apprehensions of truth here are only proximate and relative.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed it (language) is such an instrument, that I see not how anyone, who rightly conceives its nature, can hope any longer to produce in it a real and proper system of dogmatic truth. He will doubt the capacity

of language to serve any such purpose. He will also suspect that our logical or deductive processes under it, are more likely, in general to be false than true. And yet, in the matter of Christian doctrine, or Christian theology, we are found committing ourselves most unsuspectingly to language and logic, as if the instrument were sufficient and the method infallible.<sup>69</sup>

Bushnell directs his criticism specifically against a literal interpretation of the Bible. He feels that we cannot expect the scriptures to be logical and consistent, and that we cannot cut up "the body of truth into definite and dead morsels." (Bushnell's terminology for endeavoring to rightly divide the Word). From the following excerpts you will see how Bushnell carried through Schleiermacher's emphasis on experience over doctrine, and that somehow through experience man could "receive the truth of God in a more entire organic and organific manner..."

Never was there a book uniting so many contrarious aspects of one and the same truth; the more complete, therefore, because of its manifoldness; nay, the more really harmonious for its apparent want of harmony.<sup>70</sup>

There is no book in the world that contains so many repugnances or antagonistic forms of assertion as the Bible. Therefore, if any man please to play off his constructive logic upon it, he can easily show it up as the absurdest book in the world...How then are we to receive it and come unto its truth? Only in the comprehensive manner just now suggested; not by destroying repugnances, but allowing them to stand, offering our mind to their impressions, and allowing it to gravitate inwardly towards the whole of truth which they coalesce.<sup>71</sup>

Probably the most contrarious book in the world is the gospel of John; and that for the very reason that it contains more and loftier truths than any other. No good writer, who is occupied in simply expressing truth, is ever afraid of inconsistencies or self-contradictions in his language.<sup>72</sup>

The scriptures will be more studied than they have been, and in a different manner--not as a magazine of propositions and mere dialectic entities, but

as inspirations and poetic forms of life, requiring also divine inbreathing and exaltations in us, that we may ascend into their meaning...we shall seem to understand less, and shall actually receive more; no false pre-cision, by cutting up the body of truth into definite and dead morsels, throwing us into states of excision and division, equally manifold. We shall receive the truth of God in a more entire organic and organific manner, as being itself an essential vital power.<sup>73</sup>

Bushnell believes that it is science which will provide the answer. He saw in nature a "grammar of relations" which could provide "a perfect analogon of the whole universe of thought and spirit." Thus as science revealed the universal laws of nature we would be able to conceive "the true universe of thought and spirit."<sup>74</sup>

By denying the ability of words to express spiritual truth and in discrediting the integrity of the scriptures, while looking to science as the great hope in developing a universal language of truth, Bushnell sold out true Christian theology to science. Marxism and Darwinism had a free ticket to infiltrate into and corrupt the Christian Church. In the rising tide of liberalism in politics, economics, science and religion, belief in God's Word was being rapidly washed away in the nineteenth century. The scene was being set for the phenomenon of the twentieth century: the spiritualist movement.

#### IV. THE MODERN SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

Get this picture in your mind. Marxism, Darwinism and Wagnerism are sweeping across the Western world, with their ideas of scientific materialism and a denial of the spiritual side of life. The Christian world responds with a compromise position. There is a spiritual side of life, but it is not necessarily found in any writings or doctrines, including the Bible. These may be aids, but each man must realize God through his inner experiences. He must search within his soul for meaning and purpose in life. No longer is it fashionable to "search the scriptures." After all the Bible is a good book, but it is no longer rational to believe it to be the "Word of God." The Christian believer has no power in his life, so he begins a search for that power. Spiritualism and occultism promise him the power which he so desperately wants and needs. Consider these words by Colin Wilson,

Magic was not the 'science' of the past. It is the science of the future. I believe that the human mind has reached a point in evolution where it is about to develop new powers--powers that would once have been considered magical... intellect has reached certain limits, and it cannot advance beyond them until it recovers some of the lost powers. Anyone who has read modern philosophy will understand what I mean; it has become narrow, rigid, logical; and it attempts to make up for the lack of broader intuitions with a microscopic attention to detail. It has cast itself off from its source and what is, in fact, the source of philosophy-- or for that matter of any knowledge? It is fundamentally the need for power.<sup>75</sup>

The same year that revolution was being shouted in Europe (spurred on by intellectuals such as Wagner), that Marx issued the Communist Manifesto, and Bushnell presented his dissertation of language at Harvard, the Devil smugly took his ace and laid it face down on the table, biding his time to play it. That ace was spiritualism, and 1848 marks the date of a new age in the occult. In that year Margaret and Kate Fox supposedly made contact with the dead. Wilson writes, "But the really explosive impetus for the revival came from America. A completely new epoch in the history of occultism opened on the evening of March 31, 1848 in the house of the Fox family in the town of Arcadia, Wayne County, New York."<sup>76</sup> This event was so important that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, famous author of "Sherlock Holmes" and medium, addressed the 72nd anniversary meeting of spiritualists, claiming that they were celebrating the greatest event in the world in 2000 years.<sup>77</sup>

Now it may seem preposterous to set a specific date for spiritualism since it has been with mankind for thousands of years. Throughout history many groups and individuals have claimed communication with the dead, but "there had been no movement in civilized societies entirely based on a belief and practice of regular communication with the dead."<sup>78</sup> The movement which started in 1848 was the first. And this movement was to be evangelistic. The first message received by the Fox sisters was this: "Dear friends...you must proclaim these truths to the world. This is the dawning of a new era; and you must not try to conceal it any longer."<sup>79</sup>

Spiritualism began to organize in the second half of the

nineteenth century with the British National Association of Spiritualists forming in 1873, the Society of Psychical Research in 1882, and the Spiritualists National Union in 1891. By the turn of the century, scientists were beginning to give it acceptability. Raupert, who had been a member of the Society of Psychical Research, wrote in 1919,

The reading and thinking world has recently been startled by the publication of books and articles from the pens of eminent scientific and literary men in which the claim is made that reliable communications are being received from the spirits of departed human beings and that these communications are of such a character that they may not unfairly be regarded as a New Revelation.<sup>80</sup>

During the nineteenth century scientists had become deified, and more and more people turned from the true God to place their confidence and trust in science. As the belief in the integrity of the Word eroded and began to collapse, Satan slowly promoted his new spiritualism by giving it a stamp of approval by leading scientists. It has taken time, but today we are witnessing a dramatic rise in spiritualism under the guise of "parapsychology". This is nothing more than the scientific term of acceptability for spiritualism. In 1969 the Parapsychological Association was admitted into the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1973 an important survey was reported in New Scientists magazine, in which 25% of the readers believed E.S.P. to be an established fact, and 42% more felt it was more than a likely possibility. The conclusion of the survey staff: "Parapsychology is clearly counted as being exceedingly interesting and relevant by a large number of today's working scientists."<sup>81</sup>

The Adversary is absolutely deceiving the scientists who have no awareness of spiritual realities. The senses analysis of scientists and psychologists rejects the idea of spirits and looks to powers within the human mind itself. One author writes in a psychology textbook,

Magic involves the use of individual will-power and other special powers to foresee the future or to bring about changes which are normally beyond human control. In the traditional practice of magic, this was often done by seeking aid from 'spirits' and 'demons' whose powers were thought to be greater than those of human beings. However, many people who believe in magic today largely ignore the idea of 'invisible spirits' in favor of the claim that the human mind itself possesses powers which enable it to see into the future, or to read the thoughts of another person, or to cause something to happen without using the normal means of cause and effect. The study of these powers is known as parapsychology...a small number of psychologists have been trying to remove parapsychology from the realm of magic, so it can be studied scientifically, in the laboratory and in the processes of everyday life.<sup>82</sup>

That small number of psychologists is rapidly increasing. One such man, Dr. Raymond Moody, has attempted to look into death itself and to discover scientifically what happens at death. He has studied "near-death" **experiences** and suggests that the scientists' inability to construct a proof may be due "to a limitation of the currently accepted modes of scientific and logical thought."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Moody postulates that "the perspective of scientists and logicians of the future will be very different."<sup>84</sup>

Raupert has a great insight into what is happening in the spiritualist field. He wrote the following in 1919, but time has confirmed its truth for today:

...the modern experimenter (is) forever learning, yet never to be coming to a knowledge of the truth...



My long and exhaustive study of this aspect of the subject has thoroughly convinced me that the victims of these spirit-operations are seldom fully aware of what is going on. They are apt to attribute their impressions to a sort of progressive enlightenment of the mind due to a knowledge obtained from a study of the phenomena, while in reality they are due to the circumstance of the mind, and of course, the judgment all the while being tampered with by the very intelligences whose nature they are investigating, but who have made themselves the real masters of the situation in the process. It is thus that science is being led by the nose and that a credulous world is being imposed upon.<sup>85</sup>

Let us look at some of the spiritualist doctrines. Doyle himself said that according to spirit-teaching the Christ spirit came down to give an example, but there is nothing about atone-<sup>86</sup>ment or redemption. Another spiritualist view is that death is not an end, but a temporary penal state and that man's<sup>87</sup> "moral education and evolution continue indefinitely." The third characteristic of spiritualism is the idea of universalism. Gasson reports, "Spiritualism is now attempting World Federation, and such societies as the Universal Brotherhood Federation aim<sup>88</sup> high in order to achieve this end..." Included in the goals is<sup>89</sup> a world bill of rights, world laws and a world police force. Again, as in Marxism, Darwinism and Wagnerism, the individual is being subordinated to the group.

Along with the scientists, Christians are being brought into the spiritualist fold. Ebon writes, "The growth of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship in the United States and the Churches' Fellowship for Spiritual and Psychical Studies in Great Britain illustrates an undercurrent of interest among clergy and laymen<sup>90</sup> of virtually all denominations.

In 1974 a book was published entitled Psychic Exploration.

The amazing thing about this work was that it was edited by Edgar Mitchell, a former astronaut, and included contributions from prominent men supporting **psychic** research. Mitchell himself set the tone for the significance of such research, "The question 'Why psychic research?' has already been answered by saying it can be an important element in the long-sought formula for enriching human awareness, reconstructing society and generally aiding nature in the great work of evolution." <sup>91</sup> Mitchell believes that the tide in this country is turning, and with psychical research "the unity of all knowledge and experience will become apparent." <sup>92</sup>

Contained within this book are some remarkable statements by Mitchell, and also by Willis Harman, director of the Center for the Study of Social Policy at Stanford Research Center. The mixture of science and spiritualism under the guise of "parapsychology" is an attempt by man to overcome the fear of death, since there is no real death. Man is seen as becoming god-like with unlimited intelligence and as setting up his own utopia on earth. Mitchell and Harman give very ominous views for the future. The Prince of the world is turning over his ace. Consider these statements:

Psychic research is an avenue to the unconscious, a means of building greater wholes. Now is the time to develop our non-rational abilities into a 'subjective' technology which will begin the wedding of science and religion, reason and intuition, the physical and spiritual. This union of head and heart, insight and instinct, will ensure that as science comes to **comprehend** the non-material aspect of reality as well as it knows the material--that is, as science approaches **omniscience**-- our knowledge will become wisdom, our love of power will become the

power of love, and the universal man of cosmic consciousness can then emerge.<sup>93</sup>

Notice these terms: "union", "omniscience", "universal" "cosmic consciousness." Man sees himself as evolving into a god. The emphasis is not on man as an individual, but the individual subordinated to the group. Furthermore, when Mitchell refers to "the wedding of science and religion", by religion he means spiritualism.

Harman too sees man's unlimited potential and the importance which parapsychology will play in realizing that potential,

It follows from the foregoing that the human potentiality is limitless; that all knowledge and power is ultimately accessible to the mind, looking within itself; and that all limitations are ultimately self-chosen. Such supernormal phenomena as telepathic communication, clairvoyant perception, experiencing events that happened to others, 'instant' diagnosis and healing, precognition, and levitation and other PK events are, in general, perfectly possible.<sup>94</sup>

Colossians 3:3 says that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in God and 3:4 adds, "And this I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." These are definitely enticing words, claiming that the **secrets** of knowledge and **wisdom** are within the mind of man.

Finally, let us look at Harman's analysis of the future. The Adversary seems to have the winning hand, and he is beginning his play.

Science, under the new transcendentalism will be clearly understood to be a moral inquiry...It will place particular emphasis on the systematic exploration of various levels of subjective experience, the ultimate source of our value postulates. In this

respect it will resemble the humanities and religion, and the boundaries between these three disciplines will become less sharp. Finally, the new science will become a sort of 'civil religion', supporting the human value postulate of the culture rather than being neutral or undermining, as was the old science.<sup>95</sup>

Separation of Church and state will be an abandoned doctrine, in part because the Church is recognized as essentially another private educational enterprise, and in part because it will be inconceivable that religion, education and psychotherapy should be considered as separate activities, since they are in essence attempts to achieve the same goals... Psychosis will be recognized as a particular form of confusion that is as much a function of culture as of the individual. Death will be recognized as a major transition, no more to be feared than birth or rebirth.<sup>96</sup>

## V. THE PREVAILING WORD

Apart from the accuracy and integrity of the Word prevailing in our day and time, spiritualism and occultism seem destined to shape the future of our country and world. The "civil religion" of spiritualism and science predicted by Harman appears to be imminent as the Adversary continues to deceive the intellectual, senses man. Moreover, because the Word does not live in the organized denominational Church Gasson is correct in saying that the "churches are fast falling into the clutches of the Enemy." In fact, it may be more accurate to state the Adversary controls those churches lock, stock and barrel. By all outward appearance the Devil holds the future. As the god of this world he has a free hand to run the show. Or does he?

Almost 2000 years ago a man named Saul was called by God to carry out the greatest ministry ever given to man. He was chosen to carry the Word of God to the Gentiles. Acts 26:18 establishes the purpose of his ministry:

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Today the true believers of God's Word have this same ministry. Eyes are still closed, the darkness is just as vast now as then, and Satan's power has increased in the centuries since the Book of Acts was written. As it was then even so it is today that the religious hierarchy stands opposed to the Word.

While professing Christianity ministers have allowed the Adversary to tear down the integrity of the Word. Science commands more respect than does God. In the midst of this treason (and many Christians certainly have betrayed God and work for Satan) spiritualism has an open track on which to run. We must uphold the great accuracy and power of God's Word in our day and time.

First, let us see what the Word says concerning science.

I Timothy 6:20 and 21:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposition of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Whenever "science" contradicts the Word, it has to be false science. Notice from this quotation that those who had erred were not unbelievers, but they were born-again believers. They let their senses minds deceive them from the truth of God's Word. We are exhorted to guard that which has been committed unto us. We do not let a Darwin, a Marx, a Wagner, a Bushnell or anyone else talk us out of the truth, and it does not matter how logical or coherent they make their idea sound. Remember that the Devil has a way of making his lies sound like truth. He promulgates spiritualism and puts the nice label of "parapsychology" on it. God in His Word tells us exactly what it is and what He thinks about it.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14:

When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or

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

There is no question or doubt as to what God's will is. These things (whether we call them spiritualism or parapsychology) are an abomination to God, and His will is that they be rooted out. This land today belongs to believers, and we should not tolerate these things to happen in our country. The children of Israel compromised on God's Word and did not put these things away. As a result they went into captivity. Likewise, we also will fall into bondage.

When Paul wrote the second epistle to Timothy, the Church was faced with the same problems as today: people "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," (II Timothy 3:5); evil men "deceiving and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13), men not being able to "endure sound doctrine" (II Timothy 4:3), but turning their ears from the truth and "turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:4).

Contained within II Timothy are the keys on what we must do as sons of God to crush the spiritualist movement. First, we must rightly divide the Word.

II Timothy 2:15  
Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

When the accuracy of God's Word is taught, the lies of

spiritualism will be exposed. Contrary to what is being promulgated today as right believing, the Bible is still the God-breathed Word. Furthermore, it alone is profitable for instruction in righteousness. God had told the children of Israel to put away spiritualism and to be perfect with God (Deut. 18:13). Today it is the Word rightly divided and walked upon which makes us perfect.

II Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;  
That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

The man who desires to walk for God can never be perfect without the instruction of the God-breathed Word. The spiritualists will never endure sound doctrine, but they will always both turn from the truth themselves and turn others away from it also. God's Word alone can provide the doctrine, reproof and correction to keep a believer walking right on. Once we have been instructed in righteousness we are to carry out the exhortation in II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

Recall the first words to the Fox sisters was "you must proclaim these truths to the world...." Years later, Kate and Margaret Fox, who were so instrumental in beginning the modern spiritualist movement, both renounced spiritualism toward the end of their lives, and they both died alcoholics. They had turned to spiritualism and had been destroyed. The Devil has absolutely no concern for the individual. He uses people while



they serve his purposes and then discards them. If people will go out and proclaim his way of death, how much more should we arise and declare the way of life.

John 10:10

The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Thus we must preach the Word. There are two accounts in the book of Acts where the Word of God prevailed in cities which had been overrun by spiritualism. The results speak loudly to our day and time.

Acts 8:4-8

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

The people of Samaria were under the siege of the Adversary. Devil spirits operating through Simon the sorcerer, one of the greatest mediums of all, had "bewitched" the people. This had been going on for quite a while, but Philip came down and preached the Word, smashing the power of the Adversary. A whole city was set free.

The second record is in Acts 19:19,20.

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.

The Word spoken on the lips of believing caused an entire

community to forsake their spiritualism (curious arts) and it will do the same today. Just as in Samaria and in Ephesus, entire communities can be delivered from the chains of spiritualism. Only the accuracy of the Word can stop the spread of this dangerous cancer. As we boldly speak that Word it will mightily grow and prevail across our country and world. Spiritualism, in whatever guise it takes, will be exposed and defeated.

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