

THE SPIRIT WORLD¹

BY THE BISHOP OF SALFORD

I

THE Church of Christ—established by her Divine Founder for the purpose of teaching mankind those truths in both the intellectual and the moral order which are to lead them to the fulfilment of the end for which they were created and to their eternal happiness hereafter—has never ceased on the one hand to propound full and satisfying systems of truth on all questions concerning man's relation to his Maker and all that affects his own destiny; and on the other to reprobate and condemn those many false systems, religious, ethical, or social, which have arisen in all ages from the very days of the Apostles to our own. Many of these systems have contained, indeed, a certain admixture of truths, or at least half-truths, which have rendered them the more insidious and the more dangerous, as even earnest believers may be the more easily led away into false systems by the elements of good which appear therein, so that they may deceive, as Christ warned us, "even the Elect."²

Not unfrequently systems of this character have been denominated by names ending in "ism," and there are cases where such an ending, attached to a term which in itself may be unobjectionable; acts as a kind of danger signal that the complex of teachings

¹ A Pastoral Letter, 1912.

² Mark xiii. 22.

which it involves may contain errors of a dangerous and a pernicious character. Thus whilst the Church may approve and even maintain certain of the teachings appropriated by such systems; yet, as she is bound by her very nature to condemn the errors which are mixed up with them, so is it her duty to reprobate these systems as a whole and to warn her children from attaching themselves to them and becoming disciples or partisans of the schools which teach them.

MODERN ERRORS

A few recent examples will make our meaning clear. It is well known to all, that within recent years our present Holy Father, Pope Pius X., has condemned with no uncertain voice and with Apostolic severity that religious system known as "Modernism." Now, we are fully aware that so far from reprobating or discouraging modern progress of any kind, whether intellectual, political, or social, the Church in all ages has blessed and fostered all true progress and development. Thus she took under her fostering wing the advancement of literature and the fine arts in the Middle Ages. The theological and philosophical syntheses of Thomas Aquinas, so novel to his contemporaries¹; the mighty creations of Dante, of Raphael, and Michelangelo; the heroic discoveries of Christopher Columbus, received the fulness of her patronage and blessing. Similarly, at the close of the Middle Ages, the Church fostered and encouraged the then modern revival of ancient classical learning, known as the Renaissance, whilst at the same time severely condemning and checking the

¹ "To his contemporaries the novelty of his work was its characteristic. His first early biographer, William de Tocco, speaks of his 'new and clear method of deciding questions'; of his 'new opinions,' 'new projects,' 'new ideas.'"—W. Ward, *Life of Cardinal Newman*, vol. i. p. 435.

pernicious neopaganism, the outcome of the excess to which that revival led, and which vitiated so much of its action on the mind and morals of Europe.¹ Yet more strikingly did she hail that art, so thoroughly Catholic in its inception, the art of printing, whose earliest beginnings she blessed and even enriched with copious indulgences.² In our own days, she has incorporated into her Ritual special blessings for such modern inventions as the railway, textile machinery, the telegraph, the motor, and even the aeroplane. Thus the Church bestows her approval and benediction on all that is good and useful in modern progress and enlightenment, whilst she condemns—as she is obliged to do—those dangerous philosophical and theological errors which have been mixed up with so much of modern criticism and methods, and are collectively known under the title of “Modernism.” It is not, therefore, what is “modern” as such that falls under her ban, but what is “modernistic.”

The system known as “Socialism” is another example of what we mean. So far from the Church being opposed to social reform, it is she who from her beginning has been the pioneer in all the social improvements of mankind’s lot. The very adjective “social” implies “society,” and society itself, as indicating the brotherhood of mankind under the fatherhood of God and the equality before God of all men, “whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free,”³ is the direct creation of the teachings of our Lord and His Apostles, and most conspicuously of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul.⁴ The first result of this entire revolution in the conception of mankind was the gradual but sure extinction of ancient slavery and of later serfdom, brought about

¹ See Pastor, *History of the Popes*.

² See *The Catholic Church and the Printing Press*, C.T.S., ½d.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁴ See his Epistle to Philemon.

by the constant pressure of the Church, and especially of the Holy See, from the days of the Apostles to the final emancipation of the slaves of Brazil during the reign and at the solicitation of Leo XIII. The mention of the name of this great Pontiff cannot but recall those magnificent Encyclicals¹ on the rights of labour, on the conditions of the working classes, and on all the burning social questions of the day, forming a perfect and coherent code of sound teaching, based upon the principles of Christian doctrine, which will be found eventually to supply the only true and real basis for a constructive sociology capable of obviating and curing the manifold evils and miseries of present social conditions. But that system which has arrogated to itself the title of "Socialism," based as it is on principles quite other than those of Christ and His Church—having for its final goal exclusively man's *temporal* instead of his *eternal* welfare, and thus radically subordinating what is primary to what is secondary—is as such condemned by the Church, even whilst it advocates a number of practical reforms which merit her approval and blessing. And the Church's wisdom in this discrimination is, alas, only too emphatically proved by the sad fact, to which our parochial clergy bear abundant witness, that our young men, especially among the working classes, who are beguiled into joining the Socialistic ranks, invariably end by abandoning the Church and even giving up Christianity. Here, again, the Church disapproves not of what is "social," but of what is "socialistic."

SPIRITUALISM

The third case to which we would refer, and concerning which we shall speak at more length, is the movement known as "Spiritualism" or "Spiritism." The Catholic Church at all times is chiefly concerned

¹ See *The Pope and the People*, C.T.S.

with the spiritual side of man and his destiny, with the future life beyond the grave, and with the existence and operation of spiritual beings, whether good or bad. Hence we might justly say that the Catholic Church beyond all other religious systems is a "Spiritualist" organization. But, as in the case of Modernism and Socialism, an otherwise unobjectionable or even desirable epithet has been appropriated by an entirely different and even hostile system of teaching and practice, which is nowadays familiar to everybody under the above-quoted titles.

The history of this remarkable movement is interesting. The scepticism engendered by the French philosophers and encyclopædists at the close of the eighteenth century, followed by the hasty generalizations and arrogant assertions of so many students of physical science in the early part of the nineteenth, led to the growth and wide diffusion of what is known as "Materialism," which long held sway in both scientific and popular literature, as well as in many of the universities. Because the anatomist and the biologist in dissecting the animal body, or in studying germs beneath the microscope, were unable to find any trace of an immaterial or spiritual substance; because the astronomer, the physicist, and the chemist, in investigating the regions of space or analysing matter into its component elements, found no trace of anything outside of matter to respond to their tests; because the philosopher, the historian, the economist considered that the whole story of the evolution of the universe allowed no place for the action of a spiritual First Cause or the agency of subordinate and secondary spiritual beings; so the existence of human souls, of pure spiritual beings, of a God as the Supreme Spirit, were either roundly denied, or at best declared to be, in the "Agnostic" teaching, unknown and unknowable. There was a time when Materialism seemed to threaten to absorb

the world of science and thought. But the reaction inevitably came. Pure Materialism is so essentially contrary to the profoundest instincts of the human race and to the most venerable and persistent traditional beliefs of every age and race, that the conviction of the existence and power of spiritual agencies forced its way back into men's minds. An old Latin poet declared, in the form of a homely proverb, "You may drive out nature with a pitchfork, but she will always return."¹ And so human nature reasserted its innate and traditional belief in the supersensible or spiritual by a strong and even violent reaction. For as all reactions are apt to be violent and to swing to extremes, so have we experienced of late years an anti-materialist reaction in the form of an elaborate and extravagant Spiritualism, permeating all classes and exercising an ever-growing and, as we believe, pernicious influence. It is not certain individual truths, which Spiritualism teaches quite in accordance with Christian doctrine—such as the existence of the human soul, its life after death, the agency of disembodied spirits, the possibility of their communicating with us—but, as in the cases of Modernism and Socialism, the system as a whole, with all its concomitant errors and abuses, that the Catholic Church reprobates. Once again we may say the Church disapproves, not what is "spiritual," but what is "spiritualistic." And again it must be plainly stated that Catholics who give themselves up to spiritualistic beliefs and practices invariably make shipwreck of their faith, unless they are happily rescued in time and taught to see the danger of their position.

There is the less excuse for Catholics falling into the power of Spiritism, inasmuch as the teachings of their own faith supply them with the most perfect, the most complete, the most logical, and the most satisfying system of doctrine with reference to the

¹ "Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret."—Horace.

world of Spirit and all that it implies in itself and in its relation to man's life and destiny.

II

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

What then is the Catholic doctrine on these momentous topics? We shall endeavour as briefly as possible to set forth this teaching.

God the Supreme Being, existing of Himself and necessarily existing from all eternity, Himself pure and absolute Spirit, is by His own infinite power and freewill the Creator of all that exists, whether spiritual or material. His creation is thus of a double nature, the one consisting of the material universe, vast beyond human conception in its magnitude and extent, the other essentially and purely spiritual. The Doctors of the Church teach that this spiritual creation, although strictly speaking it has no direct relation to space, is of itself immeasurably greater, of more excellent nature and powers, more wonderful and more splendid than the whole material universe, as well as prior to it by creation. The first and principal portion of this vast creation consists of those highly gifted spiritual beings, endowed with pre-eminent attributes of intelligence and free will, whom we designate by the generic term of the Angels, of whom God says in the Book of Job, "The morning stars praise Me together, and all the sons of God make a joyful melody."¹ These so highly-endowed pure spirits were destined for a supernatural end of eternal happiness, but this they had to merit by the action of their free will; thus, though their nature was by God endowed with grace from the beginning, still they had to undergo a form of probation, the nature of which has not been made known to us, although the Fathers and theologians of the

¹ Job xxxiii. 7.

Church have speculated much on the subject. What is certain is that a large proportion of those spirits, under the leadership of one, the most highly endowed and the most resplendent of all, by an abuse of their free will and a refusal to obey Almighty God, fell away from their primitive state of grace, became reprobate, and were cast by the terrible judgement of their Creator into eternal punishment. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them . . . to the lower hell unto torments."¹ "And the angels who kept not their principality but forsook their own habitation, he hath reserved under darkness in everlasting chains."² And our Lord Himself tells us of the "everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels."³ Thus, henceforth there exist two vast opposing armies of spiritual beings, respectively the servants and the enemies of God, actively engaged in mutual opposition and hostility.

But this does not exhaust the spirit world. There is a wondrous creature of God, who stands midway between the spiritual world and the material world. This creature is Man. Man is most justly defined as a spirit or soul endowed with a material body; and the complete man consists of the two in intimate and necessary union. By his soul man belongs to the spirit world, and like the spirits is endowed with the supreme gifts of intelligence and free will. By his body man belongs to the material world, of which his frame forms a portion physically, chemically, and biologically. At the very moment of his conception, man's soul is created by God, and joined in the mysterious union with the material germ that is to evolve into his body; and this union is so intimate and so necessary that it is destined to subsist for eternity. Nevertheless, by a wonderful disposition of Divine Providence there is in the life history of each human being an epoch during which the spirit and

¹ 2 Peter ii. 4.

² Jude 6.

³ Matthew xxv. 41.

the flesh are temporarily disunited; and whilst the one goes on living apart, the other is, perhaps for cycles of time, resolved into its component material elements. This epoch is the space which extends from the moment of the man's death on earth to the last Judgement Day. During this space, which may, indeed, subsist for æons of time, but which nevertheless must come to an end, the disembodied soul subsists in one of three states—either united to God in the eternal felicity of heaven, or suffering in the eternal prison of hell, or detained for a time in the temporary place of banishment called purgatory, but in this latter case infallibly destined after a certain lapse of time to pass on through the gates of heaven. At the great Accounting Day this temporary and, so to speak, unnatural state of separation will in all cases come to an end, and disembodied spirits will once again resume for eternity their bodily or material parts.

THE ACTIVITY OF SPIRITS

Such is a conspectus of the Christian teaching regarding the existence of immaterial beings, or spirits, of all orders. But the Church teaches us, not only of their existence, but also of their manifold activities, and of their practical relations to and intercourse with ourselves during our mortal lives. In the first place, there is no doubt that Almighty God makes use of the vast hosts of those blessed and happy spirits who share the felicity of heaven as His agents and messengers in the government of creation. Hence they are properly called "Angels," a Greek word signifying "messengers"; hence the Psalmist says "Who maketh His Angels spirits."¹ Some of the Fathers, indeed, hold that God makes use of the agency of His Angels even in the physical ordering of the powers of nature and the phenomena of the physical

¹ Psalm ciii. 4.

world.¹ Be this as it may, we know from Holy Scripture how greatly God uses the ministry of these spirits in His dealings with mankind.² The Angel who kept our first parents out of Paradise,³ the Angels who at different times appeared to Abraham,⁴ to Jacob;⁵ Gabriel in the history of Daniel,⁶ Raphael in that of Tobias, are all familiar instances in the Old Testament; whilst the New, from the Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary to the delivery of Peter by an Angel, is full of examples of angelic intervention. Over and above this the Church teaches the beautiful and consoling doctrine of our Guardian Angels; that is to say, that every individual human soul that is born into the world, has assigned to it by God one of His angelic spirits, charged to watch over and protect it from both spiritual and material evils and aid it on its way to salvation. "He hath given His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."⁷ The task of the Angels is also represented as that of carrying up our prayers before the throne of God; and the whole of this angelic activity between God and man is symbolically represented by Jacob's wonderful vision of the ladder between heaven and earth: "the Angels of God ascending and descending by it."⁸

On the other hand, there is no doubt that, according to the mystery of God's Providence, the lost spirits, Lucifer and his host of fallen angels, whom we call the devils or demons, are allowed to exercise no inconsiderable influence in the creation—perhaps, according to some of the Fathers, even over phenomena of nature,

¹ "Omnia corporalia reguntur per Angelos." S. Augustin., iii. *de Trinitate*, c. 4 (quoted by S. Th. Aq., I. q. 110, a. 1. o.).

² "Sunt igitur Angeli universales executores divinæ providentiæ." S. Th. Aq., op. xiv., *de Substantiis separatis*, c. 14.

³ Gen. iii. 24.

⁴ Gen. xix., xxii.

⁵ Gen. xxviii.

⁶ Daniel viii., ix.

⁷ Psalm xc. 11.

⁸ Gen. xxviii. 12. On the whole of this subject, see Lanzoni, *Gli Angeli nelle Divine Scritture*, Torino, 1891.

but certainly in the spiritual, and sometimes even the physical, life of men.¹ Part of our probation in this life consists in the suggestions and temptations to sin which these evil spirits are allowed to make directly or indirectly to our mind and will. "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."² Nay, we know, from both the history of the New Testament and the lives of the Saints in all ages, that God sometimes allows these terrible spirits even physically to attack and persecute man's body. No more awful phenomena are recorded than those cases of possession or obsession which are familiar in the New Testament, and have been known in every age of the Church even to our own days. For, although modern science may be able to explain by physical and psychological forces many cases that our forefathers recorded as preternatural, still it must be admitted that there is a residuum, even in modern times, of phenomena which can only be regarded as diabolical in origin.

This teaching has been unchanging in the tradition of the Church from the Gospel narrative of the temptation of Christ our Lord in the wilderness by Satan even down to the well-authenticated cases of the attacks of the evil spirits on the Blessed Curé of Ars in our own days. And although we believe that since the death of Christ "the old serpent, which is the devil" has been bound³—that is to say that his power, both spiritual and physical, is very greatly limited — nevertheless the Church has always held that he and his wicked hosts exercise a very dreadful degree of pernicious power, and that more especially in pagan lands and where the influence of the Church is less powerful.

¹ "Immissiones *per angelos malos*," Psalm lxxvii. 49.

² Eph. vi. 12.

³ Apoc. xx. 2.

MANKIND AND THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

Turning now from the activities of these vast kingdoms of spirits, good and evil, we may ask what are our relations with that other great and ever-growing multitude of disembodied spirits—that is to say, the souls of all those who have departed this life, whether in grace or in sin. Concerning these, the Church teaches us that God allows the blessed souls in heaven to know what passes on earth, and to be interested in the fate of those living. And this is not a mere benevolent interest, but one of immense utility and practical value, inasmuch as charity leads them to be our earnest and unwearying advocates with the Divine Majesty, so that their prayers are continually pleading for both our temporal and spiritual welfare, particularly of those amongst us who are bound to them by the ties of kinship or devotion. Likewise the holy souls, who are temporarily detained in purgatory most probably are similarly endowed with this knowledge of what passes here below, and with the vicissitudes of their fellow creatures, and more particularly of their kinsfolk and friends; and though these souls can no longer pray or merit for themselves, it is held by great theologians that they are allowed to exercise some degree of intercession on our behalf.

The manifold good offices which living men are constantly receiving from the world of holy spirits, whether the angelic hosts or the disembodied spirits of the just, require from us in return corresponding offices.

Towards the holy Angels and the Saints and Blessed in heaven, we have a tribute to pay of homage, veneration, and devotion, expressed either in the public liturgy of the Church, so much of which is occupied by praise and prayers addressed to them, or by our own individual prayers and devotions. By

these means the *accidental* glory of all the blessed inhabitants of heaven is greatly increased, whilst the Church and her individual members receive in return a great accretion of help and patronage.

Towards the souls in purgatory our position is reversed, and we living here on earth are, by God's generous mercy, allowed very greatly to assist them and to shorten the weary time of their purgation by offering up for them our prayers and good works of every kind. In this great work of charity the blessed spirits in heaven are also engaged. And thus it is that, by these mutual offices, the whole of God's kingdom is for ever vivified by a golden stream of divine charity which permeates every part :

“For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”¹

The constant communion between the spirit world and mankind, above described at some length, is normally a purely spiritual or intellectual, *i.e.* a non-material one. Yet there are undoubtedly rare cases where God allows spiritual beings, whether good or bad, to make their presence known and even to communicate with living men by impressions on the senses of sight, hearing, or touch. Such phenomena, when spirits thus communicate in some sensible form, assuming even bodily appearances, are called “apparitions.” Not, indeed, that these spirits, whether angelic or human, do assume real material bodies, but, by some process which we cannot understand, they are allowed temporarily to exercise some influence on our senses as if they were really embodied material beings. The Holy Scriptures, the history of the Church, and the lives of the Saints are full of instances of these extraordinary phenomena, which God sees fit to allow either for the consolation and direction, or for the warning and correction, of His

¹ Tennyson, *Morte d'Arthur*.

children. They are phenomena which men must humbly endure for their spiritual good, but which we must not desire or seek for, according to our own will and judgement. Such a practice was reprobated in the Old Testament in the case of Saul and his evocation of the spirit of Samuel.¹ And it is as unlawful now as it was in the days of Saul.

III

THE PERNICIOUS ELEMENT OF SPIRITISM

Now the essential and most pernicious element of modern Spiritism is precisely this unlawful trafficking with, or seeking to traffic with, spirits, whether good or bad, whether human, angelic, or diabolical in their nature. It is begotten of a morbid and fearfully dangerous curiosity, like that of our first parents, to know those hidden things which God does not see fit to make known to us, and therefore to seek such knowledge is to act contrary to and to sin against the Divine Will. The Church in all ages has sternly reprobated and forbidden all such unlawful commerce with the unseen world, and has reckoned it as a grave form of that sin which is known as superstition.

But it is not only the sinfulness of these practices that makes them to deserve the warnings and condemnation of Holy Church. There is no doubt that the pursuit of spiritistic practices has a deplorable effect upon the minds and even the bodies of its votaries. The most appalling of these effects is the weakening of the will power. This weakening is progressive and alarmingly inevitable in its developments. Like the taste for alcohol, but in a still more fatal manner, it gradually grows in the soul until it absorbs the energies of the free will and reduces its victim to almost hopeless helplessness. Now, the loss of the

¹ 1 Kings xxviii.

free will, by which man has to co-operate in his eternal salvation, is the greatest loss that can befall a rational being. It leads to a slavery of the worst kind and too often ends in the loss of mental control, in other words in lunacy and despair. Not theologians only, but many experienced scientific and medical authorities are agreed upon these sad facts.

Lest this should seem an exaggerated estimate, listen to this pathetic outcry of a distressed soul—one whose personality is well known to several—in a letter in the columns of a Catholic newspaper only a few months ago:—

“I am a trance medium, and I might say an unwilling clairvoyante. Of course, I know Holy Church forbids all such dangerous and pernicious practices; but from actual experience I find that the Church does not fully appreciate their gravity. In my own case I constantly receive absolution. But how can I get away from the deadly fascinations of spirit-dealing, which is, *as I have proved for myself*, nothing less than direct communication with the devil? I know and also feel the inevitable result—a lunatic asylum. Could others only take warning! could they only for one frightful moment see the horrors which it has fallen to my lot to view whilst in the trance state! It is too ludicrous for words to imagine for a moment that departed (passed-over) spirits reappear at séances; yet many are willing to credit this. Could they but realize in what close proximity they are in reality to ‘the prince of the powers of darkness,’ viz. Satan, they would in dread and horror turn and fly before the magic powers of fascination had succeeded in weaving that most deadly of all spells. I have had many and varied experiences that would take me many hours to relate; but this one thing I must say, that for those who allow themselves to be influenced by what they please to term departed spirits, and who persist, in spite of the warning of

conscience, etc., there is but one end—damnation. I know and feel this even at this moment; but what hope is there now? It is too late.”¹

And in introducing the writer to the press, the well-known authority on Spiritism, Mr. Godfrey Raupert, writes:—

“Although it is typical of the kind of letters which I am constantly receiving, it puts the matter in an exceptionally direct and uncompromising form. It is difficult for me to describe the keen distress which these letters cause to my mind, and how deeply they make me realize my isolation and helplessness in the face of this gigantic evil. It is of a most subtle and pernicious character, and is not merely threatening, but is steadily invading human life, and is ruining countless souls. There is, alas! abundant evidence that the Catholic sphere is being increasingly affected. I am daily asking myself: What is to be done? A letter such as this must in any case free one from a charge of exaggeration, or of over-emphasizing the importance of a subject of which one happens to have made a special study.”

We are quite aware that a considerable part of this modern Spiritism, with its mediums, *séances*, clairvoyance, evocation of spirits, etc., is demonstrably made up of chicanery and fraud. But such an admixture of mere charlatanism does not preclude the really preternatural, or even diabolical, character of some of the phenomena of more advanced Spiritism. And whatever explanation, whether natural or preternatural, be given of such phenomena, there is no doubt that the crucial evil, the specific danger, of spiritualistic practices is the eventual subjection of the will power to what is denominated “external control,” be that control diabolical or merely human. This control, this surrender of the keys of the free

¹ *The Tablet*, 22nd July 1911.

will, is the true source of the frightful evils to which Spiritualism inevitably leads.¹

You may ask with some surprise why we should have chosen such a subject as the present upon which to address our flock in a Lenten Pastoral. The reason is that it has been borne in upon us by testimony from many sides that the pernicious cult of Spiritism is spreading to an alarming extent in all classes of the population, and even making headway among Catholics. We have been credibly informed that the evil is specially showing itself in certain parts of our diocese, and that in North-East Lancashire it is undoubtedly spreading among the factory operatives, so many of whom belong to our flock. It has thus appeared to us a solemn duty to utter a timely and most serious warning against the dangers, spiritual and even material, which the adoption of spiritualistic beliefs and practices involves. And this all the more so, because all the beginnings are small and apparently harmless. A little dabbling, perhaps for amusement, in some slight forms of occultism, leads to deeper interest and an ever-growing craving to know more and see more, until the victim becomes a full adept and a slave of the cult, like the writer of the pathetic letter quoted above. We; therefore, in the name of Almighty God and of His Church, most earnestly warn, in the charity of Jesus Christ, all members of our flock who shall hear or read our words, to take heed and resist the seductions of any and every form of Spiritism and superstition of all kind, no matter how mild; and we warmly exhort our Clergy both by public instruction

¹ Full information on the dangers of Spiritism, which we can but briefly summarize, is to be found in several recent Catholic writers, e.g. Raupert, *Dangers of Spiritism* (Kegan Paul & Co.), *Modern Spiritism* (Sands & Co.), *The Supreme Problem* (Washbourne); F. Lépiciér, O.S.M., *The Unseen World* (Kegan Paul & Co.); Lapponi, *Hypnotism and Spiritism* (Chapman & Hall); F. Miller, O.S.C., *Sermons on Modern Spiritualism* (Kegan Paul & Co.).

and by guidance in the confessional, to preserve souls committed to their care from these temptations, and to endeavour to release such as may be already enmeshed in the evil influences.

“Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. *May God rebuke him*, we humbly pray: and do thou, Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.” (Prayer of Leo XIII., said after Mass.)

APPENDIX

The following is an extract from the report of a theologian upon the Conference cases of the Diocese of Salford, 1911-12, concerning Spiritism:—

“Amongst a multitude of letters which have reached me is one from a non-Catholic lady, telling me that she, with a sister and two brothers, had had very strange experiences, of which she sent me the record she had made. I wish I could divulge the name, because then it would be seen that the word of the elder brother was unimpeachable. All I am allowed to say is that this elder brother was a man who stood in the first rank of English biologists.

“These four determined to see whether they could get communication with the spirits of the dead, as they thought. In their own drawing-room, without cabinet or medium, or lowering of lights, they commenced operations, sitting round a table with their hands upon it. At once there were signs of the presence of spirits. To begin with the communications were very trivial, but after a few sittings the spirit declared that he was the spirit of Bellew. Bellew, a converted Anglican clergyman, was a great

friend of this family. They were pleased to think that they were in communication with the spirit of their old friend, and some questions were put and answered. One evening the elder brother asked: 'Is your present religion similar in the main to that which you accepted in this life?' Answer: 'Yes.' 'Are there any material differences between your present religion and your past religion?' Answer: 'Yes.' 'Have you any reason to modify your views with respect to the doctrine of atonement, which during your earthly life you fully accepted?' 'Yes.' 'To what extent? to complete negation?' 'Yes.' 'In that case I presume that you no longer believe Christ to have been the Son of God in any special sense?' 'No.' 'Nor that as the Messiah He was and is the Saviour of mankind?' 'No.'

"These answers of the spirit perplexed and troubled the sitters very much, for they were ardent believers in the divinity of Christ, and in Christ as Saviour. They began to doubt whether they were really communicating with the spirit of Bellew, and earnestly prayed to God that they might not be deceived by lying spirits. A very extraordinary answer to their prayer was displayed at the next séance. The spirit speedily manifested his presence and seemed willing to answer, but yet 'like a chained animal seemed unable to do anything.' The younger brother was ordered out of the room by the spirit, and he 'went into the country for an hour's walk, all the time requesting God to cause the truth to appear, and to defend His people from deception.' The elder brother asked: 'Why can you not communicate with us to-night? Is there anything wrong on our side?' 'No.' 'Are you willing to communicate?' 'Yes.' 'Are you able to communicate?' 'No.' 'Are you controlled?' 'Yes.' 'By whom? good spirits?' 'Yes.' 'Then are you the spirit of Bellew?' 'No.' 'Were you deceiving us last night and to-night?'

'Yes.' 'Why do you undeceive us now? Is it because you are compelled?' 'Yes.' 'Do you retract all you said about the doctrine of Christianity being false?' 'Yes.' 'What is the nature of the control you are under?' (Answer) 'God defends you.' 'Then what are you—are you the spirit of a human being?' 'No.' 'You were never in the body?' 'No.' 'Then you are one of the Devil's own?' 'Yes.' 'Do the spirits of departed persons ever visit this earth?' 'No.' 'Then all the spirits which have communicated with all believers in spiritism have always been evil?' 'Yes.' 'What motive have you in communicating with human beings?' 'Hatred.' 'Hatred of mankind?' 'No.' 'Hatred to God?' 'Yes.' 'You mean us to understand that your hatred to God leads you to wish to seduce mankind (whom He loves) from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?' 'Yes.' 'In order that they may be ruined and lost?' 'Yes.' 'Do the spirits of wicked men *ever* return to attempt to deceive their brethren?' 'No, none are so bad.' 'That appalling depth of malice is reserved for Devils only?' 'Yes.' 'Now, we know you are a lying spirit, will you communicate with us any more?' 'No.'

"From that day, though they made a few attempts, these four never succeeded in establishing communication. It is of interest to know that these questions of the elder brother were put mentally, without sound or sign being made. These quotations, from a long record, are a strange confirmation of the Church's teaching; and therefore I was tempted to put them forward. This is by no means the only instance on record of the evil spirit being compelled, greatly against his own wish, to declare the truth of his own discomfiture." (*Syn. Salf.* xxxi. pp. 106, 107.)