

CHOOSING GOD'S WAY

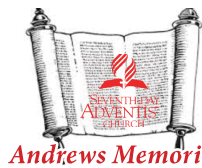
The Patriarch, Moses, recorded in holy writ as the meekest man, (Num 12:3) requests of the Lord a favour. He sojourned forty days and nights in Mount Sinai as he visited with the Lord in counsel upon matters concerning the redemption, structure and governance of the children of Israel. *"And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory"*, **Ex. 33:18**.

The Lord answered *"And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee..."* **Ex. 33:19**. God responds to Moses' request to see His glory alluding to the concept of His name being associated with His glory. *"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."* **Ex. 34:5-7**. In verse 7 the attributes of the Lord's character are listed out. These are the same traits **we ourselves will bear** as we pattern our lives after Christ who is the way the truth and the life. He gives us freedom to choose His way and He has given us time to decide. Israel was given time before the mantle of the gospel was taken from them and given to the Gentiles. *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"* **Phil 2:5**.

The Desire of Ages contrasts the character of Christ against the character of Satan. "It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas." DA 487.3.

Our God, the only true and living God, will never force us, nor are we to force our brothers and sisters. **Our salvation is not on autopilot**. We must choose Christ daily. Living for our own desires or conforming to the society and systems around us will only ensnare us in the trap of Satan. May we surrender our lives to the will of God in whom there is true safety and freedom in Christ our Lord.

By Nicholas Reid



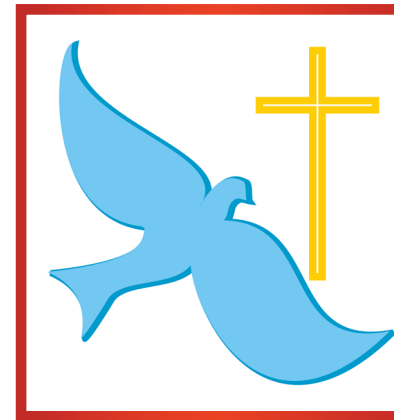
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This edition addresses a current major threat to Bible-based Christianity and points us to how we may counteract this and other threats.

DANGERS OF SPIRITUALISM



In the first of this 2-part series, an overview of spiritualism was presented as being one arm of the threefold union that will trample religious liberty in the end times. In its early stages spiritualism denied the Bible and derided Christianity but since the 20th century it has begun to profess both and has many guises; according to Sis White, far from becoming more tolerable as a result of this new stance, it has become more dangerous. This article looks more closely at this phenomenon which has pervasive influence both within and outside the Church.

Spiritism is sometimes mistakenly equated with spiritualism, because they share similar underlying beliefs. Spiritism reflects only a segment of the teaching of spiritualism, however, in that it is based on belief in a spirit world which includes the spirits of the dead, and mankind seeking engagement with the spirit world as a **source of knowledge and power**. The Bible confirms that the spirit world exists consisting of both angels and demons, but it expressly **forbids us** from making contact with this world (Deu. 18:10-11) Thus the basic underlying tenet of being taught or empowered by the spirits is contrary to Biblical precept.

Spiritual Formation

The extra-Biblical approach has been institutionalized by a very popular powerful tool now widely used in religious educational circles, namely 'Spiritual Formation'. Because it is broadly equated with spiritual growth, the idea behind it has been integral to practically all religions, but it is also a specific movement within 20th century Protestantism. Its methods originated as a feature of Jesuit training in the 16th century, which were then adopted generally by the Roman Catholic Church to train priests in the 1960s. The Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. soon followed suit and it became widely accepted in Protestantism, **including SDA institutions**. It has been said to be 'essentially **sanctification with a different name**'. The methodology stresses rigorous daily exercises under the guidance of a spiritual leader/mentor to bring about total commitment to its teaching.

Revision of Christianity

A renowned leader of contemporary religion proclaims (in 2016) that Christianity must "lose its monotheistic

notions to embrace a grander, more inclusive God who demonstrates solidarity with all" and is a "spirit of love flowing within everything" (Brian McLaren - The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian). In general, a complete revision of Christianity is being promoted starting with God Himself.

Spiritualism's seductive teachings have made it one of Satan's most successful ploys to woo believers away from the plain teachings of the Bible and to **embrace and exalt deceptions** such as:

Eastern philosophies and practices (e.g. meditation and yoga) which promise alluring spiritual experiences such as '**oneness with God and nature**' rather than eternal salvation;

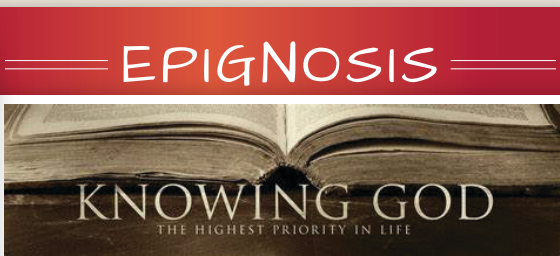
Forms of worship so focused on **emotions and the senses** that the central importance of the word of God is lost.

Sis White highlighted a factor lying at the root of the rejection of Bible teachings in favor of manmade philosophies - **man's pride in his own opinion and capabilities**, leading to skepticism, higher criticism of and **loss of faith in the Bible**, as well as reliance on a 'power' within himself for pursuing perfection. Thus spiritualism "becomes a continual personal religion to nurture and enlighten the spirit within us" with "multitudes ... taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself." Undoubtedly the widely advocated unbiblical practices have produced real spiritual experiences, but these are **not from God**.

Protection

How can we protect ourselves from these allurements? We have to first acknowledge that God has put boundaries around how we can come to Him and we ignore them at our peril. His word, rightly understood and applied, keeps us within His guidelines and enables us to discern the deceptions for what they are. His truths, our 'shield and buckler', are seen in **Christ our High Priest** through whom alone we can come to God.

By Pauline Knight



"That I may know him, and the power of his fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." (Phil 3:10)

In our world today Christianity has taken on different meanings in the eyes of men, some see it as a vehicle of security and prosperity, others see it as the ark of eternal life: an escape from hell to heaven. But in the words of Christ,

it has always been the way and the light **back to the Father and God's original** purpose for mankind. It was always in the truest sense the revelation of truth in the life of fallen man pointing man to the process of restoring the divine image and the relationship between him and his Creator.

God came to commune with Adam. **Gen. 3:8** says, "*And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*" Sitting at his creator's feet Adam was to understand more about the Father's purpose and will for his existence. Such an experience is incomprehensible to us today because of the shadow of sin. The visits by God were periods of communion where God breathes and man receives. But at this particular time we see mankind hiding from his Creator, we see man not responding to righteousness and love. Sin had brought about a change in man that separated him from his Creator and robbed him of his religious liberty. Sin separated man from God in every way and infected his very nature, neither was to be found in him the knowledge of God. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Psalms 14:2 & 3 says, "*The Lord looked down upon the children of men to see if there was any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy.*" The Bible says there is none that understands, not even one. In Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh shared the sentiments of the natural man. "*And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord,*" These are the same sentiments that are reiterated every day in our world, not just by words but also in action. But my concern today is not so much the unbeliever, but those who profess Christianity.

My question to those who have come into the liberty of Christ: **Do you know the Self-Existent Omnipotent One** who brought all things into being, who said let there be and there was? Do you know Him or do you know *of* him? There is a vast difference in knowing someone and knowing *of* someone. If I should say the name 'Portia Simpson Miller', everyone will identify the first female Prime Minister of Jamaica and similarly if I said 'Barack Obama'. Yes you have a head knowledge of these people but you truly do not have an experiential knowledge of them to identify their true characteristics and traits.

Most people are familiar with God, but we do not truly know Him. The Greek word for such knowing is **Epignosis**: It is a knowing that affects not only the thought, but also the will and the emotions. It comes through a vital connection with an entity. To have a true epignosis of God is what is called saving knowledge.

Now, in light of Christianity, you can never acquire this knowledge by just attending church. Rather it comes through daily communion with God through prayer and His Holy Word. The Word of God must be absorbed daily in the mind and applied to the life. It is only this word that can dispel the darkness in our soul, and bring an understanding of who God really is - the great author of our true religious liberty. In light of all this let us stand in the liberty which Christ has vindicated on our behalf, knowing that the "beast" is ever at hand wanting to rob us of this "Epignosis".

By Christopher Kassie