

**IS SPIRITUALISM OF THE DEVIL?**

YEA, VERILY, SAYS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE current number of the *Month* contains an article on "Spiritualism and its Consequences," the writer of which is good enough to summarise in a compendious form the conclusions at which he has arrived from the study of the phenomena of Spiritualism, with which he connects magnetism, somnambulism, and clairvoyance, which are all confounded together by the Sacred College of the Inquisition. As the writer expresses the opinion of many good people, and that of the largest organised Church which calls itself by the Christian name, I quote his conclusions, so that all my readers may have the benefit of the warning which they contain:—

THUS SAITH THE CHURCH.

Spiritualism, by which we mean the practice of invoking and holding converse with the spirits of the dead by writing and speaking, or any other means whatever, is unlawful and abominable in the sight of God, and this for the following reasons:—

1. The spirits who appear to those on earth when invoked by them are not what they profess to be, nor the spirits of departed friends, but the ministers of Satan who assume the character and even the appearance of the deceased, and manifest secrets known only to them, in order to deceive the living and bring them into their power. All commerce with them is therefore a direct dealing with Satan and the devils who serve him.
2. The true character of these spirits is shown by the doctrine taught by them. It is in direct opposition to Holy Scripture and the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is subversive of all faith. It is more especially directed against the eternity of punishment and the Incarnation of the Son of God.
3. The invariable consequence of intercourse with the spirits is a gradual and insensible loss of faith, and a dislike and dislike for all intercourse with God, whether by prayer, Holy Communion, or any other of the sacraments of the Church. In some cases gross sins against purity also follow on the practice of Spiritualism.
4. Spiritualism is a grave sin against the natural law graven on the hearts of all men. Its prevalence is invariably accompanied by a low morality and an overweening pride.
5. Spiritualism is also strictly forbidden by Holy Scripture and by the Catholic Church, under pain of mortal sin. It is a direct and formal insult to Almighty God.

THUS SAITH THE "REVIEW OF REVIEWS."

The writer before arriving at these conclusions takes exception to the observation which I made in the last number of the *REVIEW OF REVIEWS*. He says:—

We do not know whether the *REVIEW OF REVIEWS* is professedly Christian. If it is, the following criticism, which appears in the current number, on our article on the true character of Spiritualism, is quite inconsistent with the Christian faith it professes to hold.

After quoting the criticism, the writer then proceeds:—

It is strange that intelligent men do not see that such a paragraph is a virtual disavowal of Christianity altogether. It is no question of "traversing what a priest believes to be true," but of directly and indirectly denying the doctrine that underlies all Christianity and all belief in its Divine Founder.

In a previous passage he explains that this doctrine which underlies all Christianity is the doctrine of the Incarnation, concerning which nothing was said by me in the passage which is said to virtually disavow Christianity altogether. The writer says:—

Every Christian holds any fact, statement, or phenomenon which traverses this central doctrine of Christianity to be of hell. In this respect he is bound to be intolerant.

Here we have stated succinctly enough the ordinary orthodox view of the sacred duty of intolerance. Because

a priest, the writer of this article, believes that Spiritualism directly and indirectly leads to the denial of the Incarnation: Spiritualism is of hell, and communications received through mediums are of the devil. It is a convenient formula, and settles many things. But there are two illustrations of the danger of this method of constructive imputation of blasphemy and diabolism to which I may refer.

WAS HE "OF BEELZEBUB?"

About nineteen hundred years ago the priests, high priests, and scribes, and all those ecclesiastical authorities who corresponded in Judea to the Congregation of the Inquisition at Rome, were confronted by facts, statements, and phenomena which seemed to them to be in direct opposition to the law and the teaching of the prophets. They could not deny the facts; they roundly denied the statements, and they accounted for the phenomena in the same way that the *Month* accounts for those of Spiritualism. For it is written that when these men heard it, they said:—"This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." And Jesus said unto His disciples, the disciple is not above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he do as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much, therefore, shall they call them of his household? In those days the duty of intolerance was not only preached as a principle, but practised as a duty, and the result was the Cross of Calvary. From that Cross was born the religion which had as its greatest organised embodiment the Catholic Church. Fourteen hundred years passed, and the sway of the Church was supreme and unquestioned. Protestantism had not yet arisen to shake the foundations and undermine the authority of the Roman Church.

WAS SHE "A LIMB OF THE FIEND?"

Then there arose in Western Europe a simple peasant girl, who heard voices inaudible to others, and saw visions impelling her to take a course which to the authorities of her time appeared absolutely opposed to the teaching of the natural law, the authority of Holy Scripture, and the canons of the Church. She, a simple village maid, bestrode a war horse, rallied armies round her banner, and hurled the forces of France against the English hosts. She saved her country, crowned her King, and delivered France. In all the Western world no figure so ideal, so sublime, meets our gaze; for purity, for faith, for noble constancy and high resolve, Joan of Arc stands foremost among the saints of God. And yet the Pope demanded that she should be handed over to the Inquisition; and she was tried and burned as a heretic and a witch, who was declared to be "a disciple and limb of the fiend." One poor woman in Paris, who ventured to say that she believed Joan had really been sent of God, was burned alive by those predecessors of the editor of the *Month*, who allege that in such cases the Christian is bound to be intolerant. It was a bishop of the Catholic Church who presided over her trial, and when she was led sobbing to the stake at which she was burned to death, the orthodox Catholics of the day laid the flattering unction to their souls that when they were committing one of the most detestable and most cruel of all the murders that ever disgraced the history of mankind, they were testifying their love of God and their abhorrence of all dealings with the Evil One.

With these two cases on record no one can be surprised at the conclusions of the editor of the *Month*: he is in the true line of succession from the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem and the Bishop of Beauvais.