

SAMUEL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR:

— OR —

THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT.

Isaiah viii, 19, 20. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

I. *At what time does this warning have its proper application?*

This admonition is found in a prophecy that pertains to the gospel dispensation. For the preceding verse which reads, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts that dwelleth in Mount Zion," is quoted in Heb. ii, 13, and applied to Christ and the New-Testament church. Thus we read verses 11-14: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that

through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil."

And it is worthy of notice that in verse 16, which reads, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples," the term *disciples* is used, which is the common designation in the New Testament of a follower of Jesus, though it is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament. The force of this expression as pointing us to New-Testament times, is seen in the fact that he who uses this term, "my disciples," is evidently our Lord Jesus Christ.

A further proof that this passage relates to the New-Testament dispensation, is found in the fact that the "stone of stumbling" and the "rock of offense" of verse 14 which reads, "And he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense," is our divine Redeemer. For thus the New Testament applies this verse which it blends in quotation with Isaiah xxviii, 16, giving the language of both in one. Thus:

Rom. ix, 33. "As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

1 Pet. ii, 7, 8. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Another evidence that this prophecy of Isaiah pertains to the gospel dispensation, is found in the fact that the next verse which says that many shall "stumble and fall and be broken," is applied in the

texts last quoted, or in their connection, to those who reject Christ. Thus Paul says of those who stumble at Christ crucified, Rom. ix, 32, "They stumbled at that stumbling stone."

It thus appears that the admonition of Isa. viii, 19, 20, belongs to the New-Testament dispensation. A further study of the connection will establish the fact that it was designed especially for the last days of this dispensation, when the disciples of Christ are waiting upon the Lord and looking for him. For the prophet who personates in this chapter, sometimes the Lord, and sometimes his people, says in verse 17, "I will wait upon the Lord [Douay Bible, 'for the Lord'] that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." The New-Testament church was commanded not to look for that event till the Roman Antichrist should have his predicted period of exaltation. 2 Thess. ii. But when the tribulation of those days should expire, the Saviour promised that the signs of his second advent should begin to be seen, and the saints were then to look and wait for their returning Lord.

Thus we are instructed :

Matt. xxiv, 32, 33. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near even at the doors."

Luke xxi, 25-31. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of

heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

Luke xii, 35, 36. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately."

Zeph. iii, 8. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy."

Heb. ix, 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Isa. xxv, 9. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

The prophecy of Isaiah viii, 17-22 in which the

waiting position of the church is designated, has reference therefore to that period immediately preceding the advent of the Saviour. He has proved a stone of stumbling to worldly professors, whether his first or second advent be considered. And it is from this class that he hides his face.

Another clue to the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the work which it assigns the church, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Verse 16. We know that the Man of Sin was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, and to think to change times and laws. Dan. vii, 25; 2 Thess. ii. And we know that the law of God and the precepts of Christ have been wickedly mangled by the great Antichristian power. We know also that it is the work of the third angel of Rev. xiv, in the period of the saints' patience, to raise up a people that shall keep all the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And we know also that the remnant of the church in the end of this dispensation is to be warred upon by the dragon because they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev. xii, 17. This work of binding up the testimony and sealing the law among the disciples of Christ, is the very work of the third angel. This law and testimony thus restored to the people of God is that to which they are to appeal in their final conflict with the familiar spirits. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Verse 20.

We cannot doubt therefore that the admonition of Isaiah viii, 19, 20, respecting the familiar spir-

its, pertains to the time in which we now live, when the unclean spirits are making preparation for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Rev xvi.

And when the prophet says of them that seek to familiar spirits, "They shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward," Isaiah viii, 21, he fitly describes the famine predicted in the following passage :

Amos viii, 11, 12. "Behold the days, come saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

And when Isaiah adds: "And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness," verse 22, he speaks of their dreadful anguish in the battle of the great day, and of their final destruction in the outer darkness. Jude 13.

II. *What is the meaning of the terms used in the text ?*

1. The "familiar spirits" are so called because they associate with men, even the vicious and the degraded in the most familiar manner. Their character is entirely unlike that of the angels of God, in that they form intimate union with wicked men, and unite with them in the works which God forbids. There is nothing in their manifestations

that inspires awe, veneration or reverence. But when the angels have visited men, so awe-inspiring has been their appearance, that even God's most favored servants have fallen upon their faces with terror, or stood trembling in their presence. And hence the style of address so often used. Thus Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," the angel strengthens by saying, "Fear not Daniel;" Dan x, 12; to Zacharias who was "righteous before God," he says, "Fear not, Zacharias;" Luke i, 13; to Mary who had found favor with God, "Fear not Mary;" Luke i, 30; to the holy women at the sepulchre, "Fear not ye;" Matt. xxviii, 5; and to Paul the most eminent of Christ's servants, "Fear not Paul." Acts xxvii, 24.

2. Wizards are men who deal with familiar spirits. Women who do the same work are called witches.

3. That these persons are said to "peep" and "mutter" shows that the spirits who control them are identical with the "unclean spirits like frogs," for this is the very language of frogs. Rev. xvi, 13.

4. Their teaching does not even purport to come from God, but from the dead. Thus the prophet expostulates with those who seek unto them: "Should not a people seek unto their God? for the living *to the dead?*"

5. The law and the testimony by which their teachings are to be tested is thus spoken of in the Scriptures:

Psa. xix, 7, 8. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

Rom. iii, 31. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."

James ii, 9-12. "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

1 John iii, 4. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law."

Rev. xii, 17. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

III. *Do the Scriptures treat the sin of dealing with familiar spirits, otherwise called witchcraft or sorcery, as a real sin, and one that is very heinous in the sight of God?*

1. The Old Testament bears the following testimony:

Lev. xix, 31. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God."

Lev. xx, 27. "A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them."

Deut. xviii, 9-12. When thou art come into the

land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these 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 such things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

1 Sam. xv, 23. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

2 Chron. xxxiii, 6. "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and used wizards; he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger."

2. The New Testament bears quite as pointed a testimony against witchcraft or sorcery:

Gal. v, 19-21. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, WITCHCRAFT, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Acts viii, 9-11. "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used SORcery, and BEWITCHED the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one;

to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had BEWITCHED THEM WITH SORCERIES."

Rev. xxi, 8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and SORCERERS, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

Rev. xxii, 15. "For without are dogs, and SORCERERS, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

These scriptures are sufficient to show that dealing with familiar spirits, otherwise called sorcery, or witchcraft, is a sin of fearful magnitude in the sight of God. Nor can it be said that this is an Old-Testament sin of which the New Testament knows nothing. For Paul, Luke and John, or rather the Spirit of God speaking through them, class this with the vilest of sins; and exclude those who are guilty of it from any part of the kingdom of God.

IV. *What, then, is the sin of witchcraft, or of dealing with familiar spirits?*

The testimony of the Bible furnishes the answer to this important question. It is the holding of direct intercourse with Satan or his evil angels, under the name of conversing with the spirits of the dead. That dealing with familiar spirits purported to be dealing with the dead, is evident from the words of Isaiah: "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, . . . should not a people seek unto their God? *for the living to the dead?*" But we have a case of this very sin recorded at considerable length in the Bible, and to this let us refer. It is the case of Saul and the witch of Endor.

1 Sam. xxviii, 3-20. "Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he said, I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring him up whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land; wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods, ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he

stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him as he spake by me; for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and hath given it to thy neighbor, even to David; because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night."

We have in this scripture a particular account of the sin of witchcraft as practiced in the days of ancient Israel. Dealing with familiar spirits in those days was precisely the same as the present work of consulting the dead through the spirit mediums, known as Modern Spiritualism. Let us consider the facts in this case.

1. Saul, the king of Israel, had lived in rebellion against God for many years. Because of this the Lord had left him to himself, and refused to communicate with him either by dreams, or by prophets, or in any other manner. The army of the Philistines had come against him, and in his distress he sought to one having a familiar spirit.

2. Samuel, the prophet of God, was now dead. He had faithfully warned Saul against disobeying the Lord, and in the last warning that he gave him, he told him that rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft. Now that Samuel is dead, Saul who had despised his word for many years, and who had lived during this time without any intercourse with God through his prophets, now determined, by the means of witchcraft, which Samuel had warned him against, to have an interview with Samuel.

3. The woman having the familiar spirit, who is commonly called the witch of Endor, practiced her unholy calling in the most secret manner. For Saul, in obedience to the law of God, had put to death all such persons so far as he could find them. This woman stood ready to bring up any dead person that could be named, and to enable the inquirer to converse with that person.

4. The familiar spirit that consorted with this woman was the efficient cause of all the wonders that were wrought. This spirit was able to do one of two things. 1. It could bring up from the dead any person that was called for. Or, 2. It could personate or counterfeit the dead man so that those who conversed with the familiar spirit, should believe they were conversing with their dead friend, because every peculiarity of his was perfectly imitated.

The first act of the woman was to ascertain whether Saul really wished to converse with the dead, or whether he feigned this in order to detect her in the practice of witchcraft and put her to death. But when Saul had sworn to her by a solemn oath that she should not be punished for divining unto him by the familiar spirit, the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" It was her business to bring up any of the dead that might be called for. Her question was precisely that of a spirit medium of the present day, except indeed that in these

days the dead are brought down from the third heaven, or from the higher spheres; whereas in those days they were called up from a region below.

Saul said to the woman, "Bring me up Samuel." And thus we have the very words used in seeking unto those who had familiar spirits. The diviner, sorcerer, enchanter, necromancer, wizard, or witch, for these names are all given to those who in some form do this work, asks of the one who seeks knowledge from the dead, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And the inquirer names the dead person with whom he would converse. This shows the exactness of Isaiah's language when he represents the consulting with familiar spirits as seeking "for the living to the dead." Modern Spiritualism has furnished the counterpart of this very conversation in innumerable instances.

"Divine unto me by the familiar spirit" said Saul, and "bring me up Samuel." And now the familiar spirit at the bidding of this wicked woman must show what his powers are capable of accomplishing. He must produce Samuel in truth and verity; or if this is beyond his power, he must imitate him so perfectly that Saul should be made to believe that it was Samuel himself.

The woman invokes her familiar spirit, and the divination proves eminently successful. "And when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul." It is evident that the woman herself was surprised at something; for she cried out in her terror. And from this fact many have concluded that, contrary to the expectation of the woman, Samuel actually came. But it should be observed that if Samuel were indeed present on this occasion it must have been, 1. Because the familiar spirit had power to bring him up. Or, 2. Because the Lord saw fit to send him to meet Saul. But both these views are false and absurd. For, 1.

It would be absurd to believe that the familiar spirit has power to control at pleasure not merely the dead in general, but the righteous dead in particular. Who dare assert that the familiar spirits are able, at the bidding of wicked men or women, to bring up from the dead the most eminent servants of God? And, 2. It would be not only absurd but almost wicked to represent the Lord as sending Samuel to meet Saul on this *forbidden* ground when he had refused to answer him at all by any prophet, though Saul anxiously sought such answer in a lawful manner before he ventured upon the dreadful expedient of consulting a familiar spirit. And, 3. As it was a wicked thing in Saul to invoke the incantations of this servant of Satan, how can it be shown to be consistent for holy Samuel to come when thus invoked by satanic power?

It is said that the woman was terrified by the actual presence of Samuel. Those who say this do not read the record with proper attention. For it is to be observed that the woman did not cry out in her terror, "Samuel himself has come indeed!" She was not astonished at the sight of the old man with his mantle, for it was the business of her familiar spirit to present a perfect representation of any dead person. Indeed it does not appear that responses were expected until the person invoked had been raised up. But there was a fact that the woman learned the moment this reputed Samuel appeared, and that fact filled her with terror. The first act of this so-called Samuel was to make known to this woman that her guest was no other than Saul the king of Israel, the man who had destroyed every such person as herself that he could discover. It was this fact that alarmed her; for in her terror she cries out, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul." She was not alarmed that Samuel had come; her only terror was that she found herself in the hands of Saul. This circumstance itself

furnishes a convincing proof that this reputed Samuel was no other than her familiar spirit personating him ; for the first act of this professed servant of the Most High was to put this wicked woman on her guard by a private hint that he who was now her guest was no other than Saul himself. Let us read further in this wonderful record :

“ And the king said unto her, Be not afraid ; for what sawest thou ? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of ? And she said, an old man cometh up ; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.”

It is to be observed, 1. That of all the wonderful things seen on this occasion, Saul saw nothing. Witness the expressions, and it will be seen that it was the woman and not Saul who saw what was seen. Thus “ the woman saw Samuel ;” the king said, “ What sawest *thou* ?” the woman said, “ I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” Saul inquires, “ What form is he of ?” The woman answers, “ And old man cometh up ; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived [from the woman’s description] that it was Samuel.”

It is to be observed, 2. That lest any should say that Saul might have seen all that the woman saw had he not been prostrate upon the ground, the sacred writer tells us that it was after Saul had asked the woman these questions that “ he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.”

It is to be observed, 3. That this wonderful manifestation of either divine or satanic power, arose out of the earth. Thus the woman said to Saul, “ I saw gods ascending out of the earth ;” or as Gesenius gives it in his Hebrew Lexicon, “ I see a godlike form ascending out of the earth.” And when Saul asked, “ What form is he of ?” she said an old

man *cometh up*; and he is covered with a mantle."

It is to be observed, 4. That there are several facts here brought to view hard to be explained if this was the real Samuel, but very easy to understand if this was the familiar spirit personating or counterfeiting him. The first is that holy Samuel should come in answer to her wicked incantations. The second is that he should arise out of the earth. The third is that the woman should see him, while Saul could not see him. The fourth is that this holy man should first of all communicate private information to this abandoned woman, putting her on her guard against Saul. The fifth is that the woman was not alarmed at the presence of this old man with his mantle, but only alarmed when he told her that she had Saul in the house.

But let us further consider the question of Samuel's presence. If he were actually present, and this manifestation was not a satanic representation of him, he must have come, 1. As an immortal spirit from glory, or, 2. He must have been raised from the dead and therefore been present with his own flesh and bones.

But the first of these views must be abandoned, for, 1. An immortal spirit from the realms of glory could not come up out of the earth. 2. Nor would such an one begin his work by a private communication to the witch. 3. It is moreover incredible that the incantations of her satanic craft should enable her to see such a holy being while Saul could see nothing.

Let us see if the second view is any less open to objection. The fact that this reputed Samuel arose out of the earth before this woman, as an old man covered with a mantle, may be supposed to substantiate the idea that Samuel was present with his own flesh and bones. Before disproving this view of the case, several questions concerning it may well

be asked: 1. Samuel was buried in distant Ramah. See verse 3. How could he come out of the ground in Endor? 2. Can it be believed that he was raised by God to talk with Saul upon the Devil's own ground? 3. Would such a man as Samuel, who held witchcraft as a heinous sin, 1 Sam. xv, 23, before beginning his message to Saul, first hold private converse with this wicked woman in the midst of her incantations? 4. And what became of this old man thus raised from the dead? Did he go through the pains of a second dissolution? He might in such case well complain of being disquieted and brought up by Saul, verse 15.

But there is one important fact that settles this question of Samuel's resurrection. Had Samuel been present in his own flesh and bones, and not as a matter of enchantment or sorcery, Saul would have seen him as well as the woman. That Saul could not see him is convincing proof that Samuel was not raised from the dead. He must have been raised—if raised at all—by God or by Satan. But the Devil cannot raise the dead; and it is certain that the God of Heaven would not raise his servant in answer to satanic incantations.

We are therefore brought to the conclusion that Samuel was not present either as an immortal spirit from the third heaven, or as resurrected from the dead. And therefore the conclusion is inevitable that this Samuel is no other than the familiar spirit personating the man of God. Saul had asked the God of Heaven to speak to him by his prophets; but for his wickedness this was refused. This time he asks Satan to send him Samuel; and Satan was not slow to answer the prayer by sending such a Samuel as he could produce. And now let us hear what this Samuel, produced by Satan, had to say.

“And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war

against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord hath done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: and the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway all along the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night."

The first words of this so-called Samuel are remarkable. He does not wait to hear Saul's request, but asks Saul in a petulant manner what he has disturbed him for to bring him up. This is an acknowledgment on the part of this reputed Samuel that he had come through Saul's act of seeking Satan. It is not holy Samuel sent by God: but is that kind of Samuel that Satan could send. And observe, he does not represent himself as coming down from the courts of glory, but as coming up from the regions below. Those who think that Samuel was actually present from the heavenly Jerusalem, may explain how wicked Saul could be present with him the next day. Vere 19.

Saul relates to Samuel his sore distress. And now behold the result of serving Satan, and then calling upon him for help in the day of dire extremity. Satan flatters men during all the time in which

they can repent, telling them the path in which they are walking is the path of the righteous; or, if it is not, it is just as good as that of the righteous, and will end at last in Heaven; or, if it be not just right, there is plenty of time for repentance, and that they may safely neglect it for many years. But when the last hours of their probation are expiring, he comes upon his victims with overwhelming power; telling them that it is now too late, and drives them to despair by repeating the history of their sins, until, perhaps, they take their lives with their own hands. Such was the case with Saul. Satan led him to despise the warnings of the prophets, and to presume upon the mercy of God till the very hour of his extremity was upon him, and then by rehearsing his sins, and provoking him, with David's certain triumph over him, and extinguishing every hope, both for this world and the next, he drives him to utter despair and immediate suicide. He tells him,

1. The Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy, i. e., there is absolutely no hope in your case.

2. The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. This was a keen thrust to such a man as Saul.

3. Your ruin was made sure by your sin in the memorable expedition against Amalek.

4. Your army shall suffer a terrible defeat in the coming battle, and yourself and sons shall be slain.

And now let us follow Saul to the battle. We cannot, indeed, say whether it came on the following day, but it was not delayed long. His army was defeated with a terrible slaughter, his sons were slain, and Saul, in utter despair, kills himself with his own sword. See 1 Sam. xxxi. Such was the result of his seeking to one that had a familiar spirit. But before we take leave of this extraordinary case, let us hear what is said of it by that sa-

cred writer who makes the only other mention of it.

1 Chron. x, 13, 14. "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it, and inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

It is worthy of observation that this passage names the familiar spirit as the one that Saul conversed with, and says not one word about Samuel in whose form and dress he came, and under whose name he completed the ruin of Saul. It was the familiar spirit that he inquired of, and that held discourse with him. This is made very manifest by quoting this text without the supplied words: "For asking of a familiar spirit to inquire. And he inquired not of the Lord." It was the familiar spirit, therefore, and not the Lord through Samuel with whom Saul conversed.

The sin of witchcraft, or the dealing with familiar spirits, consists, therefore, in holding intercourse with Satan under the name of conversing with the dead. And observe how completely, under such circumstances, men put themselves under the power of Satan.

With hearts wounded and bleeding under some great bereavement, they call up their dear departed. And when their peculiarities are exactly reproduced, and when little tokens of friendship, which were known only to the inquirer and to the departed, are brought out, and matters best calculated to awaken all the fond remembrances of the past are called up, so that the inquirer becomes satisfied that he is conversing with his dearest friend, who now knows a thousand times more than himself, he is not only thrown off his guard, but captivated by Satan, and caused to believe the doctrine of devils; for cer-

tainly, as he thinks, his dearest friend cannot deceive him.

V. But who are these familiar spirits ?

To this question two answers have been returned. 1. They are the spirits of our dead friends. 2. They are the fallen angels who imitate or counterfeit them. One of these answers must be true ; both of them cannot be : which, therefore, shall we accept as the truth ?

If we could believe the familiar spirits themselves, the first answer must be true ; for they profess to be the spirits of the dead, and they claim to bring up any of the dead who are called for. But there are some reasons for distrusting their testimony. 1. In the case which the Bible gives at length, as a specimen of their works, the familiar spirit which consorted with the witch of Endor professed to bring up the dead at pleasure, and to enable them to speak ; yet we have found this to be a false pretense ; for the familiar spirit did all the speaking, and dead Samuel had nothing to say. 2. The Bible warns us against them all as wicked and deceitful. Deut. xviii. Their testimony as to their own personality, therefore, is entitled to no weight.

But the doctrine that the familiar spirits are the spirits of the dead, in ancient times rested upon the following propositions : 1. That the spirits of the dead are now in a state of conscious existence. 2. That they are now endowed with superior intelligence. 3. That they inhabit a region within the earth itself.

In modern times, however, the same doctrine is supported thus : 1. That the souls of men are immortal. 2. That death is the gate to endless joy. 3. That they enter upon their reward at death. 4. That they are in death endowed with superior intelligence. 5. That they are ministering spirits

to the living, having their abode, either in Heaven or upon earth, at pleasure.

The modern doctrine is an improvement upon the theology of the days of Saul. But the Bible sweeps away this cunningly-devised fable of ancient days, and with it the doctrine that dead men can hold converse with the living. Thus that sacred volume teaches us :

1. That God made man of the dust of the ground, and gave him life from his own breath. Gen. ii.

2. That he warned him that for transgression he should be deprived of life and turned again into dust. Gen. ii ; iii.

3. That all men are now under the sentence of death, and are both mortal and corruptible. Heb. ix, 27 ; Job iv, 17 ; Rom. i, 23.

4. That those who seek immortality, shall receive it at the resurrection, from him who is its only source. Rom. ii, 7 ; 1 Cor. xv, 51-55 ; 1 Tim. vi, 15, 16.

5. That death came into the world by sin ; that it is the last enemy ; that Satan has had the power of it ; and that death and Satan shall both be destroyed in the lake of fire. Rom. v, 12 ; 1 Cor. xv, 26 ; Heb. ii, 14 ; Rev. xx.

6. That in death there is no remembrance of God. Ps. vi, 5.

7. That in the day of death the thoughts perish. Ps. cxlvi, 4.

8. That the dead know not anything ; and that their love, and envy, and hatred, is now perished. Eccl. ix, 5, 6,

9. That the dead do not praise God. Ps. cxv, 17.

10. That sheol or hades, the underground abode of the dead, is a place where there is no work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom ; a place of silence, secrecy, darkness, corruption and death. Eccl. ix, 10 ; Job xiv, 10-15 ; xvii, 13-16.

11. That the righteous are not to be with Christ till he comes back after them. John xiv, 1-3; 1 Cor. xv, 32; 1 Thess. iv.

12. That men are neither rewarded nor punished till they have first been judged. 2 Pet. ii, 9; Rev. xxii, 12; Matt. xvi, 27.

13. That the dead, both righteous and wicked, are now asleep. Dan. xii, 2; Job xiv, 12; 1 Thess. iv, 14; 1 Cor. xv, 6, 18, 20.

14. That the keys of death and hades are not in the hands of familiar spirits, but in those of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rev. i, 18.

These facts are certainly sufficient to show that the familiar spirits do not come from the dead themselves, and that they do not, and cannot, bring up any of the dead. Who, then, are the familiar spirits? We need not deny their existence; nor can we without denying the Bible. Nor should we pronounce it an inexplicable mystery that our dead friends whose very thoughts have perished, and who sleep quietly in the silent dust, are by them apparently made to speak in so wonderful a manner. There is an agency competent to do this work. That the familiar spirits are the fallen angels will appear from the following facts:

1. The Scriptures inform us that Satan who was once an obedient servant of the God of Heaven, long since raised the standard of revolt against him. John viii, 44; 1 John iii, 8; Eze. xxviii.

2. That a large body of the angels joined in this revolt. 2 Pet. ii, 4; Jude 6; Rev. xii, 7-9.

3. That these wicked spirits are not now in torment, but they await the day of Judgment, when with wicked men they shall be sent into everlasting fire. Jude 6; Matt. xxv, 41; Rev. xx; Matt. viii, 29; James ii, 19.

4. That this vast body of fallen angels have been engaged during the whole history of our race in the most mighty efforts to involve mankind in ruin. 1 Pet. v, 8, 9; Job i, 2; Luke xxii, 31; Rom. viii, 38, 39; Eph. vi, 12.

5. That hypocrisy, deception, and fraud, have been the chief of the ways in which they have ruined mankind. 2 Cor. xi, 14, 15; Gen. iii; John viii, 44; Rev. xii, 9; xx, 3, 8.

6. The Old Testament plainly teaches that the work of the familiar spirits is false, deceitful and ruinous. The New Testament shows who they are that deceive, seduce, and ruin mankind. It is the fallen angels with Satan at their head.

We cannot, therefore, avoid the conclusion, that the familiar spirits of the Old Testament are the fallen angels of the New. And hence it is that the "seducing spirits" of Paul, and the "unclean spirits" of John, are called devils, or spirits of devils. 1 Tim. iv, 1; Rev xvi, 13. We need not, therefore, think it strange that the Scriptures warn us so faithfully against seeking knowledge at their hands.

VI. *From what cause did witchcraft become universal among the ancient heathen?*

That witchcraft was universal with the nations that God drove out before Israel, we learn from Deut. xviii. These nations, therefore, in their heathenish darkness, and abominable licentiousness, see Lev. xviii, 24-30, were grounded in the doctrine of the soul's immortality; for it was upon this doctrine as a basis that witchcraft rested, as manifested in necromancy, i. e., divining by means of the dead; enchantment; i. e., making things which have no existence seem real; and dealing with familiar spirits, which is a pretended communion with the dead.

But how came these people by this doctrine? They belong to that class that Paul says "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and "who changed the truth of God into a lie." Rom. i, 21-28. Demon worship, i. e., the worship of dead heroes as conducted through witchcraft, was their religion. And the first principle of this religion is the immortality of the soul. Nor is the doctrine of the soul's immortality the foun-

dation of heathenism only, with its worship of deified dead men ; it is equally the foundation of Romanism with its purgatory, prayers for the dead, worship of the saints, and deification of Mary as queen of Heaven ; and of Mohammedanism with its promise to the bloody men who fight its battles that if killed in battle they shall sup that night in Paradise ; and of Spiritualism, of which the whole stock in trade is the sayings and doings of dead men ; and of MODERN ORTHODOXY which makes death the gate to endless joy, and bestows rewards and punishments upon the dead without waiting for the resurrection and the Judgment.

Who gave the heathen this first principle of their religion ; a principle, by the way, absolutely indispensable to almost every system of false religion ? When Paul says of these ancient heathen that they " changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather [margin] than the Creator," Rom. i, 25, he tells us a startling truth. For instead of worshiping the living God, they worship the immortal souls of dead heroes that they believe had now become gods. Thus we read :

Num. xxv, 1-3. " And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods : and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor : and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel."

Let us read again and we shall learn what kind of gods these were whose sacrifices the Israelites ate at Baal-peor.

Ps. cvi, 28. " They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead."

The gods, then, to which these sacrifices were offered, were deified dead men. And they were confirmed in worshipping these dead heroes because they received such wonderful responses, so perfectly characteristic of the men. But they supposed themselves receiving re-

sponses from the souls of these dead warriors to whom they thus sacrificed as gods, Paul tells us who really received this worship, and of course who returned the response. Thus he says:

1 Cor. x, 20. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to DEVILS, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

They worshiped dead men in name, and devils in reality. They had no doubt that these departed warriors and kings still lived, for they had manifest and characteristic responses. But who cannot see where these responses come from, or what being it is that has an interest that men should believe in their own present immortality?

But who taught the heathen this doctrine that the soul of man is immortal, or that men became as gods by dying? If we go back to Satan's first great lie, we shall find this doctrine stated in express terms: "Ye shall not surely die: . . . ye shall be as gods." Gen. iii, 4, 5. Here is the fountain head of heathen philosophy, and of almost every false system of religion. With this idea of natural immortality established in the minds of men, Satan has been able by means of witchcraft to control the world to an unlimited extent. He sends his evil angels in the name of their dear departed friends, and imitating the peculiarities of those friends most perfectly, he throws them off their guard, and instilling into their minds the doctrines of devils, leads them captive at his will. To see what kind of morals attend the practice of witchcraft, read and compare Deut. xviii, 9-14, with Lev. xviii, 24-30.

Witchcraft, or the dealing with familiar spirits, is Satan's system of spiritual gifts; for he holds communion with men through his evil angels, as God does through the holy angels. But as they cannot deceive us if they come in their own name, they have chosen effectual disguise, and so come to us in the very form and manner of our dearest departed friends.

We can understand why Satan has made so great an effort to draw men into the sin of witchcraft ; for it gives him control of their minds, and makes their ruin almost certain. And we can see the mercy of God in closing up this pretended avenue to the most wonderful knowledge. The whole thing is a deception and a fraud ; and God has fenced up the road with his prohibition that we may understand it to be a dangerous and fatal thing to travel that way. God is equally merciful in what he commands and in what he prohibits. It was Satan, therefore, with his first great falsehood, that originated the principles and established the practice of witchcraft among mankind.

VII. *What are we to expect from this great satanic manifestation in the closing scenes of this dispensation ?*

That Modern Spiritualism is not slandered when represented as a continuation of ancient witchcraft is shown by two facts. 1. The Old Testament shows that the practice of witchcraft in the days of ancient Israel was precisely the same as the work of Modern Spiritualism. 2. Spiritualists do not deny, but frankly acknowledge, the identity of modern spirit mediums and ancient dealers with familiar spirits. Before we ask what Satan is to do in the final display of his utmost power, let us consider what he has done already in the revival of this mystery of iniquity. From an obscure beginning in Western New York some twenty years since, Spiritualism has extended itself over the whole earth, and gained a foothold in every district of which we have any knowledge. It is already the religion of many millions of the human family. Its success has been the result of two things : 1. Its wonders. 2. Its doctrines. Its wonders are the wonders of ancient witchcraft in enabling men to converse with the dead. Its doctrines deserve notice. Among the most important are these :

1. That the Bible is full of errors, and not worthy of our confidence.

2. That the moral law is of no authority as a standard of moral character.

3. That there is no difference between right and wrong: for whatever is, is right; and no such thing as sin exists.

4. That there is no need of salvation through Jesus Christ, but every man is his own Christ.

5. That there is no resurrection of the dead; no future Judgment, and no final account.

6. That the God of the Old Testament is the spirit of a dead man.

7. That all men compose a part of God; or, all men in death become so many separate deities.

8. That the souls of men are immortal, and at death enter a higher sphere.

These principles are not always openly avowed in plain terms, but are dealt out as the hearer can bear them. But when men have become established in this system, the spirits do not hesitate to avow the "doctrines of devils" in the plainest terms. It is probable that, like Mormonism, a large share of the success that attends this wonderful satanic manifestation is due to its teachings and practices in regard to the seventh commandment. The morals of ancient witchcraft may be seen by comparing Deut. xviii, 9-14; Lev. xviii, 24-30. Perhaps Modern Spiritualism cannot be worse; but it is certainly not one degree purer. There are thousands of people now standing in the outer courts of this infernal diabolism, who are comparatively unaware of what exists in its sanctuary. Would to God that they could be warned before they drink deeper of this strong delusion.

The future of this system of ruinous delusion and mighty satanic wonders is given in the prophetic Scriptures. Of the period immediately preceding the second advent of Jesus Christ, Paul speaks thus:

2 THESS. ii, 9-12. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in

them that perish ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

A short space of time in the close of this dispensation bears the dread appellation of the hour of temptation :

Rev. iii, 10. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

These spirits have an important part to act preparatory to the battle of the great day of God Almighty :

Rev xvi, 13, 14. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The false prophet, out of whose mouth one of the unclean spirits goes forth, is the same as the two-horned beast. Rev. xiii, 11. This fact gives us a clue to the agency by which the two-horned beast is to perform its astonishing miracles in the coming hour of temptation.

Rev. xiii, 13, 14. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell upon the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast : saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live."

At a period of time not very far distant in the future, this mighty satanic delusion will have absolute control of those who have not made Christ their portion, and his truth their shield and buckler.

VIII. *What is furnished us as a safeguard against this deception?*

The prophet points us to this in the words of the text: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Our safeguard from satanic delusion is the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Those who heed this warning will be able to escape the tempter's power; those who do not heed it shall be carried away by it. This certainly indicates that when the grand struggle shall arrive, men will be found gathered into just two classes: 1. Commandment-keepers. 2. Spiritualists.

If we treat the law of God as Isaiah bids us, we shall not only acknowledge its authority, but we shall have its holy principles written in our hearts. Then we shall be able to appreciate the vileness of this satanic doctrine, and ever be on our guard against it. And if we regard the testimony of Jesus Christ which is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. xix, 10, we shall understand how great a difference there is between the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the doctrines of devils.

Finally, if we would stand in the hour of temptation, we must now keep the word of Christ's patience. The present is the period of the saints' patience. It is for each of us to be of that number who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

J. N. A.

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